

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY YOUTH NETWORK

Learning Report

2nd Edition

Report Period: 2019–2024



GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH NETWORK
THE FUTURE IS YOUNG
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Global Opportunity Youth Network Learning Report

2nd Edition

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are delighted to present the Global Opportunity Youth Network's (GOYN) Learning Report (2nd Edition), which was made possible by the valuable contributions of [GOYN's global partners](#). In particular, we would like to thank the Aspen Institute's Gabriela Carmo and Cyrielle Auffray of the Global Development Incubator (GDI) for their authorship. We would also like to especially thank Jamie McAuliffe and Zeina Shuhaibar of GOYN, Camilo Carreño and Alice Gugelev of GDI for their valuable contributions to this report, as well as partners at DevLearn for their insights, contributions and work in previous years. Their efforts have significantly enriched the content and quality of this report. We are also thankful for the many young leaders who, through their leadership and guidance, continue to shape GOYN and its mission.

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A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDING DIRECTOR



When the Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN) published its last learning report in 2021, we couldn't have anticipated the extraordinary changes the next few years would bring. Over the past several years, the long tail of COVID-19 has set many communities and Opportunity Youth back as the economic strain of the pandemic has disproportionately impacted them. And, just as many places were recovering, we now have the twin shocks of significant economic turmoil and a global reduction of development aid affecting many GOYN countries and communities.

Through all this, we continue to be inspired and buttressed by the singular persistence, resilience, energy, and joy of GOYN's Opportunity Youth leaders and young members of our network. Influenced early on by the Aspen Institute's Forum for Community Solutions, GOYN was founded on the belief that young people, recognized for their inherent talent and agency and with the support of adult ally institutions, can and will build a better future for themselves and their communities. That continues to inform and undergird all the work that we do across the globe.

When describing GOYN, we often underscore that many of the solutions to barriers to youth opportunity already exist. The real challenge is to identify the interventions, policies, and advocacy tools most appropriate to specific local economies, and, with needed resources, partner with young leaders and communities to thrive. Now, six years into GOYN's implementation, this report illustrates the immense richness, diversity, and impact that belief in the power of place, collaboration, and local leadership will yield.

In 2025, we are just past the mid-way point in our original 10-year commitment to global Opportunity Youth and their home communities. We are privileged to have a core group of global partners—Prudential Financial Inc., Accenture, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Fondation Botnar, Vitol Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Catholic Relief Services, and Western Union Foundation—that have been with us since the very early days and have shown their deep commitment to GOYN's long-term vision for impact. We are incredibly fortunate to count some of the finest youth-serving nonprofit institutions in the world (see [Appendix B - GOYN overview](#)) as our key Anchor Partners across our network. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your unwavering support and commitment to our shared mission.

Lastly, a special thanks goes out to GOYN's original design partner, Global Development Incubator, which has now become our primary global strategic partner and provides invaluable support across almost every strategic pillar of GOYN.

Thank you for taking the time to review this latest report. We hope you will share some of our optimism and pride in the progress made across GOYN's communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jamie McAuliffe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jamie" being more prominent than the last name "McAuliffe".

Jamie McAuliffe

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the start, the Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN) has partnered with communities to expand economic opportunities for Opportunity Youth (OY). What sets GOYN apart from other youth employment and development solutions is its unique approach: placing youth at the center and adopting a place-based and systemic lens to address the root causes of youth unemployment. GOYN's long-term commitment reflects the understanding that generational challenges demand sustained, multi-year strategies—shifting systems rather than delivering short-term interventions. Through locally driven solutions and cross-sector collaboration, GOYN has helped shape more inclusive employment ecosystems, ensuring that young people are not just participants but leaders in driving change.

At the local level, GOYN communities have co-designed and implemented Opportunity Pathways that align with market demand, equipping youth with the skills, networks, and resources needed to build sustainable livelihoods while strengthening their leadership and agency. Unlike traditional youth programs that focus solely on individual skill-building, GOYN's place-based approach ensures that solutions are tailored to the unique economic, cultural, and social contexts of each community. Over the past six years, GOYN has engaged thousands of OY as leaders and changemakers, expanding access to jobs in high-growth sectors such as digital technology in Bogotá, Colombia, logistics in Pune, India, and tourism in Mombasa, Kenya. Collaboration among governments, civil society, and the private sector has helped over 84,000 youth secure dignified work, launch businesses, or return to education. GOYN's systems lens has also shaped youth-centered policies, supported the launch of youth-led enterprises, and mobilized over US\$40 million in global and local funding, ensuring long-term impact and sustainability.

At the global level, GOYN serves as a platform for cross-regional learning, collaboration, and innovation. Through its learning agenda and network-wide initiatives, communities share best practices and rapidly adapt proven strategies to improve youth economic and social outcomes. With over 430 organizations engaged, GOYN has strengthened multi-sector partnerships and influenced systemic change, including policy shifts that make labor markets more inclusive for OY. Additionally, initiatives like the Youth Innovation Fund, which has supported over 170 youth-led projects, and the expansion of digital job-matching platforms have accelerated young people's access to leadership and economic opportunities. As a thought leader in youth partnership and livelihoods, GOYN has amplified OY voices on global platforms, shaping conversations and action related to youth economic mobility.

GOYN has achieved significant milestones, including connecting over 630,000 OY, improving the employability and agency of over 220,000 OY, and transforming the lives of 84,000 through formal jobs and entrepreneurship. While individual community examples may appear modest in isolation, each represents a scalable model designed for community saturation. GOYN's approach ensures interventions can be rapidly expanded through existing ecosystems, turning pilot projects into systemic solutions. For a detailed breakdown of these results, please refer to [Appendix A—Impact at a glance](#).

Following our first learning report launched in 2021, this second edition reflects on GOYN's progress, challenges, and insights over the past six years. As GOYN looks to the future, the final section outlines the network's vision and strategic priorities for the years ahead, including expanded and scaled programming, new geographies, deeper youth leadership, and innovative financing models, to continue shaping inclusive and sustainable systems for youth economic opportunity. It is also an invitation to all stakeholders—governments, businesses, civil society, and young people—to join this growing movement and expand economic opportunities for OY worldwide.



Training workshop organized by a Youth Advisory Group member in Thiès, Senegal. (Photo: Eclosio)



ABOUT GOYN

The Global Opportunity Youth Network (GOYN), hosted at the Aspen Institute and managed in partnership with Global Development Incubator (GDI), is committed to creating place-based systems shifts to promote youth economic opportunity. Building on youth-led and local solutions, GOYN advances economic mobility for “Opportunity Youth” (OY)—young people aged 15–35 who are out of school, unemployed, or working in informal jobs—through access to dignified and sustainable entrepreneurship, employment, and leadership pathways. GOYN operates with a long-term vision, recognizing that generational challenges demand decades-spanning solutions to create lasting change. At its core, the GOYN approach helps bridge the gap between young people and economic opportunity by changing the way OY are seen and focusing on the bigger systems and barriers they face beyond their individual circumstances.

With over 600 million OY in the world today, GOYN recognizes that there is no one solution to address the scale of the global youth employment challenge. Each context is different, with unique governments, business ecosystems, and opportunities. Furthermore, Opportunity Youth are not a homogeneous group. They have diverse experiences and interests and adapt to their circumstances in different ways. Therefore, GOYN works in collaboration with Anchor Partners (local backbone organizations) and Youth Advisory Groups to develop a localized “suite of solutions” (e.g., job skilling, placement, entrepreneurship support, mentorship, case management, and labor market demand mapping). This way, GOYN ensures that scalable Opportunity Pathways are tailored to the specific needs of each community, and makes complex, systemic change manageable and sustainable at a county, municipal, or district level.

Today, GOYN operates in 17 communities across 9 countries, supported by a global network of partners that bring funding, technical expertise, and networks to scale solutions that promote youth economic opportunities. For more information on GOYN’s global network, including its communities and key partners, see [Appendix B—GOYN overview](#).

Furthermore, the GOYN approach emphasizes Authentic Youth Partnership (AYP) to advance equity and increase youth income, assets, and agency. Through multi-sector collaboration and by co-creating solutions with young people, GOYN promotes approaches that center youth voices and perspectives, while also inviting them to work alongside community stakeholders to shape and advance economic opportunities. Ultimately, GOYN equips OY with the skills to analyze data, advocate for policy change, and lead the design and implementation of interventions with public and private partners.

“

I am a big believer in young people being co-creators in solutions that work for them. The only way to create improvements at scale is through a multi-sectoral approach. GOYN is creating systems shifts that enable youth and partners to push for changes they deem necessary not just here [in Mombasa], but both nation-wide and worldwide.

— Alfred Sigo (former GOYN Mombasa Youth Advisory Group member and CEO of Pwani Youth Network)

THEORY OF CHANGE:

Core pillars

At the core of GOYN's approach is its Theory of Change, which is built on three interconnected pillars:

- ▶ **Mobilization and Coordination:** bringing together local youth employment stakeholders to improve access, quality, and efficiency of youth services.
- ▶ **Youth Partnership and Advocacy:** ensuring youth voices are at the center of intervention design and implementation, with a focus on equity.
- ▶ **Resources and Tools:** mobilizing diversified financing, data, and technology to scale youth services and create sustainable impact.

These pillars work together to create *Opportunity Pathways*—tailored interventions that connect young people to economic opportunities while building their agency and leadership. The implementation of these pathways generates impact at three levels: Opportunity Youth, ecosystem stakeholders, and communities and labor markets.

For a detailed explanation of GOYN's Theory of Change, please refer to [Appendix C—Theory of Change](#).



Youth Advisory Group members and ecosystem partners gather in Mexico City. (Photo: YouthBuild Mexico)



APPROACH AND PROGRESS

At the heart of GOYN's mission is a commitment to transforming the lives of Opportunity Youth. Over the past six years, GOYN has developed a unique, place-based, youth-led approach that goes beyond traditional youth development programs. While many programs focus solely on individual skill-building or short-term employment, GOYN addresses the structural barriers that limit youth potential, working collaboratively with communities to create long-term, sustainable pathways for economic opportunity. These pathways are designed for scale—proven through localized pilots and now expanding across districts and sectors to achieve population-level impact. Building on GOYN's Theory of Change, this section highlights tangible progress across three key areas: (1) advancing Opportunity Pathways, (2) strengthening enabling environments, and (3) driving systems shifts across communities.

OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS: Improving economic outcomes and increasing agency

As GOYN has refined its approach, Opportunity Pathways have emerged as key trademarks of place-based solutions, designed to connect youth to economic opportunities while building their agency and leadership skills. Unlike many youth employment programs, which often treat youth as passive recipients of services, GOYN's pathways are co-created with youth and tailored to local contexts. This ensures that solutions are not only relevant but also sustainable and scalable. By addressing both immediate economic needs and long-term systemic barriers, GOYN's pathways go beyond skill-building to create lasting change in the lives of OY and their communities.

To date, GOYN communities have identified 62 Opportunity Pathways that have proven integral to long-term strategies for systemic change. These pathways are classified into three major categories: Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Leadership. Each pathway is designed to meet the unique needs of OY, equipping them with the skills, resources, and support systems needed to thrive. The following pathway examples represent proven interventions designed for scale. While initial participant numbers reflect testing phases, each model is replicable across districts and sectors for widespread impact. For a deeper dive into these examples and more, see [Appendix D—Case studies: community pathways](#).

► Employment pathways

Employment pathways aim to connect and place youth into employment opportunities in growing sectors aligned with local investment interests, business needs, and market demand. These pathways focus on improving young people's employability through practical work exposure, technical training, and job preparedness programs. Additionally, employment pathways engage the private sector in innovative ways to better understand employers' needs, improve visibility of current and future opportunities, and encourage employers to better include and integrate OY into their workforce.

- » **Bogotá, Colombia:** the Quiero Ser Digital initiative has connected over 48,000 OY to digital careers, with 16,000 improving their skills and career plans.
- » **Mombasa, Kenya:** a dual vocational training program in hospitality and tourism has achieved a 70% employment rate, combining classroom instruction with work-based learning.
- » **Pune, India:** in partnership with five skilling partners and 12 employers to facilitate placements, Project Udaan trains and places youth in logistics jobs, with mentorship and awareness campaigns boosting youth interest in the sector.

► Entrepreneurship pathways

Distinct from many programs that target youth without considering the significant differences among aspiring entrepreneurs, these pathways help OY harness innovation and access self-employment opportunities through tailored skilling and support services, particularly in contexts where formal job opportunities are limited. Through partnerships with public and private sector allies, GOYN ensures that young entrepreneurs have access to financial services, digital tools, and mentorship, enabling them to build and scale their businesses.

- » **Rural India:** hyper-local “Business Ideas Compendiums” have supported over 1,000 youth-led businesses across a network of Youth Hubs, offering market analysis, business plans, and access to financial services, including gender-targeted resources to support women entrepreneurs in the local economy ([more information here](#)).
- » **Mexico City, Mexico:** the [Youth x Entrepreneurship platform](#) leverages AI to offer guidance, tools, and mentorship, strengthening over 50 projects and resourcing 460 young people with entrepreneurship skills to date.
- » **Tanga, Tanzania:** the Savings and Entrepreneurship pathway has trained OY to develop a savings mindset, resulting in the formation of business groups that have collectively saved approximately US\$10,000 and leading to the launch of innovative ventures, some of which have secured zero-interest government loans.

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT: Aarti Solanki (GOYN Barwani)

When Aarti lost her husband in 2022, she faced not only immense grief but also the urgent need to provide for her two young daughters. Living in Barwani, India with limited financial support, she turned to a key skill she had mastered—stitching and tailoring. Though she had previously taught women in her village to sew as a side income, she now needed something more sustainable. With GOYN's support, she secured a loan to open a saree shop, turning her skill into a sustainable business that quickly became a lifeline for her family.



Through GOYN's entrepreneurship pathway, Aarti gained essential business skills, including financial management and social media marketing. She credits a workshop in Mumbai as a turning point, helping her leverage platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook to expand her customer base. As her business flourished, so did her impact—women from neighboring villages began approaching her to learn stitching. Recognizing an opportunity to uplift others, Aarti expanded her shop to train and employ six women, giving them a path to financial independence. "I hope that the women I have trained will go on to train others," she says. Aarti is not just building a business—she is creating a movement of self-reliant women working toward a brighter future together.

► Leadership pathways

Many youth leadership programs focus on individual skill-building without addressing the structural barriers that limit youth participation in decision-making processes. GOYN's leadership pathways aim to shift that dynamic by creating space for OY to build confidence, find belonging, and engage meaningfully in shaping their communities. These pathways go beyond traditional mentorship models by fostering youth-led civic engagement and community development, positioning agency and identity as essential stepping stones—not just to employment, but to sustained social and economic inclusion. Like income-earning pathways, leadership pathways are adapted locally to maximize access and equip young people with the tools, networks, and support needed to understand themselves, define their aspirations, and take collective action.

- » **Mombasa, Kenya:** a mentorship and case management initiative has guided 1,650 young people through personalized career support, resulting in 246 securing formal employment, 394 starting businesses, and 286 returning to education.
- » **Urban India:** the Lighthouse Foundations Course supports OY to make informed life choices and develop the skills needed for improved employability, with 7,226 young people improving their career management skills and 1,013 accessing meaningful employment opportunities.
- » **Rural India:** the same Youth Hub network that supports entrepreneurship also functions as a critical leadership pathway. These community-embedded hubs provide career guidance, skill development, digital technologies and entrepreneurship support while serving as platforms for youth to develop leadership skills and engage in civic activities. Youth Hubs serve as one-stop centers for OY, engaging over 30,600 youth and facilitating 2,500 formal job placements.



At the GOYN convening, I witnessed the principle of connection in action. Rather than being passive recipients of interventions, Opportunity Youth leaders were co-creators of solutions deeply rooted in their own communities. Whether tackling unemployment, education, or mental health, these young leaders were not building programs but ecosystems of support.

— Gautam John (CEO, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies)

► Pathways progress

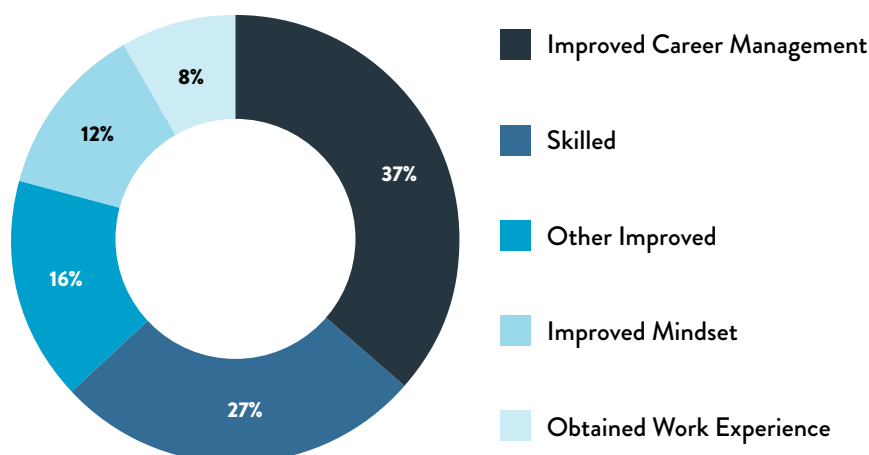
GOYN's impact on Opportunity Youth can be categorized into three key areas: Connected, Improved, and Transformed. These categories reflect the progression of OY from initial engagement to long-term economic stability and leadership.

Connected

GOYN has actively engaged over **630,000 OY** across 15 of its 17 communities through workshops, events, initiatives, and online platforms. GOYN's extensive partnerships with local organizations and public and private sector entities enable it to reach youth through direct and indirect programming. This engagement serves as a critical entry point, drawing OY into a collaborative ecosystem designed to provide both immediate resources and long-term support.

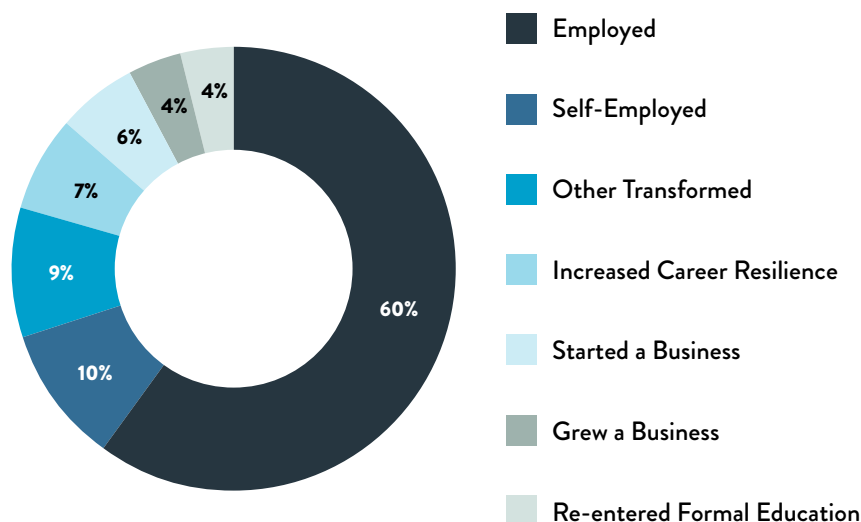
Improved

Through employability, skill-building, and agency-building initiatives, GOYN has supported nearly **220,000 OY** to improve their readiness for the world of work. Programs include mentoring, technical skills training, financial literacy, and partnerships with vocational institutes and private sector employers. Additionally, financial inclusion efforts such as savings and investment workshops enable youth to manage personal finances effectively, further supporting long-term economic stability.



Transformed

GOYN's work has enabled over **84,000 OY** to access stable and dignified livelihoods through formal job placements, self-employment opportunities, or structured education. Through these Opportunity Pathways, youth secure livelihoods that meet and sometimes exceed local minimum wage standards, paving the way for sustainable economic mobility. In parallel, community-specific programs promote entrepreneurship and reduce critical barriers through childcare, transportation, and psychosocial support.



ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS: Strengthening ecosystem collaboration

GOYN's approach to expanding economic opportunities for OY is built on three interconnected pillars: mobilization and coordination, youth partnership and advocacy, and resources and tools. These activities work together to strengthen local employment ecosystems, drive multi-sector collaboration, and ensure that youth are at the center of designing and implementing solutions. By aligning these efforts, GOYN has helped communities create more inclusive labor markets, enhance youth agency, and build sustainable economic opportunities.

This section highlights key successes and lessons learned from GOYN's approach, showcasing how these elements have contributed to community-level change. By fostering collaboration, amplifying youth voices, and leveraging innovative tools, GOYN has created enabling environments that not only benefit OY but also transform the communities in which they live.

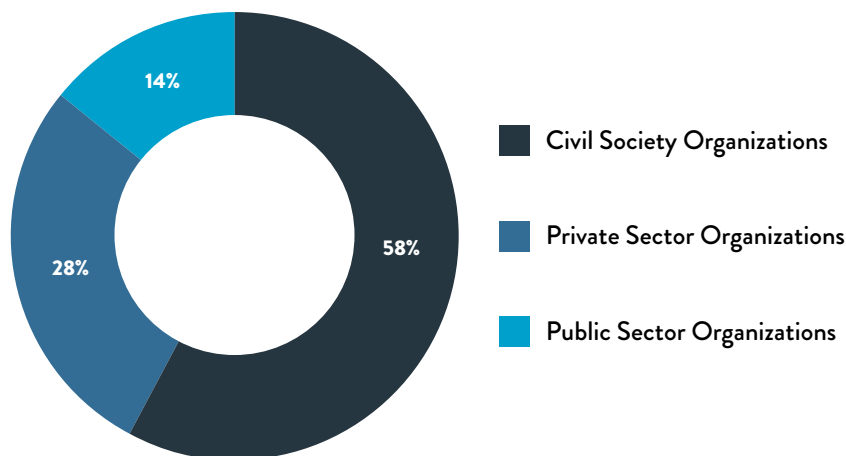
► Mobilization & coordination

From the outset, each GOYN community builds the structures necessary to foster collaboration among all youth employment stakeholders, including OY themselves. Inspired by the [collective impact movement](#), GOYN's '[Collaborative Infrastructure](#)' includes steering committees (or "Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Groups"), Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs), and technical working groups. These Collaboratives bring together senior stakeholders from the public, private, and civil society sectors, alongside OY, to co-design strategies, share progress, and provide feedback on interventions. By elevating youth voices and ensuring diverse representation, GOYN creates a foundation for inclusive and sustainable solutions.

Key successes

Strong collaborative impact

GOYN Collaboratives have grown significantly, with 430 organizations represented worldwide by the end of 2024, including 115 actively engaged in steering committees. These Collaboratives reflect a diversity of stakeholders: 58% civil society, 28% private sector and 14% public sector. While the average size of a GOYN Collaborative is 44 members, this ranges from over 100 members in São Paulo and Bogotá to smaller Collaboratives of around 5 members in some regions. This diversity reflects the adaptability of GOYN's approach, with some communities achieving impact through deep, localized partnerships rather than large memberships (e.g., in rural India).



Moreover, a 2024 survey of 204 GOYN Collaborative partners showed that 72% of responding organizations thought that GOYN had a positive impact on the youth employment ecosystem, 82% believed that GOYN enjoyed a good or very good reputation in the community, and 87% saw positive value in being part of the GOYN Collaborative.

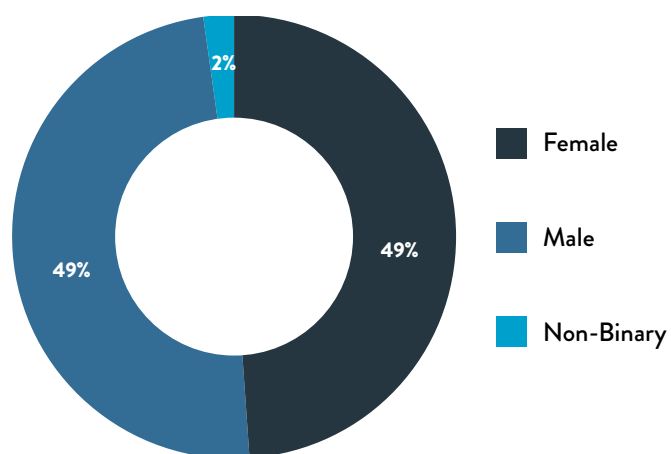


Young entrepreneurs in Raichur, India showcase their crochet products at a local pop-up event. (Photo: Head Held High Foundation)

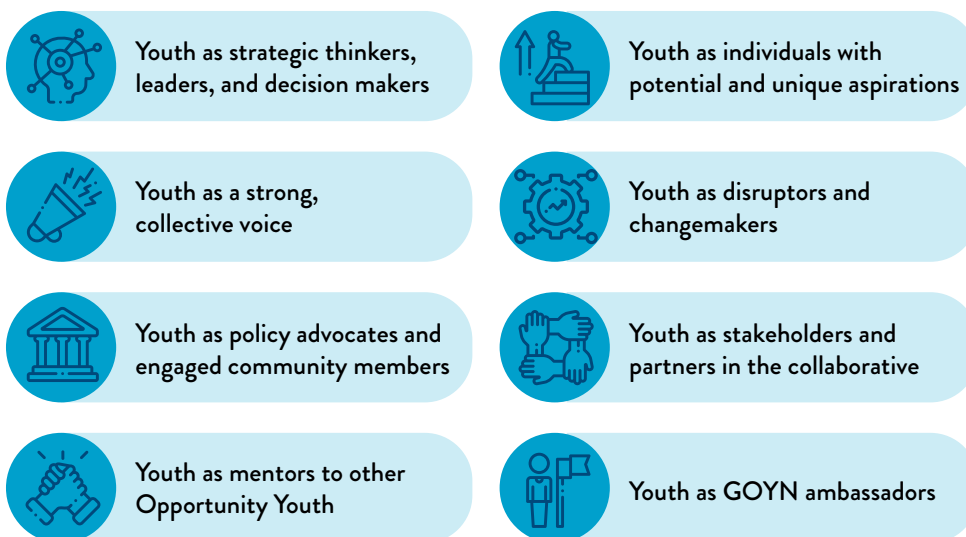
These results reflect the strength of GOYN's collaborative infrastructure and the trust built among stakeholders. By fostering mutual accountability and trust, GOYN addresses power imbalances, strengthens feedback loops, and ensures long-term sustainability, even amid political changes.

Youth-centered advisory model

All GOYN Collaboratives include a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) made of current or former OY in charge of advising on GOYN's strategy and participating in the design and implementation of GOYN interventions. By the end of 2024, there were **174 GOYN YAG members** worldwide, of which 49% were female. These youth leaders are involved in co-designing and implementing GOYN's agenda, ensuring that youth voices are at the center of decision-making.



This youth-centered approach has led to greater community responsiveness to OY needs and increased youth agency. In 2022 guided discussions, YAG members identified eight key roles they play within GOYN:





We are committed, ambitious young leaders dedicated to advancing our country's development. Through innovative, socially impactful projects, we aim to support those in need while promoting inclusion. By engaging with the GOYN initiative, we are confident in our ability to make a meaningful difference and achieve our mission.

– Demba Wade (GOYN Thiès YAG President), Serigne Ndiaye (YAG Deputy Secretary) & Adama Diop (YAG Head of Communications)

Improving ecosystem capacity

Part of GOYN's role in improving youth employment ecosystems is to build the capacity of stakeholders and organizations to support OY. GOYN does this in two main ways:

1. GOYN invests in research and data collection to provide accurate, hyper-local insights into OY's challenges and aspirations, informing better policy- and decision-making. Anchor Partners leverage these learning products to support awareness-raising, improve strategies and program design, identify capacity-building needs, and design targeted outreach campaigns for specific OY groups. For more details on these learning products, see [Thought leadership](#).
2. GOYN builds ecosystem capacity by providing training and development opportunities for Collaborative members, with approaches varying across communities. For example, GOYN São Paulo's 'GOYN Territories' strategy exemplifies a structured approach, bringing partners together monthly for joint training sessions with guest speakers. Other communities, such as GOYN Mombasa and Bogotá, use workshops and training sessions to build partner capacity, while technical working groups and committees (e.g., MEL committee in Mexico City, entrepreneurship working group in Barranquilla) facilitate knowledge exchange. GOYN events also serve as platforms to share data, evidence, and insights, further refining partners' understanding of OY and their ecosystems.

As a result of this capacity-building approach, 91% of the Collaborative members surveyed in 2024 perceived that the collaborative infrastructure had a positive impact on their organization's development and capacity.

Facilitating partnerships

An important role of GOYN is to facilitate partnerships among stakeholders in the community, thereby enabling organizations to amplify their impact, providing OY with more coordinated offerings, and improving overall ecosystem efficiency by reducing duplication of efforts. Examples include:

- » **Mexico City, Mexico** and **Pune, India:** GOYN developed websites and platforms that provide stakeholders with visibility into the activities of other youth-serving organizations in the community.

- » **Mombasa, Kenya:** GOYN established a Human Resources Network that links 10,000 OY to employment opportunities through collaboration with employers, youth employment stakeholders, and youth. This partnership is led by a coordinated secretariat including GOYN Mombasa, Gen-U, UN Kenya, and UNICEF.
- » **Ramgarh, India:** GOYN facilitated a partnership between the Jharkhand Department of Labor and Employment and the nonprofit Head Held High to provide career orientation services to students of industrial training institutes.

Lessons learned

Effective practices for collaboration

Over its years of implementation, GOYN has identified several effective practices for fostering place-based collaboration, including:

- » Implementing a structured stakeholder engagement process which brings together stakeholders to define a common vision and design the local GOYN strategy.
- » Hosting regular and diversified collaboration spaces, such as steering committee meetings, working group meetings, stakeholder engagement meetings, broad collaborative/network events, and smaller learning meetings/circles for specific projects.
- » Leveraging the respective strengths of partners to increase impact at scale, along with regular public recognition of partners.
- » Constant and relevant information-sharing with Collaborative members.
- » Enabling efficient decision-making and facilitating greater peer-to-peer collaboration by creating more sophisticated governance structures as GOYN Collaboratives grow.

Ensuring accountability and sustainability

As GOYN Collaboratives mature, it is important that other local stakeholders beyond the Anchor Partner take greater ownership of strategy and activities. While most GOYN communities are still in early stages with Anchor Partners leading collaborative-building efforts, some—like GOYN Mexico City—are establishing structures to enable this shift, such as a collaborative monitoring and evaluation platform for shared impact reporting. Similar efforts are under way in Bogotá and Barranquilla, where GOYN is tracking member contributions to collaborative sustainability. Nevertheless, challenges persist, including maintaining member commitment, ensuring equal stakeholder engagement (especially from the private sector), navigating local power dynamics, and upholding political neutrality. Since these challenges require ongoing attention, collaborative-building is never truly “done” but demands an intentional and sustained effort to foster cohesion, a shared vision, and ultimately, a collective identity.

► Youth partnership & advocacy

GOYN has made considerable progress in amplifying youth voice and engaging Opportunity Youth as leaders within their communities. Beyond skill development, GOYN partners with OY to lead civic engagement efforts, conduct community research, and foster peer learning. This engagement has elevated youth perspectives in policy-making and increased community responsiveness to OY needs.

Moreover, GOYN continues to establish itself as a global leader in advancing youth-driven solutions to systemic employment challenges. Through initiatives like the Youth Innovation Fund (YIF), annual global convenings, and representation in platforms such as the NATO Youth Summit and the Global Youth Economic Opportunities (GYEO) Summit, GOYN ensures that OY are at the center of global discourse. Unlike conventional youth engagement models that often require English proficiency and offer little compensation, GOYN reshapes this approach by prioritizing equity and youth leadership in decision-making spaces. See [GOYN's Learning Brief: Youth Engagement](#) for more information about GOYN's approach to youth partnership.

Key successes

Youth-led research and civic engagement

- » OY play active roles in policy discussions, especially in cities like Mombasa, Bogotá, Rio de Janeiro, and Mexico City, where youth-led data collection and analysis informed recommendations to be adopted by local governments.
- » In Ramgarh, Barwani, Bogotá, and São Paulo, OY conduct research on structural justice issues, contributing to ecosystem mapping efforts and highlighting critical barriers faced by their peers to drive community-specific policy changes.
- » In Thiès, Mombasa, and Pune, OY lead research and awareness campaigns on mental health, advocating for increased access to services and resources to support their well-being and success in livelihood pathways.
- » Public events and awareness campaigns in Barranquilla, Bogotá, and Mexico City allow OY to share their stories with a wider audience, raising public understanding of youth contributions to promote employability and entrepreneurship.

Youth Innovation Fund (YIF)

The YIF is a cornerstone of GOYN's strategy to partner with youth as leaders and innovators in addressing local challenges. Since its launch, the fund has supported 171 youth-led projects across GOYN communities by providing funding, mentorship, and technical tools to turn ideas into impactful solutions. Utilizing the [YIF Design Thinking Toolkit](#), youth leaders navigate problem identification, ideation, prototyping, and implementation to ensure that their innovations are locally led and sustainable.

In 2024, GOYN concluded its third round of YIF projects across 11 communities, supporting 67 initiatives that tackled barriers to economic mobility and equity. By prioritizing youth from underrepresented backgrounds, the fund fosters agency and ownership, positioning OY as drivers of systemic change. Additionally, YIF projects inform the assessment and evolution of Opportunity Pathways, helping communities adapt strategies to align with OY aspirations.

To explore youth-led projects, access resources, or learn more about the YIF approach, visit goyn.org/youth-resources/youth-innovation-fund.

Global convenings

GOYN's annual global convenings bring together hundreds of OY, allies, and global partners to strengthen connections, deepen learning, and showcase youth leadership. These gatherings fully integrate youth voices to ensure their lived experiences and innovations shape the agenda. At convenings in Bogotá, Mombasa, and Pune, OY comprised nearly 70% of attendees and over 50% of presenters, highlighting GOYN's commitment to youth leadership.

These convenings serve as dynamic platforms for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and collaboration. Participants engage in panel discussions, masterclasses, and community visits, exploring topics such as dignified livelihoods, scalable impact, and authentic youth partnership. Enriched by creative performances and cultural exchanges, convenings cultivate a global community, driving innovative solutions and amplifying the power of youth-led change.

“

Being able to access and participate in [the 2024 Global Convening], sitting at the same table as influential leaders and having access to them increased my hope for my future as a young person even more. Seeing more experienced people concerned about our future and moving collectively and together with young people to break this generational conflict made me very happy.

Many people, like me, grew up in a place where society does not care about those who are black, from the favelas or poor, having hope is a treasure within the periphery. GOYN and CEDAPS [GOYN's Rio de Janeiro Anchor Partner] gave me space to voice my opinion. I am bringing that hope back to Brazil.

— Maria Santos (YAG Member, GOYN Rio de Janeiro)

Lessons learned

Accessible and targeted resources

Tools like the Youth Innovation Fund Design Thinking Toolkit and Equity Leadership Program (ELP) are instrumental in guiding OY's project development efforts and underscore the need for practical, accessible resources that equip youth to drive meaningful initiatives. GOYN also reduces barriers to participation by translating core resources into local languages and providing simultaneous interpretation services during global convenings, YAG calls, and other meetings involving young people—ensuring full access and engagement across the network. Ongoing training and mentorship have enabled OY to step into decision-making roles within YAGs, reinforcing the importance of structured capacity development to sustain youth leadership initiatives.

Global connectivity and peer learning

Bi-monthly exchanges across communities have strengthened global connections among OY leaders and reinforced shared learning and unity within the network. Peer learning has played a critical role in building youth agency, demonstrating the value of a global youth network in fostering solidarity and collective action.

Authentic Youth Partnership (AYP)

GOYN's AYP approach, coined in 2024, builds on the Positive Youth Development framework and insights from OY, who identified dignity, hope, and agency as key outcomes of GOYN engagement. A newly developed AYP capacity-building guide consolidates GOYN's toolkits, curricula, and best practices while outlining the characteristics of effective adult allies and the transferable skills that support OY in both civic engagement and the workplace.

Elevating OY on global platforms

GOYN strategically amplifies the voices of youth on global stages like the NATO Youth Summit, the GYEO Summit, and UNGA side events, partnering with them as changemakers and demonstrating their expertise in addressing the challenges they face. These platforms shift narratives around OY and highlight their potential to influence global policy and practice.

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT: Santiago Agudelo Murcia (GOYN Bogotá)

Santiago has always been passionate about creating positive change in his community but wasn't sure how to take action. That changed when he joined GOYN Bogotá's Youth Advisory Group, where he found a space to develop his leadership skills. Selected for the YAG Fellowship, a 16-week intensive program, Santiago participated in training sessions on public speaking, teamwork, problem-solving, and human-centered design, all of which helped him develop concrete strategies for addressing the challenges faced by young people in Bogotá. More than just a learning experience, the fellowship gave him the confidence to see himself as a changemaker with the ability to influence policies and programs that impact youth.



A pivotal moment in Santiago's journey was his exchange with GOYN Barranquilla, where he connected with other youth leaders and gained insights into tackling youth unemployment and civic engagement. Seeing how young people in Barranquilla were implementing solutions in their own communities broadened his perspective and gave him practical ideas to bring back to his community. His leadership also took him to GOYN's Global Convening in Pune, India, where he co-facilitated a masterclass on the Positive Youth Development framework. Sharing his experiences on a global stage reinforced his belief in the power of youth engagement. Today, Santiago is more motivated than ever to use his knowledge and skills to create lasting opportunities for young people in Bogotá and beyond.

Advancing equity

Since its inception, GOYN's commitment to equity has focused on identifying and addressing structural barriers that impact the most disadvantaged OY. Through ecosystem mapping, civic engagement, and community-led initiatives, GOYN has advanced equity and accessibility across its global network. However, this work has also surfaced challenges and learning opportunities. Early consultations highlighted gaps in addressing the needs of LGBTQIA+ youth, immigrant youth, and youth impacted by the carceral system, underscoring the need for more explicit efforts to support these groups.

Stakeholder and youth feedback have been essential in refining GOYN's equity strategies, helping them remain responsive to evolving needs and community contexts. Lessons highlight the importance of adaptive strategies and culturally sensitive approaches to bridging gaps and creating truly inclusive pathways for OY. As a result of these efforts, 2024 stakeholder surveys indicate that GOYN's approach is widely recognized as effective in addressing structural barriers, with most stakeholders acknowledging its role in expanding opportunities for OY.

Equity Leadership Program

GOYN works to break down long-standing barriers that prevent youth from accessing livelihoods and economic opportunities. A prime example is the [Equity Leadership Program](#), launched in 2023 with support from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and in collaboration with Global Nomads Group. Designed by young leaders from 10 GOYN communities, the peer-designed curriculum ensures inclusivity, accessibility, and practical application of equity concepts.

To date, over 300 OY from 14 communities have participated in the program, leading equity-centered initiatives tailored to their local contexts. Participants have promoted inclusive hiring practices, launched youth-led civic engagement efforts, and taken on leadership roles. In Tanga, Tanzania and Raichur, India, Equity Leaders have run for local public office, ensuring OY voices are represented in policymaking and demonstrating the program's potential for community impact.

Equity and structural justice framework

To deepen its commitment to equity and accountability, GOYN has integrated comprehensive equity metrics into its global impact framework, allowing communities to track and analyze progress in shifting perceptions, policies, and practices affecting OY. The metrics, combined with the [Equity & Structural Justice Framework](#), anchor GOYN's initiatives, offering communities a shared vision and practical steps to advance equity. The framework, introduced in 2022, has been socialized across GOYN communities to align local strategies with global goals, with a focus on changing OY narratives and driving systemic policy and investment shifts. However, implementation challenges in certain cultural contexts reinforced the need for flexible strategies to ensure meaningful progress in diverse settings.

Equity in community

- » Efforts in Thiès ensured that youth with disabilities and other marginalized groups were included from the outset, promoting an inclusive approach to YAG governance.
- » In Mombasa and Raichur, ELP-trained youth leaders have successfully reduced water pollution, installed drainage systems, and improved sanitation —addressing public health barriers to economic opportunity.
- » In Mexico City, OY used storytelling and music to raise awareness of structural inequalities, engaging the public and policymakers through a major media campaign that included a [video](#) and a song produced by [Yo te la canto Fest](#).
- » In Barwani and Raichur, youth led equity-focused career guidance efforts, ensuring gender-responsive pathways for young women in traditionally underrepresented fields.

► Resources & tools

GOYN recognizes that sustainable and impactful youth employment programs require innovative financing models and cutting-edge data and technology tools. Historically, youth development programs have relied heavily on grants and lacked the infrastructure to leverage data effectively, limiting their scalability and long-term impact. By prioritizing diversified financing and data-driven approaches, GOYN is transforming how youth employment programs are funded, implemented, and scaled, creating a more equitable ecosystem for OY.

Key successes

Diversified financing models in community

From the start, GOYN has looked into options to diversify the financing sources for youth employment activities, with the goal to improve their long-term sustainability and bring in new lines of funding. In 2023, GOYN published the [FinYouth report](#) in partnership with GDI and CRS, which provides a comprehensive review of existing financing mechanisms for youth employment and entrepreneurship; identifies effective and proven financing models; and recommends products for stakeholders to launch and scale in their markets. As a result, a majority of GOYN Anchor Partners have developed or are in the process of developing different financing models for their activities, including:

- » Results-based financing, where payments to skilling providers are tied to outcomes (Bogotá, eThekweni, Mexico City);
- » Fee-for-service models, such as São Paulo's social immersion experience for employers to engage with OY—[more information here](#);
- » Skilling programs co-funded by employers and civil society organizations (Mexico City);
- » Income-share agreements, allowing youth to pay for training only after securing jobs above a minimum income threshold (Bogotá, Mexico City);
- » Entrepreneurship financing models such as social investing and affordable lending platforms (rural India);
- » Funding raised through the Social Stock Exchange (rural India, with other Anchor Partners seeking to list programs in the near future).

Data-driven tools and platforms

Across the network, GOYN communities have consistently invested in data and technology tools to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their work, including:

- » Collaborative geo-map platforms that enable youth and stakeholders to identify available services within their communities (Bogotá, Mexico, Rio, eThekweni);

- » Direct messaging tools, such as WhatsApp chatbots and SMS platforms, for mass outreach (São Paulo);
- » Youth-facing digital portals and websites that centralize access to opportunities (Bogotá's DigiO, Barranquilla, Pune);
- » AI-driven tools, e.g.: job-matching algorithms (Mombasa), ChatGPT-integrated platforms (Mexico City), youth services and learning management systems (rural India), and other products in São Paulo, Bogotá, eThekweni, Tanga, Pune, and Raichur;
- » Data dashboards and databases for OY analysis (Mexico City, Bogotá, Mombasa, Thiès, Ramgarh, Barwani);
- » Collaborative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) platforms for impact tracking (Mexico City, São Paulo);
- » Pathway-specific tools for implementation and tracking (Mombasa's case management system, Mexico City's entrepreneurship platform, and Ramgarh & Barwani's business transaction tracking tools);
- » Mobile solutions improving accessibility (CommCare in Thiès, business tracking apps in Ramgarh & Barwani).

Scalability and replication

Many tools are being replicated across GOYN communities and, where applicable, with other stakeholders as open-source solutions, generating economies of scale. For example, in 2024, GOYN started supporting the expansion of the Mexico City [Youth x Entrepreneurship platform](#) in three additional communities.

Lessons learned

While GOYN has achieved significant progress in diversifying financing and leveraging data and technology, key challenges remain:

Understanding and implementing financing models

Many communities and funders lack awareness of financing models beyond grants, making adoption difficult. The design process can also be costly and time-consuming, and many GOYN partners may not be able to dedicate sufficient resources towards these efforts. To address this, GOYN provides technical support and a quarterly Community of Practice, helping partners build capacity and successfully implement alternative financing models. Experience has shown that where these models are being implemented, they are usually very successful and can be used to demonstrate impact and inspire other partners to adopt similar models. For example, the use of results-based financing models by GOYN Bogotá has led to the issuance of an outcomes-based contract by the city of Bogotá aiming to place 22,000 young people into employment.

Access to data and effective strategies

Access to hyper-local macroeconomic data is essential for setting placement targets, informing training content, designing interventions, and guiding civic engagement strategies. Additionally, leveraging multiple channels to reach OY is essential to ensure accessibility and reduce connectivity barriers. Digital tools like social media platforms and online web/mobile job-matching platforms must be complemented by offline strategies such as in-person events, hubs, and job boards in trusted community spaces to maximize engagement.

Still, capacity gaps in data analysis, platform development, and AI strategy persist, making it difficult to scale data-driven decision-making. GOYN addresses this through targeted advisory support and its Data & Technology Community of Practice. Furthermore, the fragmentation of costly, proprietary platforms and inconsistent data standards create inefficiencies. To counter this, GOYN prioritizes open-source, scalable solutions to reduce duplication, lower development costs, and enhance collaboration across the network.

The road ahead

Looking forward, GOYN is transforming its digital infrastructure through three strategic upgrades: transforming GOYN's online Learning Lab into a dynamic, partner-driven repository; developing a global data dashboard with privacy-centric unique identifiers to track youth journeys across interventions; and implementing API integrations to automate network-wide impact tracking. Together, these advancements will shift GOYN's measurement framework from isolated program metrics to continuous youth journeys—turning real-time data into actionable insights that lead to greater opportunity for OY everywhere.

SYSTEMS SHIFTS:

Building more inclusive labor markets and communities

GOYN's approach is rooted in the understanding that transforming individual lives requires changing the systems that limit young people's access to opportunity. This long-term, generational perspective ensures interventions are built for scale and designed to compound over time, addressing structural barriers through sustained collaboration rather than isolated projects. By influencing public policy, promoting inclusive business practices, shifting perceptions of OY, and mobilizing resources, GOYN drives systemic change to build more inclusive labor markets and communities. This comprehensive approach ensures that youth priorities are embedded in community agendas, creating sustainable and equitable pathways for OY. For a deeper dive into these examples, see [Appendix E—Case studies: systems change](#).

► Influencing public policy

GOYN works to embed youth priorities into local governance structures through targeted interventions, youth-centered civic engagement, and cross-sector partnerships. The examples below highlight GOYN's role in driving policy reforms that improve youth economic outcomes and enhance access to resources at the community level:

- » **Thiès, Senegal:** partnerships with the National Agency for Entrepreneurship (DER/FJ) and the National Agency for Vocational Training (3FPT) have connected OY to vital resources, enabling them to enter the workforce or start businesses aligned with local market needs.
- » **Ramgarh and Barwani, India:** Youth Hubs, established in partnership with the National Rural Livelihoods Mission, provide safe spaces for career counseling and skilling. Additionally, these hubs enable OY to participate in local governance initiatives and actively shape their communities while gaining essential skills for their futures.
- » **São Paulo, Brazil:** GOYN's participation in the City Council's Youth Subcommittee led to the creation of youth coordination bodies, a Municipal Youth Fund, and scholarship programs for underserved communities.
- » **Mombasa, Kenya:** GOYN successfully advocated for the inclusion of youth priorities in the County Integrated Development Plan, increasing the youth affairs budget and combating negative stereotypes ([more information here](#)).
- » **Bogotá, Colombia:** GOYN collaborated with the city's Secretary of Education to develop multi-sector career pathway guides, reaching 45,000 students and embedding career exploration into the school system. Moreover, in 2024, GOYN deepened its partnership with the public sector, joining as a lead partner in a program for the Social Integration Office of Bogotá aiming to impact 150,000 OY over the next four years.

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT: Elizabeth Kipingu (GOYN Tanga)

In Tanga, Tanzania, Elizabeth is proving that young people deserve a place in decision-making spaces. Her commitment to inclusion led her to learn sign language, ensuring that no one is left behind. As secretary of the GOYN Tanga Youth Advisory Group, she has strengthened youth advocacy efforts, built regional connections with young leaders in Mombasa, and championed leadership development opportunities. She played a key role in integrating the Equity Leadership Program into the Tanga Youth Forum, a government-led platform connecting youth with policymakers. She also represented her community globally at the GOYN convening in Pune, India, where she was hired as the official Swahili interpreter and shared insights from Tanga on an international stage.

Elizabeth's work is part of a growing movement of youth leadership in Tanga. Alongside her peers Patrick Ruben and Ali Mndema—both YAG members and ELP graduates—she is breaking down barriers for young people in governance. While Patrick and Ali ran for elected ward-level positions, Elizabeth has worked to create pathways for youth partnership with government institutions, ensuring that young voices influence policies. Through civic engagement and collaboration, Elizabeth is helping to create a future where youth are not only included in conversations but are leading the way in shaping their communities.



► Promoting inclusive business practices

GOYN's collaboration with the private sector is essential to building inclusive labor markets for OY by engaging employers to adopt practices that make workplaces more accessible and supportive for OY. The examples highlighted below illustrate how GOYN's partnership with the private sector enables employers to see the value in investing in OY and paves the way for sustained impact:

- » **São Paulo, Brazil:** the “Elevado À Potência” (Elevated to Power) social immersion program brings employers into OY communities, fostering understanding and improving hiring practices. GOYN also developed an “Opportunity Youth-friendly” classification with the Great Places to Work Institute ([more information here](#)).
- » **eThekweni, South Africa:** GOYN partnered with the Global Business Services (GBS) sector and BPESA (Business Process Enabling South Africa) to invest in OY and establish inclusive hiring requirements, creating 3,000 new jobs and developing online learning content to prepare OY for employment.
- » **Pune, India:** job drives and workshops aimed at facilitating dialogue between employers and youth have connected 1,700 youth with employment opportunities to date, with an additional 7,000 engaged in skill-building activities with private sector partners.
- » **Mexico City, Mexico:** the “[Empresas con la Juventud](#)” (Companies with Youth) movement promotes inclusive hiring practices, such as competency-based hiring, non-discriminatory policies, and internship programs, with 70 companies certified under the initiative.

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Young people are not the future, they are our present and that is why it is important to start opening up career paths for them so that they can begin to build their working life, gain experience, and form their own criteria and work context.

— Martin Hernandez (operational manager at La Docena and employment partner with GOYN Mexico City)

► Shifting perceptions of Opportunity Youth

GOYN is actively working to change the narrative surrounding OY by addressing misconceptions and promoting positive perceptions of their assets and potential. These efforts are designed to propel changes not only in mindset but also in the behaviors, practices, and policies of stakeholders, opening doors to new economic opportunities for OY. Key efforts include.

- » **Barwani, India:** GOYN developed hyper-local IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) materials and gender-sensitive entrepreneurship modules to support young women entrepreneurs and improve community acceptance.

- » **Mombasa, Kenya:** GOYN Mombasa’s #BadiliSimulizi (“Change the Narrative”) radio campaign reached 45,000 listeners, showcasing OY as valuable employees, entrepreneurs, and civic leaders through stories of resilience, leadership, and economic contributions.
- » **Bogotá and Barranquilla, Colombia:** GOYN facilitated workshops and media campaigns to challenge stereotypes and move away from the term “ninis” (a term implying “neither studying nor working”). This shift reframes OY as individuals facing systemic barriers rather than as unmotivated.

Global narrative change learnings

GOYN’s efforts to shift perceptions of OY have revealed critical lessons in advancing narrative change. A key first step is challenging harmful terms like NEETs (not in education, employment, or training) and “ninis,” which reinforce negative stereotypes, and reframing OY as individuals facing structural barriers rather than as lacking skills or motivation. Showcasing real stories of OY as capable contributors through data-driven campaigns and community-led storytelling has been crucial in changing perceptions and strengthening relationships with stakeholders. Tailoring messaging to local contexts (such as using “productive inclusion” to resonate with employers) has improved OY engagement, while visibility in business-focused media has amplified these efforts, driving systemic change. Together, these strategies position OY as valuable assets in the economic and social development of a community.

► Mobilizing resources

GOYN’s partnership development efforts—both local and global—have been instrumental in promoting meaningful change for youth across its communities. By attracting and renewing high-impact funding, GOYN has amplified its ability to create place-based systems shifts that improve outcomes for young people.

Local mobilization

Anchor Partners have collectively mobilized over US\$16.5 million in local funding, catalyzing initiatives tailored to the unique needs of their regions. Examples include:

- » **Bogotá, Colombia:** GOYN developed innovative financing models to support OY in accessing digital sector jobs. The Quiero Ser Digital Fund and the Digital Evolution Fund have improved job placement rates and expanded opportunities for OY, showcasing how localized financial solutions can increase access to sustainable livelihoods.
- » **São Paulo, Brazil:** GOYN’s research during the pandemic influenced the municipality to establish a \$3 million entrepreneurship fund for underserved communities. This fund was established to train 10,000 young entrepreneurs, emphasizing the power of data-driven civic engagement in shaping public sector investments.
- » **Mombasa, Kenya:** OY policy champions influenced local government policies, resulting in a multi-million dollar increase in the county’s youth affairs budget, alongside expanded gender-related funding and sports allocations. These efforts highlight GOYN’s effectiveness in leveraging partnerships to align policies with youth priorities.

Global mobilization

GOYN's impact is made possible by a unique coalition of funders who share a long-term vision for generational change in youth economic opportunity. Since its inception, GOYN has mobilized over US\$26 million in global funding, catalyzed by an initial US\$5 million investment from Prudential Financial Inc. and US\$2 million in pro bono support from Accenture. In 2023, GOYN secured its largest single grant to date: an US\$8.2 million, three-year agreement with Fondation Botnar. This partnership supports GOYN's expansion into new communities while strengthening its peer-supported model for network growth.

By leveraging these resources, GOYN has deepened its impact in existing communities, expanded into new regions, and created scalable, sustainable pathways for youth to thrive. GOYN acknowledges the unwavering support of its global partners, including Prudential Financial Inc., Vitol Foundation, Accenture, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Western Union Foundation, Fondation Botnar, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Catholic Relief Services—whose multi-year commitments reflect a shared belief in GOYN's place-based, youth-centered approach to systemic change.



Young entrepreneurs connect at GOYN Tanga's 2024 launch. Youth vendors showcase and sell their crafts to peers, turning creativity into livelihood opportunities. (Photo: Tanga Yetu)

GLOBAL LEARNING NETWORK

Beyond its local impact, GOYN operates as a global network that fosters learning, knowledge-sharing, and thought leadership to accelerate systemic change for OY. Central to GOYN's approach is the belief that shared learning and innovation are essential for creating lasting impact. By aligning local action with global insights, GOYN creates a dynamic ecosystem where communities learn from one another, refine strategies, and expand their influence. This section highlights how GOYN's learning network enhances local efforts, builds evidence-based practices, and contributes to the global conversation on youth economic opportunity.

LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

A major benefit of GOYN's local and global network is the opportunity for communities to learn from one another and benefit from each other's experiences. GOYN's learning agenda focuses on testing and evaluating models for change, responding to knowledge gaps, refining approaches, building an evidence base, and contributing to the global body of work on youth economic opportunity. Key priorities include:

- ▶ **Faster scale-up:** developing tools and approaches to accelerate the adoption of the GOYN model in new communities.
- ▶ **Dissemination of best practices:** sharing research and innovative solutions across GOYN communities and beyond.
- ▶ **Practitioner knowledge-sharing:** promoting collaboration and innovation among stakeholders.

Learning is primarily driven by Anchor Partners who share experiences through regular global calls, quarterly communities of practice, and the annual GOYN global convening. In 2024, 87% of Anchor Partners reported increased knowledge of effective youth employment interventions, and 93% reported enhanced capacity through engagement with GOYN.

To facilitate peer-to-peer learning, GOYN has also built the [GOYN Learning Lab](#), a dynamic suite of tools, methods, and training resources developed for and by communities across the network. This repository includes comprehensive “how-to” guides, tutorials, templates, and examples of best practices, supporting the start-up and evolution of new GOYN communities.

GOYN's commitment to shared learning also extends to learning partner communities, an emerging model designed to engage regions that are actively exploring alignment with the GOYN approach. Haiti, GOYN's first learning partner community, has participated in global learning activities, including communities of practice and knowledge exchanges, and has begun leveraging GOYN resources to inform local efforts. This phased model provides an accessible entry point for emerging communities and is being replicated as GOYN explores expansion into new geographies.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP: Local insights, global impact

GOYN's commitment to learning and knowledge-sharing has positioned it as an innovator and thought leader in the global youth development space. At the community level, GOYN facilitates learning, information-sharing, and capacity development among Collaborative members, ensuring interventions are informed by data and the voices of OY. In 2023, all GOYN communities developed at least one publicly shared learning or research product, with 50% producing multiple outputs. These include ecosystem mapping reports, market studies, impact evaluations, surveys, and policy recommendations, all designed in partnership with OY.

Community-led learning and capacity building

- ▶ **Bogotá and Barranquilla, Colombia:** annual reports on the state of OY, based on large-scale surveys, are widely shared to influence strategies and decision-making.
- ▶ **São Paulo, Brazil:** a [report](#) on the structural barriers faced by OY in the city has been presented at collaborative events to shape policies and practices. Similar reports were developed by GOYN in [Ramgarh](#) and [Pune](#), India.
- ▶ **Mombasa, Kenya:** GOYN collaborated with UN-Habitat and the county government to design the [Mombasa Urban Monitoring Framework](#), with OY leading field data collection. The findings are now informing city planning and local decision-making.
- ▶ **Rural India:** the [State of Rural Youth Employment](#) surveyed over 5,000 OY, highlighting barriers to workforce participation and providing actionable insights to improve access to dignified work.
- ▶ **Mexico City, Mexico:** partnering with CLAP, GOYN developed the [Apunta report](#), an online tool analyzing over 140,000 job vacancies. The report identified high-potential job pathways for OY, informing workforce development and civic engagement strategies.

Sharing insights and driving innovation

At the global level, GOYN builds on local insights to develop thought leadership products that share best practices and evidence-based strategies with practitioners and stakeholders worldwide. Examples include:

- ▶ **Ecosystem Mapping Learning Brief:** a detailed overview of GOYN's ecosystem mapping methodology, informed by experiences across all communities.

- ▶ GOYN Case Studies Series: deep dives into specific challenges faced by OY within a community ([São Paulo](#), [Rural India](#), [Mombasa](#)).
- ▶ [FinYouth](#): a landscape report on scalable financing solutions for youth employment and entrepreneurship, featuring over 150 examples and 11 key recommendations to develop and replicate.
- ▶ [Taking the Economy to the People](#): a thought leadership report advocating for a place-based approach to connect rural youth in India to economic opportunities.

Key drivers of learning

GOYN's experience in building a global learning network has revealed several key lessons that drive effective learning at the community level. **First**, having a dedicated GOYN team member to lead and manage learning activities ensures more structured processes, tools, and outputs. **Second**, establishing specific times and spaces for learning—such as communities of practice or capacity-building sessions—helps prioritize these activities and prevents them from being overlooked. **Third**, rather than relying on standalone fundraising for learning initiatives, embedding resources for learning into all plans and proposals proves to be a more sustainable and impactful approach. **Finally**, OY are essential partners in the design, implementation, and dissemination of learning activities. Their unique insights enable them to identify critical research questions, design and administer surveys, analyze results, and present findings to stakeholders with a powerful voice, ensuring that learning is both inclusive and impactful.

By applying these lessons, GOYN continues to strengthen its learning network and enable communities to adapt, innovate, and scale their impact. As the network grows, GOYN remains committed to amplifying the voices of OY, sharing best practices, and contributing to the global movement for youth economic opportunity. Through its dynamic learning ecosystem, GOYN is not only transforming local communities but also shaping the future of international youth development.



GOYN gathers as a learning network for the 2022 Global Convening at Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia. (Photo: Fundación Corona)



LOOKING AHEAD

As GOYN reflects on its first six years and looks to the future, it envisions a path of long-term impact, partnership, and innovation. GOYN aims to broaden and deepen its network, reaching 50 communities and millions of young people by 2030. GOYN will strengthen its core network capabilities and leadership to continue transforming economic pathways and systems partnering with local communities and OY across its expanding network. The following objectives outline GOYN's strategy and ambitions for the future:

- ▶ **Scale programming and develop new Opportunity Pathways** to maximize OY engagement and community-level saturation in current GOYN locations across Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Haiti, India, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania.
- ▶ **Extend the GOYN model to new communities** within existing countries and broaden the network by adding communities in new regions, including the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America.
- ▶ **Leverage research, data, and learning** to enhance intervention impact, build youth-led movements, and pilot financial models for sustainability. GOYN will continue to strengthen community-led decision-making, with youth involved in every phase from design to implementation.
- ▶ **Strengthen financing mechanisms** to boost financial literacy and wellness among OY, integrate asset-building pathways, and pursue diverse and innovative financing strategies for sustainable community impact.
- ▶ **Position OY as leaders in movement building**, advancing discussions to address structural barriers, promote belonging, and foster change through civic engagement.
- ▶ **Shift perceptions** through global and local campaigns, fostering new narratives that promote OY as key drivers of economic and social progress.

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I have always wanted to bring about positive and meaningful change, and through GOYN, I have gained the confidence and communication skills to do just that. The fact that people are accepting of my journey and celebrating it is what I hold in the highest regard.

This might sound a little cringe, but I am my own role model—because despite every challenge, I have stayed true to myself.

— Ovi Bhandalkar (GOYN Pune Youth Advisory Group member, law student, and social worker)

To learn more about GOYN's work or explore partnership opportunities, please contact us at goyn@aspen-institute.org or visit goyn.org/contact.



OY leaders celebrate at the 2023 Global Convening in Mombasa, Kenya. (Photo: Swahilipot Hub Foundation)

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A—IMPACT AT A GLANCE

► Opportunity Youth Impact



631K

Opportunity Youth reached by GOYN and its partners



228K

Opportunity Youth that received support through GOYN to improve their employability, skills, or mindset



84K

Opportunity Youth with improved livelihoods through employment or entrepreneurship



174

Youth Advisory Group members advising on GOYN strategy development and implementation (65% female)



171

impactful youth-led projects implemented in local communities with support from GOYN's Youth Innovation Fund

► Ecosystem Impact



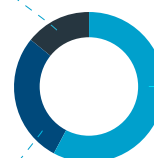
439

organizations engaged as Local Collaborative Members

Public Sector (14%)

Private Sector (28%)

Civil Society (58%)



115

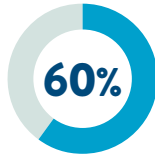
organizations represented on GOYN Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Committees/Steering Committees



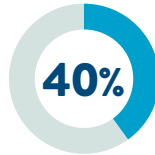
28

technical working groups implementing collective impact solutions in support of youth employment and livelihoods

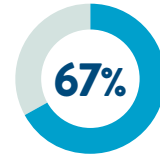
► Systems Impact¹



GOYN Collaboratives participating in public sector bodies and/or processes to advance policy changes in support of OY



GOYN Collaboratives actively working to change employers' practices and perceptions to increase hiring and retention of OY



GOYN Collaboratives advancing narrative change efforts to shift perceptions of OY



US\$16.5M

funds raised locally
by GOYN Anchor Partners



US\$26.6M

funds raised globally
by GOYN

¹ All percentages calculated based on data from 15 of GOYN's 17 communities that submitted reports by the end of 2024.



GOYN partners gather for the 2023 Global Convening in Mombasa, Kenya. (Photo: Swahilipot Hub Foundation)

APPENDIX B—GOYN OVERVIEW

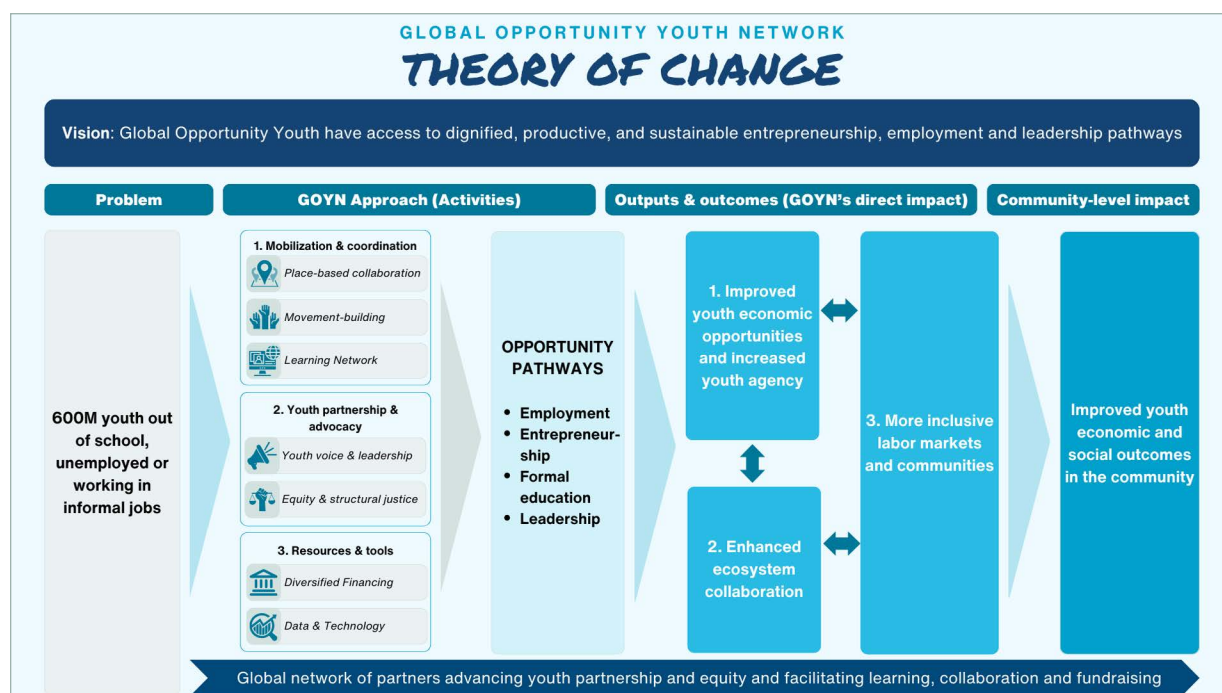
Since GOYN's launch in late 2018, a group of global institutions committed to generational change have supported the network, bringing a complement of funding, technical expertise, and networks to help GOYN rapidly expand. Global members of the network include Prudential Financial Inc., Global Development Incubator, Accenture, Catholic Relief Services, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Vitol Foundation, Fondation Botnar, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Western Union Foundation, among others.

Today, GOYN has built a vibrant network of communities around the world. Seventeen communities—Pune, Ramgarh, Barwani, Pimpri-Chinchwad, Raichur, Bhubaneswar, and Gulbarga, **India**; Mombasa, **Kenya**; Tanga, **Tanzania**; eThekweni, **South Africa**; Thiès, **Senegal**; Haiti; Bogotá and Barranquilla, **Colombia**; Mexico City, **Mexico**; and São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, **Brazil**—are anchored by local partners who have established cross-sector Collaboratives and youth advisory groups, collected data and research, and developed contextualized strategies and pathways for scaled impact.



As GOYN has established a foundation of learning, practice, and evidence, there is continued interest in expanding the GOYN model to new communities. In 2025, GOYN will launch its first community in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and continue its expansion across current GOYN countries. These are encouraging signs that GOYN's long-term ambition of growing its network to include dozens of place-based Collaboratives in critical regions around the globe will be realized.

APPENDIX C—THEORY OF CHANGE



At the core of the GOYN Global Theory of Change is the design and implementation of “Opportunity Pathways”. Opportunity Pathways are sets of interventions that connect young people to economic opportunities in their community and/or support them in developing their personal agency and leadership. These pathways are defined and prioritized in collaboration with local youth employment stakeholders, including youth themselves. These pathways weave together the three core activities that form the GOYN approach in each community:

- ▶ **Mobilization and coordination** of local youth employment stakeholders to improve access, quality and efficiency of youth services at the community level.
- ▶ **Youth partnership and advocacy** to ensure that youth voices are placed at the center of intervention design and implementation, and that all youth voices are represented equally, including those of the most disadvantaged youth.
- ▶ **Resources and tools** to support the deployment of youth services at scale, including the mobilization of diversified sources of financing and the use of data and technology to facilitate connections and learning.

GOYN’s Theory of Change is a blueprint for long-term impact, where sustained collaboration and youth leadership compound to transform communities over generations. The implementation of Opportunity Pathways creates impact at three different levels:

- ▶ **Opportunity Youth** who benefit from GOYN interventions experience improved economic opportunities and increased agency.

- ▶ **Ecosystem stakeholders** engaged by GOYN experience enhanced collaboration and coordination, which improves the effectiveness and efficiency of their youth-facing interventions.
- ▶ **Communities and labor markets** influenced by GOYN become more inclusive for OY, through changes in policies, practices, and mindsets.

These three impact areas are mutually reinforcing. For example, greater ecosystem coordination facilitates changes in the community and the labor market, while also generating direct benefits for OY. But ultimately, it is the systemic changes advanced in the community and the labor market that generates the ultimate impact GOYN seeks to have: the improvement of social and economic outcomes for all youth in the community, well beyond the OY directly reached by GOYN.

GOYN's impact in each community is reinforced by the power of the global network of partners that GOYN brings together. Global GOYN activities enable shared learning, cross-regional collaboration and joint fundraising, while centering the core values of youth partnership and equity in all communities across the network.

APPENDIX D—CASE STUDIES: COMMUNITY PATHWAYS

► Employment pathways

Bogotá, Colombia: GOYN's Quiero Ser Digital (QSD) initiative has transformed from a digital skills program into a citywide employment ecosystem, serving over 48,000 Opportunity Youth to date. While 16,000+ have gained foundational skills through early QSD activities, the program now delivers intensive, high-touch support—evidenced by the 2024 cohort where 284 of 333 participants completed advanced training and 81 secured quality employment. This deeper engagement model is being scaled systematically through partnerships with Bogotá's Secretary of Education, with full adoption across all 335 city schools planned by 2026.

The initiative's impact is amplified by complementary systems: The Evolution Digital Fund (FED) maintains an 84% employment rate (249 of 297 graduates) while advancing gender equity (27% women participants). These efforts are supported by the QSD Tracker (mapping real-time talent needs), the Youth Innovation Hub (developing technical and life skills), and the 4th Industrial Revolution Learning Community (aligning 50+ organizations around sector demands). Together, they demonstrate how targeted pilots grow into institutionalized pathways where hundreds trained today enable thousands employed tomorrow.

Mombasa, Kenya: GOYN has built out a pathway in the hospitality and tourism sector, which represents a significant share of the city's economic activity. Working closely with GDI, GOYN Mombasa spearheaded a youth-led mapping exercise of the youth employment ecosystem in the city in 2019, where they found that the hospitality and tourism sector had the greatest potential to improve OY livelihoods. GOYN then began to design interventions in partnership with academic and skilling institutions, industry associations, and employers that identified placement and work-based learning opportunities for OY. Amongst other interventions, the strategy deployed an innovative dual vocational training program consisting of short courses combining 30% classroom time with 70% work-based learning (hands-on experience with an employer). This model has proven very successful in aligning skilling programs with employer needs, with 70% of OY completing the training currently employed. In 2023, GOYN also launched a Tourism Innovation Lab to foster the development and innovation of tourism products and services in Mombasa. Ultimately, the lab aims to attract, test, re-engineer, mentor, and launch new ideas in the sector that have the potential to scale and increase the number of jobs and economic opportunities in the industry.

Pune, India: Pune's role as a major logistics hub presents significant opportunities for youth employment across the supply chain beyond delivery roles. To bridge the demand-supply gap, GOYN Pune launched Project Udaan, a comprehensive initiative to train, place, and retain young people in locally available logistics jobs. The pathway began with mapping youth-relevant roles across the sector and co-creating a skilling curriculum with key industry stakeholders, including employers. Five skilling partners now disseminate this curriculum, while a network of 12 employers facilitates placements. A mentorship component supports retention by setting clear expectations for OY, and an awareness campaign boosts youth interest in

logistics careers. Project Udaan also provides OY with firsthand exposure to different job roles and career pathways within formal workspaces, enhancing their preparedness, confidence, and competence. GOYN Pune innovatively adapted the program to be delivered directly within communities, making skilling more accessible and inclusive for OY who face barriers to traditional training centers.

► Entrepreneurship pathways

Ramgarh and Barwani, India: rural communities have developed hyper-local “Business Ideas Compendiums,” which compile concrete and locally relevant entrepreneurship ideas for OY in the district, including a high-level market analysis and bankable business plans to help local entrepreneurs in identifying and quickly launching their business. These guides are being distributed through GOYN’s network of Youth Hubs, which house additional resources for entrepreneurs such as directories of last mile distributor products and services (telecom service providers, insurance agents etc.), curated financial services providers, and sector expertise and mentorship services to support OY through the pre- and post-business set-up journey. Over 30,000 OY access these Youth Hubs, which have supported the start or growth of over 1,000 youth-led businesses since 2021 (additional information on Transform Rural India’s Youth Hub model can be found [here](#)). Moreover, gender-focused programs have helped women navigate social and economic barriers, resulting in greater support and acceptance of women entrepreneurs in the local economy. Separately, targeted support for agricultural entrepreneurs has strengthened value chain development, leading to improved cultivation techniques, increased production, and higher selling prices.

Mexico City, Mexico: GOYN launched an online youth entrepreneurship platform ([Youth x Entrepreneurship](#)) in 2023. It leverages AI technologies and offers young people access to guidance, tools, and mentorship to start their own businesses. Since its launch, the platform has strengthened over 50 entrepreneurship projects and equipped over 460 young people with entrepreneurship skills. As a member of the Ministry of Entrepreneurship’s technical working group, GOYN Mexico collaborated with local public officials and successfully incorporated crucial government resources within the platform for young entrepreneurs. The close partnership with the Minister continues to be critical in increasing the platform’s visibility and use. Finally, GOYN Mexico City continues to center equity and inclusivity in this pathway by intentionally engaging with women entrepreneurs to ensure a gender perspective and employing youth partners to train OY to use the platform to increase reach and overall access to the tool in different municipalities and schools.

Tanga, Tanzania: the Savings and Entrepreneurship pathway has trained OY to develop a savings mindset, resulting in the formation of business groups with young people collectively saving approximately US\$10,000. Through this initiative, young entrepreneurs have launched innovative ventures, some of which have secured zero-interest government loans. This pathway exemplifies how a focus on financial literacy and youth-led enterprise development can create meaningful and sustainable economic opportunities for OY.

eThekweni, South Africa: GOYN’s Anchor Partner Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator launched new digital content, ‘Make Your Own Money,’ to support OY in starting and running microenterprises. A collaborative of eight organizations actively works together to develop, disseminate, and iterate content for thousands of OY hoping to generate income outside of a formal job through the national SA Youth platform. These resources have been vital in unlocking access to services and improving agency and decision-making skills for aspiring youth entrepreneurs. Looking ahead, GOYN eThekweni will continue to build on the platform’s success by piloting linkages to other sources of support, such as MSME start-up grants and business development programs.

► Leadership pathways

Mombasa, Kenya: GOYN is implementing a comprehensive mentorship and case management initiative designed to help OY build sustainable careers. This effort offers OY personalized career guidance, mentorship, and tailored support, helping them navigate employment, education, and entrepreneurship. With 136 trained case managers, the project has conducted over 3,000 one-on-one sessions, guiding 1,650 young people in self-discovery, skill-building, and goal-setting. As a result, 246 have secured formal employment, 315 found informal work, 394 started businesses, and 286 returned to education. More than 4,000 youth have registered through nine community outreach activities to join the initiative. As GOYN Mombasa refines its mentor-mentee matching algorithm, it aims to support 60,000 OY across six sub-counties, equipping them with the tools and confidence needed to build sustainable careers.

Urban India: Through GOYN’s partnership with Lighthouse Communities Foundation in, OY are gaining the tools to make informed life choices and develop the skills needed for improved employability. Central to this effort is the Lighthouse Foundations Course, which helps young people awaken their inner sense of “agency”—the ability to shape their own future. In a supportive environment, participants engage in creative exercises, mindfulness practices, and group challenges while learning from their peers. This holistic approach allows them to see their potential in a new light and clarify their aspirations. By creating mentoring hubs and actively engaging with the community, the program has addressed challenges like low participation and built a strong support system for youth. As a result, 7,226 young people have improved their career management, 1,013 have gained employment, and 362 have strengthened their career resilience.

Rural India: the Transform Rural India Foundation’s (TRIF) Youth Hub network provides career guidance, skill development, and entrepreneurship support in safe, accessible spaces. Established in partnership with local governments, Youth Hubs are embedded within communities, often housed in Cluster Level Federation spaces, serving as one-stop centers where OY can access job placements, skilling programs, government services, financial resources, digital technologies, entrepreneurship support, and mentorship. Over the past three years, the hubs have engaged 30,600 youth, facilitated 2,500 formal job placements, supported 1,000 youth-led businesses, and helped 3,500 young farmers increase their incomes. The hubs also prioritize women’s agency-building, foster leadership, and enable youth to shape local development plans and actively participate in governance.

APPENDIX E—CASE STUDIES: SYSTEMS CHANGE

► Public policy influence

Thiès, Senegal: GOYN has forged partnerships with key public agencies to strengthen youth employment pathways. The collaboration with the National Agency for Entrepreneurship (DER/FJ) and the National Agency for Vocational Training (3FPT) has enabled GOYN to connect OY to vital resources for entrepreneurship and vocational training. These partnerships ensure that youth have access to both practical training and startup support, enabling them to enter the workforce or start their own ventures in alignment with local market needs.

Ramgarh and Barwani, India: GOYN's efforts in the rural districts focus on providing safe, accessible spaces for youth development through Youth Hubs, established in partnership with the National Rural Livelihoods Mission. These hubs are located within Cluster Level Federation (CLF) spaces, which are well-known community spaces managed by Self-Help Groups (SHGs), making them trusted and welcoming environments for OY, especially young women. The hubs provide career counseling, skilling, and opportunities for government engagement. To date, these hubs have facilitated job placements, supported youth-led businesses, and enabled OY to participate in local governance through initiatives like the Gram Panchayat Development Plan, a decentralized planning process that allows citizens to define development areas for their panchayats (community councils) and influence budgetary allocations towards these areas. This engagement enables youth to actively shape their communities while gaining essential skills for their futures.

São Paulo, Brazil: GOYN joined the City Council's Youth Subcommittee, a body focused on advising the city on youth-related issues. Through this role, GOYN shared insights and data from its work with OY, influencing policy recommendations that led to the creation of youth coordination bodies in each sub-prefecture of the city, a Municipal Youth Fund, and a scholarship program dedicated to youth from underfunded communities. GOYN's participation has not only provided it with direct access to policymakers at multiple levels, but has also allowed it to advocate for systemic support for OY across the city, influencing how youth-related resources are allocated and managed.

Pimpri-Chinchwad, India: GOYN worked closely with local leaders, including ward officers and community leaders, to launch mass mobilization and awareness campaigns as part of its efforts to engage OY. This collaboration established three skilling centers in partnership with the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC). These centers provide accessible spaces where youth can receive vocational training, career counseling, and essential employability skills, making it easier to enter the job market or pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.

Mombasa, Kenya: GOYN played a pivotal role in advocating for the inclusion of youth priorities in the 2023-2027 County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), a critical policy document that guides county-level resource allocation. Beginning with a pilot group of 50 youth leaders who presented research in public forums, this initiative has now been institutionalized, formally embedding youth perspectives in planning processes that affect over 200,000 OY county-wide. Beyond securing policy changes, this work addressed the economic challenges OY faced and helped combat negative stereotypes, promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment for youth leaders in Mombasa. [More information here.](#)

Bogotá, Colombia: GOYN collaborated with the city’s Secretary of Education to develop multi-sector career pathway guides covering fields such as creative industries, construction, energy, and health. These guides reached over 45,000 students across 335 educational institutions, directly embedding career exploration and pathways into the school system and exposing OY to potential career fields early on. Additionally, GOYN partnered with the Mayor’s Office and the Korean Cooperation Agency to establish the 4th Industrial Revolution Observatory, which leverages data to identify and address youth employment needs in emerging sectors. In 2024, GOYN Bogotá joined as a lead partner in a program of the Social Integration Office of Bogotá that aims to impact 150,000 OY in the city over the next four years.

► Inclusive business practices

São Paulo, Brazil: in 2023, GOYN deepened its employer engagement strategy by collaborating with Accenture to launch the “Elevado À Potência” (Elevated to Power) social immersion program. This one-day experience brings employers into the communities where OY live, allowing them to engage directly with youth and better understand their needs and challenges. Participating companies have begun to change their practices, forming working groups with OY representatives to review and improve their hiring practices and support Opportunity Youth through ongoing initiatives. Additionally, GOYN São Paulo collaborated with the Great Places to Work Institute in Brazil to develop an “Opportunity Youth-friendly” classification in its annual rankings, with nearly 100 companies applying. This data will help GOYN understand the labor market challenges facing OY and the strategies companies are adopting to create supportive environments. [More information here.](#)

eThekwini, South Africa: led by Anchor Partner Harambee, GOYN partnered with the Global Business Services (GBS) sector to expand employment opportunities for OY. Collaborating with BPESA (Business Process Enabling South Africa), GOYN encouraged global businesses to invest in eThekwini and established a requirement for inclusive hiring among employers receiving government incentives. The partnership supported the development of online learning content to prepare OY for job openings in the GBS sector. Through these efforts, 3,000 new jobs were created, and critical work-readiness content was disseminated on platforms such as SAYouth, giving OY valuable insights into employer expectations and skills needed for these roles.

Pune, India: GOYN collaborated with recruitment firms and local businesses to organize job drives and workshops to connect OY with employment opportunities. Over 1,700 youth participated in 26 job drives, while around 7,000 youth engaged in skill-building activities supported by GOYN’s private sector partners. These events connected youth with immediate job opportunities and facilitated dialogue between employers and youth, allowing both groups to share expectations and insights. This consistent engagement has reinforced the importance of ongoing collaboration between local businesses and youth to create a supportive and dynamic employment ecosystem.

Mexico City, Mexico: GOYN launched the “[Empresas con la Juventud](#)” (Companies with Youth) movement, a program promoting corporate social responsibility by encouraging businesses to adopt inclusive hiring practices. The movement’s “10 golden rules” outline best practices, such as competency-based hiring, non-discriminatory policies, and internship programs. Seventy companies have been certified under this initiative, and it is expected to evolve into an advocacy body to further promote youth-inclusive practices across the Mexican business landscape. This collaboration with Coparmex, a significant business association, has broadened the reach and influence of inclusive practices among local employers.

► Perception shifts

Barwani, India: GOYN conducted research to understand the structural barriers young women entrepreneurs face. Through a survey of women entrepreneurs across Barwani, GOYN identified key challenges, including limited mobility, lack of family support, and difficulties accessing finance. In response, GOYN launched efforts to shift narratives by developing hyper-local IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) materials and gender-sensitive entrepreneurship modules. Youth Ambassadors play a critical role in these initiatives, working within their communities to raise awareness about the capabilities of young women entrepreneurs and the need for greater inclusion. These efforts aim to improve community acceptance of women in business and create a more enabling environment for young female entrepreneurs.

Mombasa, Kenya: GOYN’s #BadiliSimulizi (“Change the Narrative”) radio campaign has played a pivotal role in shifting community perceptions of OY. Reaching an estimated 45,000 listeners, the campaign provided a platform for OY to share their stories of resilience, leadership, and economic contributions. As a result, OY are now more widely recognized as valuable employees, entrepreneurs, and civic leaders. This shift is evident in how local leaders and policymakers engage with OY, with many adopting the term “Opportunity Youth” and actively involving them in decision-making processes. Today, OY in Mombasa are not just participants but leaders in public forums, driving policy discussions and shaping the future of their communities.

Bogotá and Barranquilla, Colombia: GOYN has been actively working to change perceptions of OY through workshops, media engagement, and youth-led campaigns. In Bogotá, GOYN facilitated workshops with collaborative members to share data and insights that challenge prevailing stereotypes, encouraging stakeholders to move away from the term “ninis”. This shift reframes OY as individuals facing systemic barriers rather than as unmotivated. The campaign was further supported by GOYN’s presence in 18 media publications, amplifying this positive narrative. In Barranquilla, GOYN’s Youth Advisory Group launched the “Qué Nini ni qué ná” (“Not ninis, no way”) campaign during the city’s launch event, delivering a clear message that OY should be defined by their potential rather than limitations. These combined efforts in Colombia have led to a growing adoption of more positive language, shifting stakeholders’ perceptions and behaviors in recognition of OY’s potential as economic actors.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

4IR: Fourth Industrial Revolution—a focus area in Bogotá, Colombia, where GOYN collaborates with stakeholders to prepare youth for emerging sectors.

AYP: Authentic Youth Partnership—GOYN’s core approach to youth engagement, AYP centers young people as equal partners in shaping decisions, programs, and systems that impact their lives. It emphasizes mutual respect, shared power, and long-term commitment to equity.

BPESA: Business Process Enabling South Africa—an organization that collaborates with GOYN to promote inclusive hiring practices in the Global Business Services (GBS) sector in South Africa.

CIDP: County Integrated Development Plan—a policy document in Kenya that guides resource allocation at the county level. GOYN Mombasa successfully advocated for the inclusion of youth priorities in this plan.

CLF: Cluster Level Federation—a community space in rural India where GOYN’s Youth Hubs are located, providing career guidance and skilling opportunities for youth.

ELP: Equity Leadership Program—a program designed by GOYN youth partners to advance equity and structural justice by empowering youth leaders to address systemic barriers.

FED: Evolution Digital Fund—a funding mechanism in Bogotá, Colombia, that supports digital skilling and employment for youth.

GBS: Global Business Services—a sector in South Africa where GOYN eThekweni has partnered with employers to create job opportunities for youth.

GDI: Global Development Incubator—a partner organization that supports GOYN in managing and scaling its initiatives.

GOYN: Global Opportunity Youth Network—a collaborative approach focused on creating economic opportunities for Opportunity Youth through local systems change.

GYEO: Global Youth Economic Opportunities—a global platform, led by Making Cents, that convenes stakeholders from across sectors to advance youth economic opportunities through innovation, collaboration, and learning.

IEC: Information, Education, and Communication—materials and campaigns designed to inform and educate communities in India about specific issues.

MEL: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning—a framework used to track progress, evaluate impact, and share learnings across communities.

MSAG: Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group—a group of senior stakeholders from the public, private, and civil society sectors who co-design strategies and provide feedback on GOYN interventions.

MSME: Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises—businesses that fall within specific size criteria (based on employees, turnover, or assets). GOYN supports youth-led MSMEs through entrepreneurship pathways and access to resources.

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization—a political and military alliance where GOYN has represented youth perspectives on global issues.

NEETs: Not in Education, Employment, or Training—a term often used to describe young people who are disconnected from education and employment. GOYN avoids this term due to its negative connotations.

NINI: A Spanish term (short for “ni estudia ni trabaja”) used to describe youth who are neither studying nor working. GOYN works to reframe this term to focus on systemic barriers rather than individual shortcomings.

OY: Opportunity Youth—young people aged 15-35 who are out of school, unemployed, or working in informal jobs. The term reflects GOYN’s efforts to move away from defining young people by the adverse systemic conditions they frequently face, in favor of reframing around their talent and potential.

PCMC: Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation—a local government body in India that partners with GOYN to provide skilling and employment opportunities for youth.

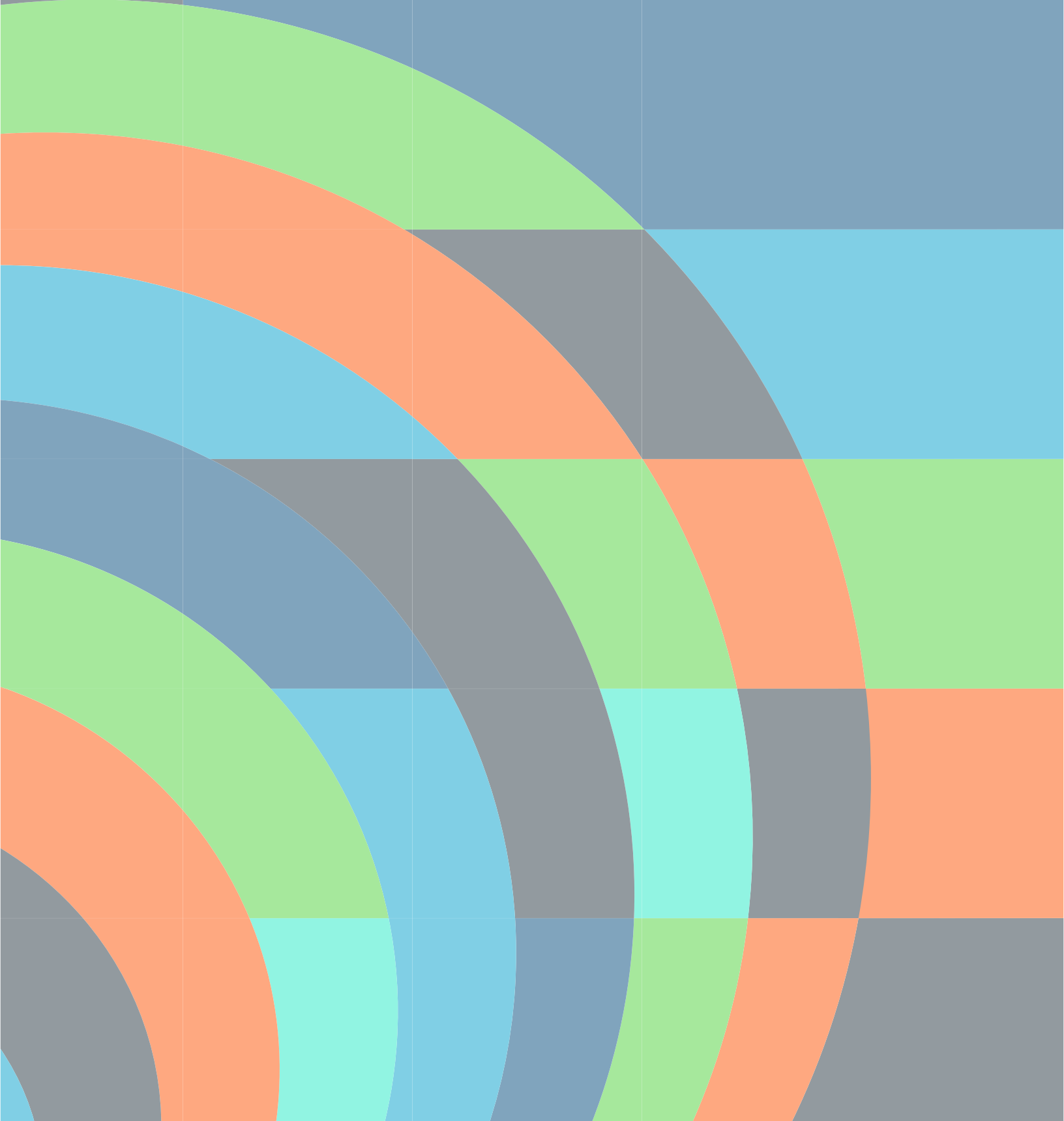
QSD: Quiero Ser Digital—a digital skilling initiative in Bogotá, Colombia, aimed at connecting youth to careers in the digital sector.

SAYouth: A national platform in South Africa that provides resources and opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship.

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly—the main deliberative, policymaking, and representative organ of the United Nations. It also adopts resolutions and sets global agendas to address pressing challenges.

YAG: Youth Advisory Group—a group of current or former Opportunity Youth who advise on GOYN’s strategy and interventions locally.

YIF: Youth Innovation Fund—a fund that supports youth-led projects to address local challenges and create economic opportunities.



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2300 N Street, NW | Suite 700 | Washington, DC 20037

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