

# Entrepreneurship within reach:

Connecting young people to opportunity

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Insights and lessons from YBI's 20 years  
of supporting youth entrepreneurship.



## Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the economic potential of nearly every group in society—but none more so than young people, and young women in particular. And with the business and social landscape changing, a new generation of young people, equipped with the business skills and competencies, to navigate new challenges and opportunities is required. Digitalisation, sustainability, inclusion and responsible leadership are at the heart of the future of work, and our youth will be the leaders and drivers of innovation in this rapidly evolving economy and environment.

At Accenture, we believe in empowering the next generation. We know that this younger group will only succeed—especially those who are marginalised or excluded—when they are afforded the chance to develop their business ideas, acquire skills, develop a growth mindset. These chances require connections with mentors, networks and capital to enable them to transform their business ambitions into reality. We support applying technology and ingenuity to prepare youth for the digital world. We believe in investing in future generations with digital and soft skills plus a growth mindset. Yet we at Accenture are conscious that there are many underserved young people who do not have access to the education, network and opportunities to enter the employment marketplace.

### So, what can we do to help ensure that budding entrepreneurs across the globe receive the support and opportunities they need for success??

That's where Accenture's partnership with Youth Business International (YBI), a global network of organisations devoted to empowering underserved business-minded youth, comes into play. Accenture's teams have been working with the YBI network to empower them and young people to make a world of difference. And since businesses today expect a Future of Work that is largely reliant on digital resourcing, bolstered by a focus on sustainability, we are duly qualified to support the cause, both within our organisation and through YBI. This support includes defining and embedding appropriate technology solutions, enhancing the efficiency of operations, providing strategic advisory, being a thought partner for the YBI network team and mentoring young entrepreneurs.

### Where do we go from here, and what "works" for young people?

The following report is an evaluation of the actions and approaches taken over the past two decades to assist young entrepreneurs. We are pleased to have supported YBI with this research, and it is our hope that with this information, YBI—along with Accenture's backing—will continue to provide underserved young

people with the best training, mentoring and finances critical for success. As we aim to continue to provide the global standard in inclusive economic programmes for young entrepreneurs, evaluating what has worked previously and evolving these practices accordingly will be a key to future success.

**Jean-Marc Ollagnier**  
CEO | Accenture Europe



## Executive summary

Youth entrepreneurship is a transformational solution to a persistent global youth unemployment crisis that is now exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Youth Business International (YBI) has 20 years of experience and engaged with over 70 member organisations over that time that have provided entrepreneurship support services to young people across the world, prioritising those who are marginalised. The organisation itself has grown from serving as a programme builder to developing networks for facilitated resource and knowledge sharing. Over time, it has become a global leader working to scale youth entrepreneurship with emerging focuses on innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity.

The learnings embedded in this report demonstrate how their global approach is underpinned by human-centred design principles that are customised to local context to optimise impact on young entrepreneurs. The approaches integrate 3 components to support the development of young entrepreneurs.



## Personal Development, Business Development, and Enabling Environment Facilitation

**Personal development** refers to building positive mindsets and attitudes via mentoring, soft and life skills training, and increasing leadership capabilities. This work instils competencies such as team building, time management, delegation, conflict resolution and stress management; and traits such as resilience, curiosity, risk-taking, and critical, innovative thinking.

**Business development** training entails the provision of technical training, guidance on how to start and grow a successful business, and ongoing aftercare to support the young person on their journey long after their initial training has ended.

Finally, **enabling environment facilitation** focuses on access to finance and markets to provide opportunities otherwise inaccessible to most young entrepreneurs.

These 3 components of the YBI approach are widely used in differing manners by its members, especially as YBI's network of member organisations are located within 46 countries around the world. YBI members and their respective local networks (including mentors) have tested, customised, innovated, and perfected these various approaches over time and adjusted them based on external factors such as technology advancements and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of applying these practices is demonstrated by the stories from young entrepreneurs in which they describe their personal and professional growth.

It is also evident through the research that community support is crucial to the success of each entrepreneur. Member organisations and young people alike emphasised the significance of mentors, business advisors and organisational staff who help problem solve and overcome feelings of loneliness, and peers who – through solidarity and transparency – support one another through difficult times.

This research is intended to serve as a tool for organisations working to help young people become entrepreneurs as it outlines a tested approach to developing them and the various ways that approach can be applied to different global contexts. It is also a reminder of the importance of investing in youth entrepreneurship as a way to combat the youth unemployment crisis and ensure economic and social development for current and future generations of young people. Lastly, it reaffirms that importance of finding ways to connect organisations to learn from each other, innovate and share good practice, especially when they are united by a common goal.





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# 1. Unlocking young people's potential

## Unlocking young people's potential

Young entrepreneurs, defined here as those who are aged 18-35, are critical to unlocking economic growth and creating new jobs. They have, are, and will continue to shape the future and solve many of the greatest challenges of our time. They reimagine businesses, bring new ideas to market, and strengthen communities and economies as they create opportunities – not just for themselves and their immediate spheres of influence – but for us all. As a result, fostering entrepreneurship is embraced by policymakers and business leaders as a key pillar of the policy agenda in many countries. It is increasingly becoming a focus in efforts to expand employment opportunities and empower young people to sustain themselves<sup>1</sup>.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), unemployment affects 67.6 million young women and men<sup>2</sup>, or 13.6% of the global youth labour force<sup>3</sup>. Across the world, many young people lack access to education and employment opportunities, and the ILO only expect the number of young people outside the labour market to increase<sup>4</sup>.





The situation has worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, putting disadvantaged young people in an increasingly precarious situation. Across the globe, between 2019 and 2020, the youth employment rate fell by 8.7% compared with 3.7% for adults<sup>5</sup> with 17%, or one in six young people employed before the outbreak, stopping work altogether<sup>6</sup>. The impact of the pandemic on young people has been particularly hard on young women and young people living in low and middle-income countries with employment falling by 23.7% for young men, and 29% for young women in middle-income countries.<sup>7</sup>

This disadvantage results in an increasing skills gap between young people in developed and developing countries and between the marginalised and privileged communities within countries, setting us on a course for leaving millions of young people behind and in poverty.

Despite the adverse impact of COVID-19 on youth employment, the main factors contributing to youth unemployment predates the pandemic and continue to be a stubborn, persistent reality in all regions and most countries globally. Youth unemployment stems from inadequate labour market skills, a mismatch of skills needed for employment, lack of access to finance and market linkages, cyclical and undeveloped labour market trends, and various structural and socio-cultural barriers that impede young people's success<sup>8</sup>.



@Tina Roesler YBG (28 von 159)



Today YBI members are found in 46 countries where they have supported more than 642,000 young people between the ages of 18-35 since 2014.



### Addressing the global youth unemployment problem

Entrepreneurship is a transformative option to unlock income generation and helps create decent work for young people. For 20 years, Youth Business International (YBI) and its members have formed a responsive frontline network that provides entrepreneurial support services designed specifically for underserved young people. With an ambition to help unlock the potential of youth entrepreneurship to uplift entire communities, YBI sets the global standard for inclusive entrepreneurship programmes and helps young people access crucial resources needed to gain the skills to reach their full potential.

This report draws on insights and learning from the work of YBI and its members over the past two decades to identify the key ingredients for successfully supporting young entrepreneurs in an ever-changing world.



## 2. An empowering global network

## An empowering global network

Since YBI started in 2000, the network has continuously grown, and YBI has evolved and refined services to its members and their approach to supporting young entrepreneurs.

### Delivering frontline support to young entrepreneurs

Today, YBI is a global network of expert organisations that act as local, innovative engines of youth entrepreneurship. Through co-creation and collaboration with its members, YBI designs entrepreneurship support approaches and uses the expertise, diversity and reach of the network to catalyse and multiply impact.

Supporting disadvantaged groups is a complex undertaking due to the disparities and multi-dimensional obstacles that they face. Supporting them in a meaningful way necessitates the need for inclusive programming to cater to the needs of disadvantaged young people. YBI focuses its efforts on disadvantaged young people, helping them build the skills, confidence, and connections to beat the odds, create opportunities, and become successful business owners.







## Programme builder

In 2000, YBI was established as a result of international interest in the Princes' Trust's work in the United Kingdom, presenting youth entrepreneurship as a solution for youth unemployment. YBI focused on developing organisations with a focus on helping disadvantaged young people to become entrepreneurs through training and mentoring. Incubated by the International Business Leaders Forum, YBI became an independent international NGO in 2008.

Their current programme focus areas emphasise technical preparation for the future of work and the integration of soft skills while accelerating digital adoption.



## Network developer

YBI then began to take a more concerted approach to grow its network of independent expert organisations and fostering innovation and collaboration across the network. Their facilitation of the network's knowledge and solutions sharing serves to ignite increased impact, with strong support ecosystems developed in Latin America, Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Today, YBI has 52 members in 46 countries, in addition to partners who have supported members and the youth they serve in key programmatic areas.



## Global leader

Building on 20 years of experience, YBI has demonstrated leadership in the field of youth entrepreneurship. In the context of the widespread prevalence of youth unemployment, worsened by the pandemic, they have been able to steward the movement towards supporting young people develop as entrepreneurs by facilitating knowledge sharing across their network and advocating for programmes that address the whole person.

Moving forward, they will continue to evolve and scale their programme with the aim to reach more young people and encourage more inclusive programming and social and green entrepreneurship.



## Offering best practices globally

The unique value of YBI is the forward-thinking and adaptive support to its members that is responsive to changing circumstances and opportunities. Having developed from an initial focus on creating mentoring programmes, YBI now offers guidance, curricula and development support on entrepreneurship training, improved mentoring, digital support initiatives and uses design thinking methodologies to evolve its services alongside its members.

The flexibility, combined with YBI's best practices and quality programmes, enables creativity and ongoing improvement of the members' support to entrepreneurs. Allowing members the freedom and resources to develop their services and experiment with new support models enables them to increase programme quality, thereby developing and evolving services that respond to the changing needs of young entrepreneurs<sup>9</sup>.

### Global



### National

Responsive frontline network



### Local Community



#### YBI Hub

YBI offers services, standardised approaches, trainings, learning exchanges and direct support to members

#### Members

Building on the YBI support, members around the world provide direct support to young entrepreneurs through training, mentoring and follow-up

#### Youth entrepreneurs

With support from YBI members, young entrepreneurs build and develop their businesses and contribute to their local communities

YBI's support takes global best practices and offers them to members locally to leapfrog learning and programme improvement.



## YBI is Committed to Continuous Innovation

YBI also focuses on fostering innovation among its members so that they can, in turn, better support young people to become entrepreneurs who incorporate innovative thinking in their businesses. This includes Innovation Challenges to stimulate effective, scalable innovations while inspiring a culture of innovation within and amongst members. Innovation successes as well as failures are shared across the entire YBI network.



**"The rapidly changing external landscape driven by advancing technology and increasing globalisation significantly impacts people's expectations and needs. It requires us to step up to solve difficult problems and exploit new opportunities. Innovation for and with our members is the process we hone to continue to evolve our learning and practice."**

**Dejan Markovic**

Head of Innovation

Youth Business International





**"It is of immense value to be part of the YBI global network. The identity helps to establish links and collaborate both internationally and nationally. It enables us to gain access to interesting international partners that work with YBI. What we also enjoy most is drawing rich experiences across the network. For instance, we link up with programme leads from other countries and discuss the methodology to train mentors and entrepreneurs and get to know the new developments in their curriculum or what kind of orientations they provide to newcomers."**



**Aruna Vinodh**  
Senior Director  
Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST), India



A photograph of two women in a workshop or studio setting. The woman on the left is sitting on a wooden stool, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and a dark denim apron, and is drinking from a blue mug. The woman on the right is standing, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt with white polka dots and a green apron, and is holding a potted plant in a blue and white pot. The background is a plain white wall with a grey stone base.

# 3. Setting up young people for success



## Setting young people up for success

Starting a business is a daunting and exciting endeavour. Even under the best circumstances, the journey from idea to successful business brings challenges and obstacles to overcome.

Many young people that YBI members serve face similar challenges and barriers, ranging from a lack of knowledge and skills to cultural barriers and adverse economic and political conditions. As a young person, just starting out with an idea, experience, and knowledge of starting a business is often limited. At the same time, the confidence and positive self-attitude that usually comes with experience may not manifest strongly, making the step into entrepreneurship more daunting.

Adding to this, especially for many disadvantaged young people, the lack of access to education, networks, opportunities, funding or adverse cultural dynamics, can be further detrimental to the success or even the motivation to pursue the idea<sup>10</sup>.



The entrepreneur journey is full of both expected and unforeseen challenges. YBI and its members offer support and accompaniment that act as steppingstones for the young entrepreneurs to help them navigate the journey.

YBI believes that having the capabilities to face the challenges of the journey is the best way to ensure success and that young people deserve all the support they can get. That is why their network of dedicated and experienced members provide a community of support and accompaniment through training, mentoring, skills building, peer-to-peer connections and market opportunities. YBI has developed and refined the approach over 20 years of action and continuously assesses the needs and circumstances the entrepreneurs find themselves in.

## Building inclusive programmes

YBI and its members ensure that within organisations and programmes they actively create space and access for the hardest to reach and most marginalised young people. Their inclusivity principles in action manifest in their commitment to reach any young person with a desire to be an entrepreneur (regardless of their identity, background or circumstances), to remove barriers to access, and to equitably empower young people to develop their skills and realise their business dreams.

## Encouraging social and green entrepreneurship

Throughout YBI's network, there has been an increase in the number of young entrepreneurs who have a personal mission to solve social and environmental challenges and are building businesses that deliver profit with purpose.

YBI will seek to support these entrepreneurs in executing their vision by ensuring members have access to the approaches, methodologies, tools and connections they need to support social and green enterprises.



"We have used a partnership approach whereby the top entrepreneurs from partner organisations in marginalised areas such as impoverished areas and refugee communities come for training. I think the targeted effort to get these entrepreneurs to the training help them catch up to those from more privileged backgrounds."

### Sylvie Somerville

Director of Training & Global Partnerships  
Sinapis Group, Kenya

"At SOMO Kenya we focus on the social impact the entrepreneurs can have. When we accept entrepreneurs to our training programme we always look for the potential the business has for creating employment opportunities, or if it has an educational factor or a health benefit."

### Joshua Onialo

Acceleration Programme Manager  
SOMO, Kenya



## The key to success is an integrated approach

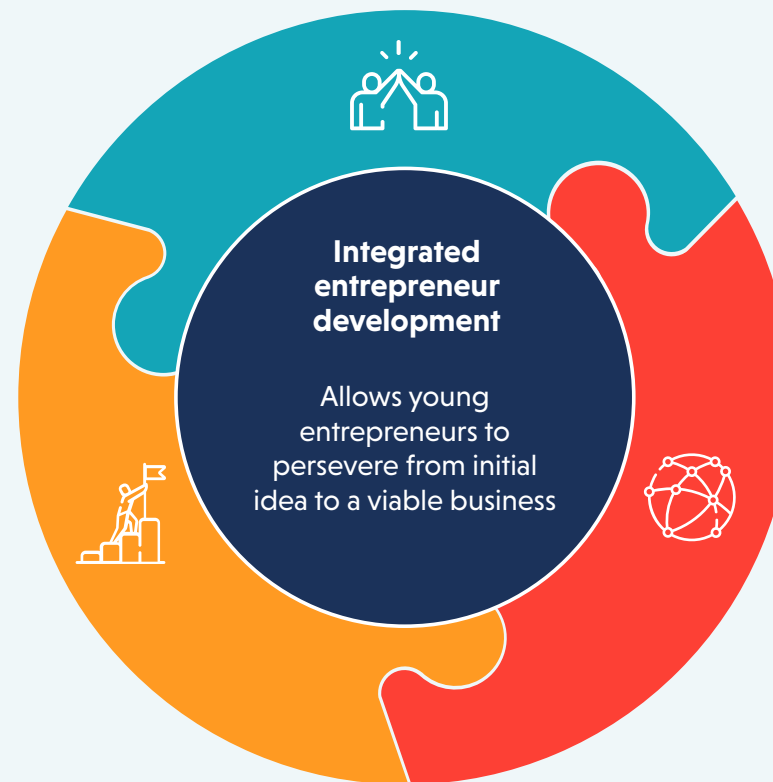
For an entrepreneur to succeed, they need to have a productive and positive attitude and mindset in addition to technical skills and market access. Therefore, YBI has focused on developing a comprehensive set of services, integrating personal development, business development and enabling environment facilitation. YBI's approach to youth entrepreneurship combines support activities and services, especially crucial when working with disadvantaged young people<sup>11,12</sup>.

Over the years, YBI has demonstrated that integrating these three components into their support to young entrepreneurs is key to the success they have been able to achieve. The integrated support also ensures that the young people who participate in the programmes gain from the training and personal support they receive along the way, which they can apply to many different situations throughout their lives.

These three dimensions will guide the rest of this report as it explores how YBI and its members have supported young entrepreneurs and developed resources and services for the members.

## Personal development

Personal development focus on soft skills, life skills and leadership capabilities and is supported through mentoring, training and coaching.



## Business development

Development of the business focus on training and advice on hard skills like creating a business model and managing a budget.

## Enabling environment facilitation

Local facilitation of an enabling environment through access to markets and finance helps businesses get a foothold.



**4.**  
**YBI's approach to  
integrated support**



## YBI's approach to integrated support

Support for personal development is invaluable for creating the foundation for a young entrepreneur who decides to pursue a business idea. With the constant technological and social change, young entrepreneurs must understand and navigate the complexities of a global environment and demonstrate sensitivities toward diverse cultural settings<sup>13</sup>. Adding to this, automation and artificial intelligence increasingly reshape the work and jobs of the future, demanding that young people can adapt and develop new skills and competencies continuously. Navigating these challenges requires creativity, resilience, risk tolerance and action orientation, and these are some of the characteristics observed in individuals who successfully engage in entrepreneurship. Evidence also shows that such qualities are often present in young people who can adapt to divergent ways of approaching situations within their entrepreneurial journeys<sup>14</sup>.

YBI focuses on soft skills development throughout the entrepreneurs' journeys via training and mentoring to strengthen and facilitate personal development. Working closely with their members worldwide, they have built a comprehensive soft skills curriculum and helped their members set up mentoring programmes.



Personal  
Development

## Soft Skills Training

Since 2019, YBI has developed a curriculum for essential soft skills for entrepreneurs in collaboration with five YBI members: Youth Business Russia, Youth Business Spain, MOST Business Incubator – Kazakhstan, ICCO Burundi, and Fundación Paraguaya. The curriculum covers team building, time management, delegation, conflict resolution and stress management, and traits such as resilience, curiosity, risk-taking, and critical, innovative thinking.<sup>15</sup>

The soft skills training curriculum was based on findings from research commissioned by YBI in 2019, through which gaps in soft skills training and delivery were identified within the network. This curriculum, originally designed as a face-to-face offering, was condensed in April 2020 to be offered digitally as the compacted Growth and Performance Skills (GPS) program, which was offered to 9 cohorts totalling 1,500 people and is available in English, Spanish and Russian. The GPS training pilot placed young entrepreneurs at the centre of the learning process by directly engaging them and was later given to members. It focuses on four important skills groups for a young entrepreneur to develop and evolve.



### Intra- and interpersonal

These skills enable individuals to interact, build relationships and demonstrate self-awareness. They can be divided into three sub-groups: self-skills such as positive self-concept; communication skills; and social and interpersonal skills such as collaboration and networking.



### Information, opportunity and risk management

These skills enable individuals to identify and leverage opportunities. They can be divided into three sub-groups: opportunity seeking, recognition and assessment; information seeking and management; and coping with ambiguity, uncertainty and risk.



### Create and solve

These skills enable individuals to engage in creative problem solving. They can be divided into three sub-groups: planning, organising, executing and management; higher order thinking; and creativity and innovation.



### Growth mindset

These skills enable individuals to be resilient and to continually learn and adapt. They can be divided into three sub-groups: persistence, tenacity and resilience; flexibility and adaptability; and future orientation.



The members recognise the importance of listening to the needs of the people they serve and base their programmes on co-creation to ensure that the soft skills training matches the young entrepreneurs' situation.

This human-centred approach to soft skills development is key to help, especially young people, grow and improve such new non-cognitive skills.<sup>16</sup>



"Soft skills are not so easy to teach, and some members didn't have the experience of putting a curriculum together that would result in changing human behaviour and mindset. Therefore, we decided to help our members craft these curricula with guidance and inputs from us. We use a human-centred approach to make it relevant to the members and the entrepreneurs according to a standardised journey."

**Carol Appel**  
Head of Training  
Youth Business International



## Mentoring Programme Support

Mentoring has been integral to YBI's work since its foundation. YBI's mentoring approach is theoretically underpinned and informed by years of experience, recognising the importance of well-designed and supported mentoring programmes that allow for deep and detailed conversations between mentor and mentee.<sup>17</sup> The mentoring approach is based on academic theory around programme design and inputs from members. A global community of more than 14,000 volunteer mentors makes use of the "non-directive" mentoring approach in which the role of the mentor is to be a sounding board, offer space for reflection, guidance and facilitated problem solving, as opposed to offering specific business advice.<sup>18</sup>

It is an acknowledgement that it is a young entrepreneur's business and that the mentor is there to support rather than direct. Volunteer mentors continue to share and learn together to embed this approach and share challenges so that they continue to offer valued support to young entrepreneurs and their emergent businesses.

While each mentoring programme is different and contextualised to the needs of its recipients, there are shared principles on how to design, build, implement and support an effective youth entrepreneurship mentoring programme. YBI helps their members to implement the validated 10-step process while designing their mentoring programming.

As mentoring programmes are adapted locally by members, the offering to the entrepreneurs is highly contextualised, with mentors that have a unique understanding and insight on the local conditions in which the young entrepreneurs operate.



## 10-step process for designing a mentoring programme



A previous YBI study<sup>19</sup> on the impact of mentoring found that 74% of mentees reported greater confidence in running a business, 72% felt they had improved decision making, and 71% better understood their strengths and could identify areas of development as a result of the mentoring support received.



"Because our members manage and run their programmes, the mentoring programmes are local and community-based. This enables better recruitment opportunities and leads to a real understanding of the context that helps mentors guide their entrepreneurs to better decision making. By matching locally, mentors help young people reach and expand their networks, understand cultural dynamics, and help them navigate local business laws within their business communities. Skilled, local mentors focus on the person and the business. This is what gives a young person self-confidence and their business the potential to grow."

**Jo Gray**

Director of Membership Services and Engagement  
Youth Business International

Running a business requires skills such as business planning, budgeting, accounting, costing, pricing, and marketing. These technical skills have shown to positively help affect business performances and earnings.<sup>20</sup> The skills are also important for young entrepreneurs to master to help translate their motivations into concrete businesses. The skills also empower them to assess the feasibility of their ideas and create a business model canvas or improve their business management and operations.

To strengthen and facilitate the development of young entrepreneurs' business skills, YBI designs entrepreneurship training and aftercare programmes with the members to increase the success rate of the businesses. The training programme also provides participants with important skills they can use in other professional circumstances like looking for a job or advancing a career.

## Entrepreneurship Training

Adopting the entrepreneurial mindset is key to a good start on the journey. It includes recognising an opportunity to create value, both economic and social, as well as the ability to act on this opportunity.<sup>21</sup> Across the YBI network, members develop training curricula specific to the contexts allowing for content that matches the entrepreneur landscape, the political dynamics, legal requirements, and the cultural context the entrepreneurs need to consider.



**Business Development**



This highly adaptable approach allows for the training programmes that YBI members offer young entrepreneurs to incorporate context-specific modules. These modules often include topics like building supportive networks, pathway planning, financial management, and more complex topics like design thinking and user-centred approaches that help them realise their entrepreneurial ambitions.

Business skills training has a wide-ranging and long-term positive impact on young people, whether they start a business or not. It is a core ingredient for success, with the skills and knowledge gained proving valuable in the long term and enabling young entrepreneurs to unlock access to finance, improving their household incomes and even increase confidence to run a business in the future<sup>22,23</sup>.

To equip young people to navigate unpredictable markets and ecosystems, training programmes within the network are evolving in various ways, such as through the *concept of effectuation*.

Based on the theory proposed by Saras Sarasvathy<sup>24</sup>, YBI introduced this evidence-based concept to its members in 2017 to support them in equipping young people to leverage and maximize resources that are within their immediate reach when setting up their businesses.

Compared to traditional methods of approaching entrepreneurship, effectuation seeks to simplify the thinking and decision process of setting up a business, requiring one to match available resources to market needs. Young entrepreneurs are taught to apply the five effectuation principles to continually build a business that evolves naturally through the interactions made with oneself, and with others.



**"We offer credit designed for young entrepreneurs to get started, but we combine it with training and ongoing support to ensure that the foundation for them to build and grow their business is there. So we have courses on financial management, business plans, and strategy as well as how to think like an entrepreneur. This way, we can make sure to provide a full package of support so that the young entrepreneurs also know how best to use the money they get access to."**

**Evelyne Oprel**

International Relations Manager  
Credits, The Netherlands

## The 5 Principles of Effectuation



### 01 - Means

When young people set out to build a new business, they start by considering the resources available to them: who they are; what they know; and who they know. From there, they build on this thinking to imagine the possibilities that can originate from their means.



### 02 - Leverage Contingencies

Young entrepreneurs are encouraged to anticipate negative, worst-case scenarios to identify potential contingencies. They can then interpret these situations as clues to create new markets.



### 03 - Co-Creation Partnerships

Young entrepreneurs build relationships and partnerships with self-selecting stakeholders within their network. By getting pre-commitments from these individuals early on, they reduce uncertainty and co-create the new market with interested participants.



### 04 - Affordable Loss

Young entrepreneurs limit risk by understanding what they can afford to lose at each step of their journey. They then choose goals and engage in actions in which there is feasible potential for progress, even if it does not work out.



### 05 - Worldview

An effectual worldview is grounded in the conviction that they have a significant role to play in shaping their future. By focusing on activities within their control, entrepreneurs increase the likelihood that their actions will lead to their desired outcomes.

At the beginning of their entrepreneurial journey young people are trained to identify and assess the resources that they have at hand, looking at who they are (their passions, values and ambitions), what they know (their knowledge and experiences), and who they know (networks). This then informs how the business evolves across different stages of operation. ideiaLab, YBI's member in Mozambique, communicates this in their training, highlighting that while entrepreneurship requires effort and dedication, every young person has the necessary resources at hand to be an entrepreneur.

## Aftercare

Through the years, YBI has identified the importance of personalised aftercare and accompaniment, the continued support with technical business advice to entrepreneurs as a key driver of success in their programmes. Members also remain available as a source of consistent, reliable emotional support to combat feelings of loneliness and isolation that may arise when building a business.

Yuval Beck, Chief Programmes Officer at YBI member Keren Shemesh in Israel, notes "Loneliness and isolation can drive paralysis and negative business development: wrong decisions, and fear of taking risks – even calculated ones, thus we ensure that there is always someone to ask, share with, consult." Working with disadvantaged young people requires personalised support that is highly practical and addresses the concrete business challenges the young entrepreneurs<sup>25</sup>. Having business advisors ready to engage entrepreneurs at different times throughout their journey has been instrumental in some of the successful programmes delivered by YBI members.

YBI knows that business survivability decreases without real, accompanied support, especially when working with vulnerable populations from resource-limited backgrounds. YBI member Youth Business Spain found that businesses that had participated in a mentoring programme were more than twice as likely to continue in business, with a business survival rate of 87% in the fifth year compared to the national average of 41%. Higher intensity of support has a significantly greater outcome on business success and is highly valued by young entrepreneurs. Young people who receive personalised business support over a longer period create more profitable businesses<sup>26</sup>.



### Business Advisory

Business advisory can be 1:1 or with multiple shallow connections with experts. This often includes specialised business advisory services on market research, design and packaging, branding, sales etc.



### Testing Opportunities

Members use different models to create testing opportunities for the entrepreneurs. This can be pitching competitions, exposure to accelerators etc.



### Targeted Operational Support

This includes business clinics where specialists come in to provide support on various technical issues such as IP management, legal advice, marketing etc.



### Networking & Community Building

Peer-to-peer relationships help to support business growth. Member-facilitated events provide a platform where knowledge sharing, business advice, and risk mitigation is openly shared.





"The personalised aftercare, where the members work with small groups or directly one-to-one with an entrepreneur, allows for close support on very detailed challenges. The entrepreneurs have gained the knowledge they need but the aftercare supports them to put this into practice and provides real-time advice. For young entrepreneurs who might lack experience and networks, this kind of tailored support can be pivotal. It helps navigate difficult moments whilst building confidence and really embeds the learning."

**Sophia Greeley**

Evidence and Learning Manager

Youth Business International





Many young people in the entrepreneurial space say funding is a key barrier that would prevent them from starting a business.<sup>27</sup> Young entrepreneurs often miss out on great opportunities to act on their business ideas despite demonstrating potential and having done the groundwork, simply because they do not have opportunities to access to low-risk financing or new markets; or may not understand how to navigate local public agencies to, for example, register their business.

The 2020 UN World Youth Report highlights that an overall environment conducive to conducting business for young entrepreneurs is one in which targeted support in areas such as education, technical support, and networking together with tailored support in access to finance and markets are provided. The report highlights the challenges faced by young people pursuing entrepreneurship in obtaining finance due to their lack of credibility, security, and experience. Similarly, young people experience challenges when trying to navigate market dynamics due to their inexperience and limited market knowledge and linkages.<sup>28</sup>



**Enabling Environment  
Facilitation**

To help facilitate an enabling environment for the young entrepreneurs, YBI and its members match young people with local funding and market opportunities. As members are entrenched in the community and are aware of the organisations and institutions that would complement their offerings, they often leverage these relationships to help provide access to low-risk funding opportunities and to identify market opportunities. This way, members use 'linked partnerships', in which youth-serving organisations form partnerships with other organisations in the local ecosystem to better serve young people. These partnerships allow members to maximise institutional capacity, strengthen expertise, help build entrepreneurial ecosystems and promote an environment for youth businesses to thrive.<sup>29</sup>

## Access to Finance

Young people seeking to become entrepreneurs, especially those who are disadvantaged and marginalised, face much greater challenges when trying to access finance due to lack of credit history, experience and collateral. While financing by itself is not effective in driving business success, it is a core ingredient in unlocking the full potential of young entrepreneurs.

YBI works in two distinct ways to provide access to finance, either directly or indirectly. Direct access to finance involves providing financing to start, strengthen

or scale a business through in-house lending facilities, grant-based schemes and seed funding, or through a hybrid model in which YBI engages financing partners or takes advantage of schemes that catalyse lending such as loan guarantees and other government initiatives. Indirect access to finance is facilitated through linkages between young people and finance institutions. For instance, in India, YBI member BYST has *memoranda of understandings* (MoUs) with several financial institutions that allow for easy access for entrepreneurs to the lending options they offer. Another example is FATE Foundation in Nigeria, which works with banks to offer affordable funding to start-ups.

## Access to Markets

Even in the presence of all other complementary factors, businesses can only be successful if there is a market to interact with. In supportive ecosystems, access to markets and value chains may be well established and accessible to large businesses; however, for many small businesses, especially start-ups, this access has to be developed. To be successful, young business owners need to understand their local, regional, and global customer base demands and have entry points and connections to them.<sup>30</sup> Accurate market understanding can steer young entrepreneurs in the right business direction and help them fully leverage the potential of the existing market and access new markets.

YBI and its members continuously work to engage with local and global networks to seek market access opportunities for the entrepreneurs. Most of this work happens through established networks, and connections YBI and the members have built over the years.



**"Many young entrepreneurs lack information on the business ecosystem, so we help them understand how to navigate the early stages of starting a business, like how to register it, how to market the products, etc. We also help link the entrepreneurs with other people in the sector they work in, to give them a good start."**

**Benson Macharia**  
Entrepreneurship Development Programme  
Coordinator | CAPYEI, Kenya





# 5. How YBI and its members implement the approach

## How YBI and its members implement the approach

The following sections explore how the YBI network of members have supported young entrepreneurs around the world. The examples highlight specific features of the YBI members work in each of the three dimensions that together make up the foundation for success - Personal Development, Business Development, and Enabling Environment Facilitation.



# 102,000

youth started their own business



## 580,000

trained



## 34,000

matched with a mentor



## 212,000

advised



## 82,000

connected to financial services

## Personal Development

YBI members help entrepreneurs establish and operationalise a business and build soft skills, life skills, and leadership capabilities through customised programme offerings and facilitated open discussions that emphasise problem-solving and self-reflection. They recognise that this training programme component is the difference between someone who starts a business and being an entrepreneur who can overcome challenges over time to maintain that business.

### Developing mental strength and positive self-worth

The support from members can include personal reflection through sessions focused on questions that help them understand who they are and the characteristics they would like to build. Members also facilitate transparent conversation in group settings for the entrepreneurs to better understand their role in their communities, and they help them connect these insights to their businesses as a lasting and fundamental aspect of their business success. For example, in 2020, YBI member Habitat in Turkey created a specific programme for young women entrepreneurs to develop their digital skills and increase their digital identity. They created an online community with refugee entrepreneurs, freelancers, mentors, and trainers. Through this community, young women had the chance to attend training, mentoring sessions, and help each other. It provides a space for understanding and emotional support as they build skills.







**"We invite the young people to look back at their lives to understand who they are and where they come from to build their entrepreneurial persona and to help recognise what new behaviours they need. They ask, "what skills do I need to bring to this role to succeed?"**

**Manuel Rego**

Action Catalyst | ideaLab, Mozambique

The approaches are often a combination of didactic sessions and interactive activities. As noted by YBI member Positive Planet in France, one of their best practices is to offer very individualised support through listening to young peoples' problems. Positive Planet consciously uses a holistic human-centred approach to their work to help build confidence and security for the entrepreneurs.

Additionally, for Fundación Paraguaya, a YBI member located in Paraguay, soft skills are a consequential aspect that accounts for nearly fifty per cent of training activities to impart entrepreneurial motivation, leadership, teamwork, self-esteem and assertive communication abilities. "We give them the capacity to begin businesses, and the impact is bigger when the application is individualised. We give them mentoring and financing and accompany them in the process. Without mentoring, it is harder for them to continue", observes Lorena Soto, Entrepreneurship Education Manager, Fundación Paraguaya.

Business Incubator MOST, a YBI member in Kazakhstan, delivered the YBI Growth and Performance Skills, which although delivered online retained a personalised component. A young entrepreneur noted,

**"To receive feedback is very motivating. When I posted comments online, they were answered with comments such as 'We are glad that it is useful'. It was a sign that our work was being read, but when I saw that they answered my assignment in detail, with advice... wow! It was just a breath of air and gave me a second wind."**

### Peer learning and community support

Members leverage peer learning and support groups to create a safe, reliable environment for young people to go when they need positive reinforcement

or emotional support. This form of emotional learning puts concrete tools into practice by encouraging open discussion on what the entrepreneurs are collectively feeling and common challenges to strengthen personal relationships with the self and others. Manuel Rego, Action Catalyst at YBI member ideaLab in Mozambique;

**"We apply entrepreneur-to-entrepreneur learning. This has been highly successful because it provides real-life examples from a peer that the young people learn from."**

Fostering peer relationships has been effective for helping young people develop their communication and social skills. In Brazil, YBI member Aliança Empreendedora recognises that soft skills such as emotional intelligence are more important than technical skills, especially for beginners. Within their programme, they encourage peer learning, often grouping young entrepreneurs with similar backgrounds to learn and transfer skills with each other. At Enda Inter-Arabe, a YBI member based in Tunisia, they listen to young entrepreneurs' feedback and give them space to feel welcomed and part of the community since they are dealing with very marginalised people. To further support young people, organisations like Enda Inter-Arabe also have psychologists on staff that can deal with problems like depression, drug abuse and violence that are also factors that determine and/or influence entrepreneurial success.

## Mentors as a resource for personal reflection and better decision making

Mentors encourage young entrepreneurs to develop their distinct abilities and uncover insights as they start and grow their businesses. Mentors help build constructive entrepreneurial mindsets and attitudes and occasionally guide business operations. As mentioned by Jason Anjichi, Programme Coordinator at YBI member Somo in Kenya, "Mentoring keeps young people grounded and it allows our trainees to get more specialised assistance as opposed to the general training. It is also easier to address specific needs and support the entrepreneurs in a holistic way." By imparting personal development tools and resources, members apply a non-directive, relationship-based approach to mentoring that builds trust and allows for two-way learning between the mentor and mentee.

Members make use of YBI resources; however, they are highly customised. As Sara Simon Penas, CEO of Youth Business Spain, said, "We adapted the mentoring programme from the YBI methodology to Spain. The mentoring programme experiences success because it provides support over time. Many entrepreneurs feel alone when they finish the training, and they need to have a mentor to feel more confident about themselves and their businesses. We also try to organise webinars once per month to help them stay in contact with other entrepreneurs in the same situation."

To that end, members prepare both the mentor and the mentee for the two-way relationship they will build to ensure they derive maximum value from the process by emphasising selective recruitment processes, clearly setting expectations, and providing guidance on how the relationship should function. For example, YBI members Enterprise Uganda and ICCO Uganda have provided training to mentors to help them understand what mentoring is, what a mentee usually expects of the mentors, and how to approach the mentor-mentee relationship.

The mentor selection process undertaken by ICCO Uganda ensures that the process yields mentors who are passionate about the programme and its intended objectives and able and willing to voluntarily work with and support entrepreneurs. As such, the rigorous selection, recruitment, and application process of mentors is a best practice to carry forward for both current and future programming.<sup>31</sup>



YBI's members also use non-traditional approaches to mentoring in response to continued programme evolution. While the traditional mentor-mentee dyad approach is most effective to engage disadvantaged young people, YBI and its members have adopted creative ways to be effective mentors. For example, members have adopted group mentoring in situations in which cultural barriers limit the participation of marginalised groups. Members find a way to cater to this population of young entrepreneurs by creating a safe space composed of people with similar backgrounds and experiences. In the context of Keren Shemesh of Israel, which supports young women from the orthodox community, there are gender-based behavioural restrictions and limited access to mentors. This has necessitated the development of a single-gendered group mentoring approach in which mentors match with several mentees. Alternatively, situational mentoring is a short-term interaction that uses a mentor with specialised experience to address a specific issue or problem the young person is experiencing.

### Providing mentoring during the COVID-19 pandemic

When the COVID-19 crisis began to have global ramifications, YBI launched the SOS Mentoring programme to equip the global mentor network with new techniques to help entrepreneurs navigate the crisis. Across the YBI network, the response to shifting restrictions to meeting in person varied but members used blended interaction methods to build

and maintain mentoring relationships. They combined distance mentoring through virtual channels and physical meetups. Through SOS mentoring, YBI trained more than 750 mentors in over 20 countries across 4 continents. This provided over 1,500 entrepreneurs with mentoring support.

Acción Emprendedora, a YBI member in Chile, has used the YBI SOS Mentoring programme to support entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic. A change from their traditional mentoring approach allowed them to react quickly and respond according to the pace that entrepreneurs are requiring. This reflects the recognition that the entrepreneur's needs may change over time. Youth Business Trinidad & Tobago leverages channels such as email, chat rooms, WhatsApp and FaceTime to deliver their mentoring programme in a bid to counter the challenges caused by location, time and mobility. Fundación Paraguaya has also started using a mobile app, Mentorem, to facilitate virtual interactions, while BYST has introduced three-way calling to include BYST, the mentor, and the young entrepreneur.





## The Impact of Personal Development: Overcoming obstacles to become an entrepreneur with network support

Members have successfully supported entrepreneurs to overcome challenges through effective training and mentoring programmes. For example, Corporación el Minuto de Dios, a YBI member in Colombia, has programmes that include a psycho-social component beginning with an assessment by a trained professional to inform the support provided, including soft skills training and referrals to ensure personal needs are met. This allows entrepreneurs to focus on their businesses. Jeaneth Baquero, Director of Programmes, notes:

**"This holistic approach contributes to increased positive outcomes for young entrepreneurs and humanises the process."**

Entrepreneurs have become more resilient due to the support they receive from YBI members. For example, Kimberley Sandiford participated in a young women entrepreneurs' retreat hosted by Barbados Youth Business Trust. She found solidarity in the experience, seeing that she was not alone in the at-times difficult task of becoming an entrepreneur. Another example is the experience business partner team Abhishek Jacob Chetikatt and Naveen Sasidharan had with NyföretagarCentrum in Sweden.

They were able to conquer their fears, bounce back from mistakes and develop their leadership skills, noting that they have

**"Always made a point to realise their mistakes and quickly adapt."**

Additionally, the impact of having a mentor on an entrepreneur's business journey is evident through programmes such as those of BYST. They matched Akshay Babar – who has a bio-fertiliser production business that provides work to young people in rural areas – with a mentor who helped him to create a business plan and guided him to select the right machinery for his factory. BYST also matched entrepreneur Neelima Tippavajhla with a mentor who helped take her beverage brand online within ten days and increase her sales over time.

In Italy, YBI Member MicroLAB, through the YBI COVID-19 Rapid Response and Recovery Programme with Google.org, paired Anna Basile with a mentor who helped her rethink and adapt her business plan during the pandemic. This one-on-one guidance was critical to addressing specific pandemic-related issues.

The influence of personal development training goes beyond preparing young people to become entrepreneurs.

For example, Cecilia Domingos, a young person who participated in *Quem Quem Set Empreendedor (QQSE)*, a programme delivered by ideiaLab in Mozambique, said:

**"Self-development modules helped me a lot. I had to apply for a job, and thanks to QQSE I was better prepared to talk about my new financial skills and my experience in representing my company in the competition. I managed to get the job at UNICEF, and this is helping me to put food on the table for my family."**





## Entrepreneur Spotlight:

### How NyföretagarCentrum helped Klaus overcome personal obstacles to establish a business



Klaus, a young entrepreneur, exemplifies the importance of imparting personal development skills and a supportive network of people. He overcame personal challenges and difficulties to successfully found his business and employ three people in his community.

Klaus is the founder of the property management company Ramnebergs Fastighetsservice AB in Sweden. After high school, Klaus was a furniture mover for 13 years and spent a couple of years with a property management company in Trollhättan in Sweden. He enjoyed the active nature of the job, and he didn't miss sitting at a desk all day long. On the other hand, he often thought about creating his own business. One in which he would have more control over doing more of the work he enjoyed and focus more on quality and satisfying customers.

As an employee, Klaus experienced stress and occasional burnout. He was greatly committed to his work but at times found it difficult to be in the middle between the customers and his seemingly uncommitted bosses. Eventually, he had to take a couple of months off work and got help to deal with the anxiety and stress he had built up over the years.

With the treatment and the gradual recovery, Klaus began to think about his entrepreneurial ambitions again. Having worked in property management, he realised that he had something special to offer. He cared deeply about the services he offered, and he was keen to make his customers happy.

He also realised the prospect of being able to establish his own business brought back a lot of his energy and excitement.

**"It is incredible how much energy you get from doing what you like. Many people thought I was crazy to start my own business as I had just been out sick with stress and anxiety, but I realised that it worked well for me."**

While taking the first steps to set up his new business in 2018, he came across an invitation for an orientation meeting with NyföretagarCentrum, a YBI member in Sweden. Klaus connected with NyföretagarCentrum at a crucial time when the administrative part of starting a business stood between him and his ideas for a service he knew how to do well. With support from Petra, the business advisor from NyföretagarCentrum, Klaus managed to register his business, develop a website, do the bookkeeping, and begin other administrative tasks.

**"All the things they did were important for me to get things off the ground. I mean, it was basically a full-time job to do the website and finances, so I wouldn't have had time to do the property management."**

Petra also helped Klaus figure out what critical tasks to prioritise in the beginning. "His motivation was very high, and he was very excited to begin. *"We often focus our initial support on helping them balance the eagerness and desire to do everything, with a step-by-step process, so they focus on the right things when time is limited to all the things they want to do."* Besides the technical assistance, Petra also encouraged Klaus to enrol in the mentoring programme to help him develop his thinking as an entrepreneur and build his confidence in decision making through the support of an experienced professional.

After six months, Klaus enrolled in the mentoring programme and over 1.5 years, the mentor helped him deal with both minor and major questions for his business. During the winter between 2019 and 2020, a big property management deal fell through, and Klaus had to lay off his first and only employee at the time. With his mentor's guidance, he managed to channel the energy from the disappointment into winning a bid for property management services with the biggest utility supplier in the area.

Today Klaus has one full-time employee and two part-time employees, and his hard work in building a business that emphasises quality and integrity in its services is paying off. He still occasionally gets in touch with Petra to seek advice on marketing activities and customer relationship management systems.

**"It has been challenging to start on my own. It is lonely sometimes, but with the support from NyföretagarCentrum and especially my mentor, I now have a business with happy clients. I am very excited about taking back control of what I do, and I hope to build out the business. My immediate plan is to seek to get an office space because I think it will make it easier to create the kind of camaraderie between the colleagues that I really appreciate and believe is important to create the kind of business focused on integrity and quality that I want."**





## Member insights from their experience with personal development programming

Through implementing their programmes, members have seen that personal development training and activities create a change in entrepreneurs for a long-lasting impact in their entrepreneurial and professional lives. As Petra Arlebo, Business Advisor at NyföretagarCentrum in Sweden, noted:

**"The mentoring and the training we offer serve very distinct purposes. The training helps them focus on the right things, and the mentoring provides a much-needed opportunity for reflection for the entrepreneurs. When they are excited and eager, they easily tend to just work, work, work, but they also need time to consider what they are doing and why. That is where the important mentorships come in."**

Personal development becomes critical when entrepreneurs are facing crises—whether it be a personal crisis or a crisis such as the pandemic. It is in these types of circumstances when soft skills and mentoring has been the most valuable. Youth Business (YB) Russia has integrated mentoring and soft skills as they are closely related—their mentors also join the soft skills training.

Not only does this help them to better help their mentees, but it also provides support to the mentors who are often also entrepreneurs. The more skilled their mentors become, the more committed and supportive they are to their mentees. Boris Tkachenko, CEO, YB Russia observed:

**"As never before, young entrepreneurs could see that if they survived the pandemic circumstances, they would become stronger. Before the pandemic, business sustainability was more of a concept. Now they have lived through the threat of sustainability and survival. For our team and our mentors, we focused on providing the right support at the right time."**



## Business Development

Members conduct training sessions, often in-person and via online channels, that are focused on teaching hard skills that can be used for starting a business and applied to other areas of young peoples' professional lives. They also implement aftercare services to support entrepreneurs as they respond to challenges that arise along their respective journeys, long after their initial training period has ended.

### Training entrepreneurs on the hard skills they need to build their business

Members develop training sessions that are responsive to local realities. The way members deliver training, therefore, differs across the network. The trend, however, is towards flexibly offering different modules to cater to different entrepreneur needs and profiles. As stated by ideiaLab in Mozambique,



"We believe that everyone can be an entrepreneur, if they so wish. It requires effort and dedication, but everyone has the necessary resources to be entrepreneurs - this is what we communicate in our training."



Shedron Collins, General Manager of Youth Business Trinidad & Tobago echoed this sentiment while noting the overlap with personal development when stating:

**“We know our training improves the confidence of the young people. This is clear when they pitch their ideas, where we see an impressive improvement from the beginning of the programme to its end. We also see how the training increases their problem-solving skills. For instance, when we challenge them in training by asking them to completely change a part of the business model canvas like the revenue streams or the customer segment, they must figure out how to deal with it. Even if their businesses do not work out, they can apply thinking to other areas of their lives.”**

Members also believe entrepreneurship is a result of accumulating a set of skills developed through practice and experience.

**“Entrepreneurship has to be taught in practical, applicable and locally relevant ways for it to be used in building successful businesses,”**

contends Adenike Adeyemi, Chief Executive Officer of Nigeria-based FATE Foundation. Sylvie Somerville, Director of Training & Global Partnerships at Sinapis Group, Kenya & Uganda, highlights progression this way, “Our model is like a funnel - we train broadly, but we work more deeply with a handful of entrepreneurs each year. Our formula is a cohort-based training programme (2-4 months) followed by two months of pitch prep

and 1-1 business model consulting for shortlisted applicants. Those that are successful in this process join our six-month accelerator. We’ve learned that we must combine our training with practical, 1-1 or small group accountability or coaching. Both training and 1-1 coaching need to be combined with participation in a wider network offering supportive relationships and opportunities”.

### Applying the concept of effectuation to develop impactful and resourceful businesses

Effectuation requires that entrepreneurs match available resources to market needs. In practice, young people work early-on to assess the feasibility of their idea according to the issues raised by the community, available resources (including financial resources and networks), and other factors.



In Brazil, YBI member Aliança Empreendedora has embraced effectuation in its training methodology that is in use in all its partner organisations across the country: effectuation theory cuts across their training programmes, however differing in how it is applied within the programmes. Through a process of self-discovery based on effectuation, they have found a practical way to train their underserved target group in identifying their entrepreneurial potential and to emphasise the development of the entrepreneur themselves. They have three different trainings, including the Vai que dá ('Go for it') programme for absolute beginners; the Vai ou racha ('Sink or swim') programme for people who already have a business and want to work on specific skills to improve; and the Agora vai ('And we're off!') programme that focuses on alumni. Throughout these training programmes, effectuation logic is used to ensure that the entrepreneur is constantly assessing their profile, using the skills, knowledge and experiences they have, and leveraging their social and personal networks to drive their businesses.

To monitor the effectiveness of this methodology, they have developed an “entrepreneur compass”, a tool that results in a quantitative score that measures the entrepreneurial readiness of a person, including their skills, knowledge, and networks. This score is measured at the beginning and end of the programme, allowing them to identify the participants' strengths and weaknesses and measure their development throughout.



## Aftercare and continued support through the journey

A great example of aftercare integration is provided by Perspektiva, a YBI member in Peru, which transferred its methodology to scale and sustain its impact by expanding its network to include educational institutions and municipal economic agencies. This resulted from more than two decades leading the field of entrepreneurship for disadvantaged populations in Peru that led them to understand the importance of continued support. Perspektiva begins by assessing the mindset of the entrepreneurs, then provides training and personalised technical assistance, and subsequently gives financial support through cash grants awarded through business competitions.

Another example is Somo, a YBI member based in Kenya, which has developed DigiKua, a USSD and WhatsApp-based record-keeping digital tool they often use to understand when in each entrepreneur's journey to provide services beyond the initial training. This tool allows entrepreneurs to track and manage their businesses as entrepreneurs submit their sales and expenses, automatically generating cash flows and income statements. Through the DigiKua dashboard, they can see which entrepreneurs are actively using the tool and which are dormant, allowing them to provide informed coaching and know when then to provide additional support. Somo is then able to provide aftercare support services such as linking the businesses with financial institutions to access funding, based on their business metrics.



**PERSPEKTIVA**  
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## Examples of how members offer aftercare and business support include:



**Business advisory:** In the Caribbean region, the Youth Business Trusts' aftercare frameworks comprise specialised business advisory services such as market research, design and packaging, branding, sales etc. In France, the YBI member Adie has a business advisory programme called "Coach Adie", where volunteers support entrepreneurs. The relationship can be short-term or long-term (e.g., one session per month for a year), depending on the need of that specific entrepreneur. The support is a prerequisite for accessing financing and helps solidify the business ideas.



**Targeted operational support:** Barbados Youth Business Trust has developed periodical business clinics for their members to support very specific legal, operational challenges and knowledge gaps. They partner with an enterprise that provides this targeted legal advice for their young entrepreneurs. In Nigeria, FATE Foundation offers two clinics every month with specific topics requested by the entrepreneurs.



**Testing through pitches and competitions:** In Bolivia, YBI member Manq'a runs a competition called "Make Your Business a Reality". It targets entrepreneurs who have finished training to help them strengthen their business plans and pitch them. Winners receive seed capital and continue to receive support through training and business management advice. Sinapis in Kenya uses business competitions to boost confidence of women in their programme. Pitch practice and one-on-one support received during these competitions helps entrepreneurs feel strong in their business models and strategy.



**Networking & Community Building:** In Nigeria, FATE Foundation leverages alumni networks as a platform where knowledge and experiences, business advice, and risk mitigation strategies are openly shared. These collective intelligence platforms and broad-based networking support are important in fostering business growth and help entrepreneurs incorporate feedback into their business. FATE Foundation has also turned the service into an online support function. The Enterprise Ecomap is Nigeria's first online, centralised, keyword-searchable, indexed data source of advice and digital mentoring support for entrepreneurs. Additionally, FATE Foundation itself remains accessible to its entrepreneurs for ongoing emotional and community support services.

## The Impact of Business Development: Leveraging training for a solid start

Joan, a young entrepreneur trained by Enterprise Uganda who joined their High Flyers programme, noted that the training she received has been extremely helpful because it has opened her eyes to so much. When Joan joined the programme, her business was around a year old, and she had little knowledge on how to grow it. After joining the programme, she acquired useful skills such as bookkeeping, properly pricing her products, learning how to save and open a bank account, among other skills. She has since seen her business grow.

Another entrepreneur, Ibu Renny (right), received training on managing her finances better for her small bed linen business from YCAB Foundation in Indonesia, allowing her to leave her old job to focus entirely on her new venture.



©YCAB Foundation





## Entrepreneur Spotlight:

How Positive Planet France helped Sirine with business advice and ongoing mentoring support



When Sirine was younger, she and her sisters enjoyed finding old clothes and giving them new life. They used their creativity to design interesting pieces for special occasions and add excitement to the daily wardrobe. Along with being a fun activity, recycling clothes represented their awareness of the adverse effects fast fashion and the extensive use of resources that buying new clothes frequently leads to.

When she finished school at 17, Sirine started looking for employment, which proved to be challenging. During her search, she learned about Positive Planet, a YBI member in France supporting young entrepreneurs to get their ideas off the ground. This became the starting point for Sirine to pursue her ambition of becoming an entrepreneur and creating her job.

In the beginning, Sirine did not have a strong idea about what she wanted to do. Still, she kept recalling how she used to design beautiful dresses from recycled clothes and was driven by her desire to do something with a positive impact. In early 2019, Sirine met Sylvie, an entrepreneurship advisor from Positive Planet in Nice. They met ten times as part of Positive Planet's programme for young entrepreneurs, and during one of their first meetings, Sylvie asked Sirine to formulate an idea and solidify it by writing it out.

**"I noticed that Sirine was a very engaging person to be around, and she had a strong wish to create a business that would both enable her to take charge of her life, but also with a positive impact on the world."**

With Sylvie's counselling and support, Sirine began working on her idea - a rental business with dresses she intended to upcycle herself. Sylvie then helped Sirine to register her business and provided guidance on how to develop the business plan.

In addition to providing help with the initial business idea and administrative work, Sylvie introduced Sirine to business financials and helped her enrol in a local incubator programme called Ouvre Boite, from which Sirine has since graduated and now supports as an active alumnus. As Sylvie explains:

**"When we first met, I noticed that she needed to trust her idea and gain confidence in her ability to develop the business. So besides the concrete, technical support with the legal registration, we also created opportunities for Sirine to boost her confidence. It could be to sign up for entrepreneurship competitions or speak at events about her business and journey."**

Sirine has used her entrepreneurial mindset to pivot her business twice. The first time came when the incubator programme offered an opportunity to have her clothes sold at the department store Printemps. As she built her initial business on the rental of upcycled dresses for special occasions, she had to come up with clothes that she could sell more widely. In one week, she produced eight new pieces and has since become more confident in the idea of selling her upcycled clothes.

The second pivot came when COVID-19 hit. Initially, Sirine sold her clothes through local stores, but with lockdowns closing the store, she has worked to create an online web shop instead. She also worked with a friend to create a new line of head accessories called *"Beauty Veil"*, to expand her market reach. Asked about why she focused on launching new products while the pandemic created a challenging time for her business, she focuses on the opportunity;

**"I wanted to continue my work because I am excited to satisfy my customers and am really happy that I can create this myself."**

Throughout the official programme with Positive Planet, Sylvie noticed how Sirine developed as an entrepreneur. Most notable, besides the growth of her business, Sirine decided to change the name of her business to Maison Beca. In France, the word "Maison" signifies a fashion house of high quality. And for Sylvie, it was a clear testament to how Sirine grew more convinced about her product and her capabilities.

This grit has also translated into a positive outlook for the future despite the COVID-19 lockdowns. Before the pandemic, Sirine worked with other entrepreneurs in the upcycling business to create a space to sell and work on their clothes, the way she did with her sisters when she was younger. Despite the setback, she is adamant that the space will open when the pandemic is over.

**"I am so happy I decided to pursue this idea of becoming an entrepreneur. It has given me so many opportunities to explore what I am capable of, and I am becoming a lot more confident in my ideas. I hope to open spaces all over France and maybe even abroad one day."**



## Member insights from their experience with business development programming

As they deal with the shifting realities and needs of the entrepreneurs, members continue to learn and evolve the content of the training they deliver and how it is delivered. While these learnings may have emerged due to contextualised feedback and observations, they are widely applicable to different members of the network.

For example, technological changes in planning were quickly implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Florian Paysan, former Research Information Officer at Alianca Brazil, said:

**"Because of the pandemic, we needed to focus on online courses. We have a platform that hosts many courses, but in Brazil, people who are low income don't have total access to the internet or a computer, so we needed to think of other solutions. We worked with training on WhatsApp – which is widely used in Brazil. The main issue we are collecting data on is the impact of the new training since it is shorter. We need to assess the impact and quality of these new approaches. Retention is also a question, and we are not sure if they were consuming the content consistently."**

There is also a clear need to balance the intention to be human-centred and considerate of each entrepreneur, which has been made more challenging by the pandemic. However, it was already an area of difficulty. Dunja Buchhaupt, Mentor Manager at KIZ Germany, noticed:

**"The challenge is implementing a programme that serves everyone. The needs and know-how are different throughout the group. We have basic courses, but everyone comes with their own package and backgrounds. We figured out open and individual coaching to provide more personalised support. Our entrepreneurs required a tailor-made programme."**

This is also reflected in the updated approach of Perspektiva in Peru. They found it necessary to be flexible and adapt the training to the needs of the entrepreneurs. Hence, one of the training modules they offer is open to allow content to vary as needed. For example, they offered English training to artisans to interact with tourists and greenhouse training to strawberry producers when the need arose. They noticed that, in the beginning, it was difficult to implement this flexibility because it was necessary to look for experts in those specific topics who were willing to go to rural areas, but they now have a pool of experts who can deliver this service.

In another example, Hatch Enterprises, a YBI member based in the United Kingdom, applies a similar approach when tailoring their training to the young entrepreneurs they serve. Their Impact Programme, targeting entrepreneurs in the social and environmental space, consists of eight workshop sessions that are fully co-designed with participants. Before each module, a co-design session is held with the participating cohort to understand their knowledge of a particular topic and identify gaps. Hatch is then able to tailor content for the cohort, thus making the entire training programme relevant. Likewise, for their Female Founder Programme that caters to women and other marginalised groups with a focus on ethnic minorities, the co-creation of training material is introduced in the second half of the programme, following delivery of core concepts in the first half. Participants then collectively identify their challenge areas, which become the focus for the remainder of the programme.





## Enabling Environment Facilitation

After the business idea is concretely developed with resources to get it off the ground identified and/or taught, members facilitate the young entrepreneur's interaction with an environment conducive to building and sustaining the business - namely, access to both finance and market opportunities.

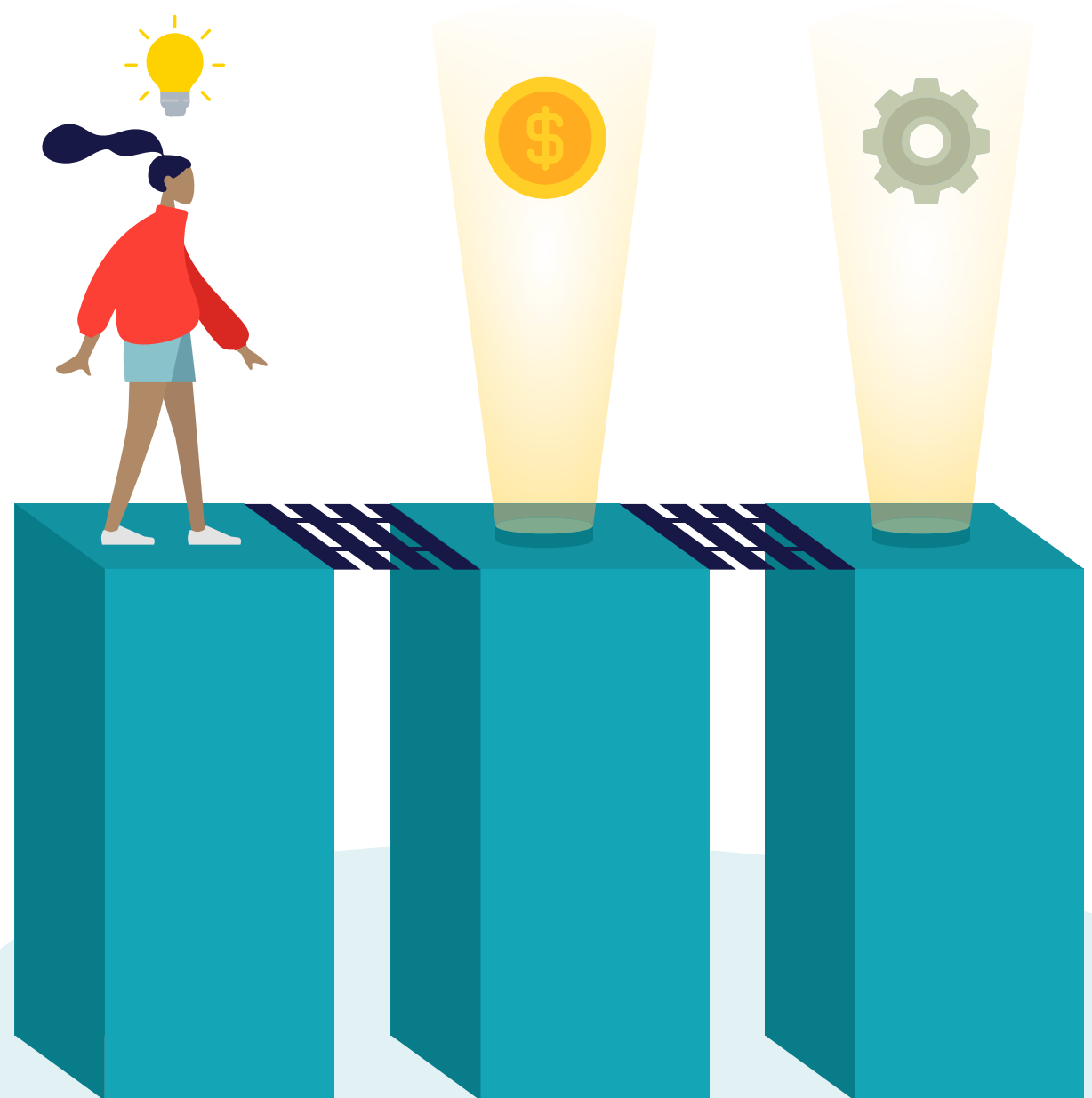
Each member's network differs, as does the approach used to connect their entrepreneurs to opportunities.

As members are entrenched in the local communities, they work to develop supportive ecosystems and partnerships to help young entrepreneurs by identifying organisations and financial institutions that can complement their service offerings.

### Supporting access to finance

Members provide financial support directly or indirectly depending on entrepreneurial needs and the resources available to members. Members also help entrepreneurs to explore alternative funding models, i.e., crowdfunding and savings groups.

Direct financial support is often extended to businesses that have undergone mandatory training and mentoring, providing direct financial support in the form of seed capital, grants or low-interest loans.



For example, microStart, a YBI member based in Belgium, offers microcredit and guidance to entrepreneurs who cannot receive financing from the traditional banking system. In addition, microStart promotes a vision in which everyone, regardless of income, education, or origin, can take their destiny into their own hands. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they created zero per cent interest funds with partners to support entrepreneurs impacted by the crisis. The loans were given in combination with microcredit, and the re-payments could be delayed allowing flexibility to business owners experiencing financial difficulties during this time. In Belgium, for every 1€ invested in microStart, after 2 years €4 is generated for local community.<sup>32</sup>

Another member that uses a direct financing model, combined with indirect support, is Qredits – a YBI member in the Netherlands. Qredits helps entrepreneurs to successfully start or invest in their company. They offer mentoring, online tools and financial products ranging from low micro-credit loans to larger subordinate loans with flexible credit.

Members provide indirect financial support to help navigate opportunities, in which they offer training and negotiate for low-interest loans from credit facilities. For example, the High Flyers Programme delivered by Enterprise Uganda and ICCO Uganda does not offer direct financial support to the entrepreneurs, instead equipping them with financial literacy and financial management training. Additionally, from work done

with Caribbean members, a key finding was that partnerships with established financial institutions are achievable and have the added benefit of freeing up the organisation's time to focus on other supporting activities. These partnerships also facilitate linkages between the entrepreneurs and financial institutions to enable young entrepreneurs to create relationships that would result in them accessing funding.

This support helps young entrepreneurs to become more aware of the requirements to access loans from banks; exposes them to the types of financial products available to meet their needs; have the information needed to make strategic loan decisions and decide to separate their personal and business finances by creating separate bank accounts.

Sky's The Limit (STL), a YBI member located in the United States, uses a combination of the two methods. It has found that risk-tolerant financing options such as micro-grants are a good option for early-stage businesses because it allows them to grow organically and sustainably. Their Friends & Family Fund awards at least one grant of up to \$2,500 per month, and for special pitch opportunities grants up to \$20,000 have been awarded. Beyond this direct provision of financing, they support young entrepreneurs with indirect access to finance by connecting young people to funding opportunities that emerge through their network of NGOs, chambers of commerce, and corporate partners. They guide young entrepreneurs through the application process, providing them

with mentors and supporting them with securing any additional documentation -such as letters of recommendation- when required.

It should also be noted that members prioritise the accessibility of these financial services. For example, FATEN – a YBI member located in Palestine – introduced financial services designed for people with disabilities and for green and eco-friendly projects to increase the percentage of people they help by 10% by the end of 2021. This promotes access to alternative and innovative sources of funding for refugee and migrant entrepreneurs, including crowdfunding, peer-to-peer lending, self-finance groups and cooperatives; diaspora investment; Islamic finance; and matching funds.



## Creating market opportunities

Members facilitate access to market opportunities that allow young entrepreneurs to promote and sell their products and services. In Trinidad and Tobago, Youth Business Trinidad & Tobago's Trust training programme offers agriculture-based training modules in line with the country's economic activity. To complement this, they work with stakeholders in the agriculture ecosystem to identify niche markets with products to propose to entrepreneurs. Their portfolio of niche products available in Trinidad and Tobago can be expanded beyond the domestic market into the entire Caribbean region and into predetermined international markets in which they have identified potential.

YBI member TechnoServe in South Africa helps young entrepreneurs access markets through different channels such as product exhibitions in which they find exhibitions on behalf of the entrepreneurs and facilitate connecting young entrepreneurs to physical and online retail opportunities. They also introduced the Box Shop incubation programme, which is a 10-month retail readiness programme aimed at developing entrepreneurs within the fashion value chain. For this programme, they identify existing businesses operating in Gauteng, South Africa that want to launch into the market or those that are looking for more distribution channels for their products. They then facilitate market access through the Box Shop, a retail platform that houses products made in South Africa by local black designers.

Many Rivers, a YBI member in Australia, supports young entrepreneurs based in rural and remote populations where business development and growth are limited due to distance from potential customers and markets. To support market access, they have initiated a pilot programme that has been in effect for over three years. Pop-up shops containing products produced by affiliated young entrepreneurs are featured before the December holidays in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Many Rivers gives 100% of the profits to the entrepreneurs.

In response to COVID-19 in Armenia, YBI member Jinishian Memorial Foundation (JMF) introduced a market access intervention programme to support young entrepreneur businesses, particularly those based outside of the capital city. Due to the pandemic, most of these businesses were at a strong risk of default and required immediate and active support in accessing markets within the capital and abroad to survive. A 3-step support approach was used.

The first level of support was matching these young entrepreneurs with professional management consultants who guided them in developing sales and marketing strategies that would propel them into different markets. Secondly, a robust team of digital experts consisting of social media marketers, web and graphic designers, and professional photographers was engaged to support the young entrepreneurs in incorporating a strong digital component into their marketing strategies. Lastly, JMF facilitated the link between the entrepreneurs and businesses in various verticals, acting as liaisons and mediators to arrange business-to-business meetings.





## The Impact of Creating an Enabling Environment: Exploring opportunities

With member support, young entrepreneurs have been able to identify and take advantage of various opportunities to access finance and markets – with clear linkages to business benefits. In India, BYST supported young entrepreneur, Shantanu Dandage, by working closely with him on the application process for him to secure a much-needed loan and paired him with a business mentor. Shantanu successfully received the loan, thanks to BYST's help, in February 2020. He was then able to sustain his business during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another example of how members help to provide access specifically to finance opportunities is Relina Coward, a young entrepreneur who received support from Barbados Youth Business Trust, in the form of a direct loan for \$18,000 Bajan Dollars (USD \$9,000) to fund the construction of the professional production facility she occupies today for her business, Healthy Fruit Juices. Relina's business was then able to supply fruit juices to 4 small shops, 2 supermarkets and 2 primary schools in Barbados.

In terms of access to markets, one such example is Viola Lam's experience in which she received support from Youth Business Hong Kong (YBHK), a YBI member. Viola was able to use YBHK's promotional channels, such as exhibitions and networking events, to give her business - FS Education - the media coverage and exposure needed to create better awareness of its tutoring programme. That led to an influx of customers, parents in particular, who wanted to know learn more about her unique teaching method on behalf of their children.



©Barbados Youth Business Trust



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## Entrepreneur Spotlight:

### How Somo Kenya helped Jeniffer to create opportunities for unemployed mothers



In 2018 Jeniffer lost her job as a legal assistant at a law firm and decided the time to start her own business was now. Jeniffer, who was born in Meru County in Kenya but grew up in Nairobi, has always found farming interesting, and from an early age, she experimented with different crops. Near her school, she found a place where kids could do small farming projects and learn “green skills”.

But before she finally turned to full-time farming, life took her elsewhere. The job as a legal assistant happened a bit by chance. While studying business management, Jeniffer went for a student programme at a law firm, which turned into a job as a legal assistant. However, the thought of starting her own business in farming always lingered with her. She already knew what crops were profitable, what the market saturation was, and where the export potential of different agricultural products was high. She had investigated tomatoes and onions but found that chillies had potential. The Kenyan market was far from saturated, and Jeniffer was excited to explore the potential she saw in her new adventure with True Kijani Farm.

A key challenge for many start-ups and early-stage small businesses in Kenya is access to finance. Most investors and financial institutions focus heavily on the cash flow, financial projections, and performance results before considering extending loans or engage in investments. Typically, this is not information or experience young, and early-stage entrepreneurs have available.

**“It is difficult to access finance if you don’t have your business plans and financial documents to show. We know it is a huge obstacle for young entrepreneurs with a good idea,”**

says Joshua Onialo, Acceleration Programme Manager from Somo Kenya, a YBI member supporting young entrepreneurs from low-income communities.

Jeniffer knew she needed help to get the money she needed for equipment to start the chilli farm. She learned about Somo Kenya and their Buruka programme for young entrepreneurs from a friend and decided to apply for the three months training and hoped to access financial support for her idea. Initially, she thought she knew all there was to know about farming, so her interest was mainly in the financial backing Somo offered, but she quickly realised that the Buruka programme provided her so much more. “The training was so valuable to me. I learned about the entrepreneur journey and how to consider many sides of my business, like managing employees, tax returns, meeting with investors, and finding market opportunities. And the direct personal support has been outstanding. I always have someone to reach out to when I have doubts or want to discuss something”, she says.

After completing the three-month training programme in early 2020 and developing a solid pitch together with a business plan and financial projections for her chilli products, she got access to a seed grant, which allowed her to invest in equipment for her farm. She also enrolled in Somo's accelerator programme and continue to enjoy the marketing services Somo offer to the entrepreneurs from their programmes.

Somo Kenya has put in a lot of effort to help entrepreneurs reach markets with their products. They have created an online sales platform where entrepreneurs from the Somo network are featured, and they leverage their broad network across Kenya to provide market opportunities by connecting entrepreneurs with partners around the country. They also include established business leaders in their acceleration programme, creating visibility for the entrepreneurs through pitching sessions and mentorships. For Jeniffer, these opportunities have been essential to get her product to customers all over Kenya. She now sells through the Somo platform and uses the Somo alumni network to find new opportunities to sell her chilli sauce, chilli powder, chilli flakes, and mango pickles.

Today, Jeniffer employs four people. But besides the successful growth over the past two years, Jeniffer's business also serves another important purpose. Since she started her company, she has been keen to offer employment opportunities to unemployed women. Being a single mother with two children herself, she knows how important it is for women to get a job to provide for themselves and their children.

She made it a principle for her business to only hire women, except for the one man, who does transport and lifting tasks. This social impact was also a critical part of her application to the Somo Buraka programme, and she hopes to grow her business with international exports in the future so she can hire even more women to develop her chilli venture.





## Member insights from fostering and tapping into enabling environments

Because of their local knowledge and established positions, YBI members have a unique understanding of the opportunities that exist for young entrepreneurs. At the same time, the networks that members have built over the years through their work often plays an important role in facilitation opportunities for the entrepreneurs.

**"I have worked as an entrepreneurship advisor for 20 years now, so I always try to see what my networks can offer to the young entrepreneurs that I work with. My connections from other entrepreneurship programmes and incubators are useful, but also my knowledge and networks at business associations, foundations etc., are very helpful. And we also know about all the different government programmes and foundations that support young entrepreneurs with funding to get started."**

### Sylvie Passeron

Entrepreneurship Advisor and Manager  
Positive Planet, Nice, France

In connecting their young entrepreneurs to opportunities, members have seen that some young entrepreneurs may require handholding to navigate external resources.

**"I want to see the local support ecosystem working more closely together. We created an ecosystem map for which organisations provide what and who entrepreneurs should be talking to. It worked in the past – we did an event where all were brought into the same space like a career fair, and mentors helped the entrepreneur to navigate it."**

### Shedron Collins

Youth Business Trinidad and Tobago



A smiling man in a white shirt is standing in a greenhouse, holding a small tree sapling. To his left is a plant with bright red flowers. The background shows the structure of the greenhouse and some greenery outside.

# 6. Expanding on entrepreneur journeys



## Expanding on Entrepreneur Journeys

While the report has presented entrepreneur journeys in each section of the YBI approach deep dives, the following takes a more complete look at how the entrepreneur journey is driven by the actions of passionate young entrepreneurs, the YBI members who support them throughout it all, and the mentors who provide personal support. The following two entrepreneurs represent how YBI approach has been applicable—despite differences in location, background, and their products—through personalised support.







## Innovating to Simplify Agricultural Practices for Farmers in India

Yogesh Gawande

**With an innovative spray system, 23-year-old Yogesh Gawande, founder of Niyo Innovative Solutions LLP, has created a business helping farmers in India to ease the burden of spraying their field and created the foundation for others to start businesses as well.**

Yogesh's journey as an entrepreneur began when he created an innovative wheels-based pesticide sprayer as a project in school. Knowing that farmers usually carry heavy, 20-litre tanks on their back when they work in their fields, he wanted to create a better solution that would make their work easy. His project won an award, and he was encouraged by fellow students and his community to take the project further and create a business selling the sprayer system. Inspired by the rural area he grew up in, Yogesh created a sprayer that would help the farmers reduce the time and cost of spraying their fields and the wheels-based system, with four nozzles. The sprayer can spray four rows at a time, allowing the work of four people to be done using just one machine.

In 2018, Yogesh saw an advertisement for Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) in a newspaper. Yogesh – who at this point had already sold about 300-400 units – connected with BYST and participated in their Awareness Generation Programme. As part of the

programme, he enrolled in training, and BYST began supporting him directly by advising him on how to improve his products and business after he completed his engineering degree.

The support from BYST also included mentoring. He was connected to a local business leader from a blow moulding company, who guided him on how to improve his product. The mentor offered Yogesh that he could use his factory and learn from the experienced team working there. This opportunity to learn and work with the professional team at the mentor's factory allowed him to develop a new tank, new nozzles and complete the redesigned product in 2019.

**“I didn't have much knowledge of design, so I learned it in my mentor's factory. The team working there taught me how the process works and helped me to design my product tank. I spent about three months working there, and afterwards, they helped me find a good place for my own workshop,”**

says Yogesh, while explaining the crucial support to his product development.

Another essential factor in BYST's support to Yogesh was helping his funding. In 2019, Yogesh received a grant of rupees 8 lakh or roughly USD 10,600. He used the grant for manufacturing and purchasing raw materials and was able to leverage free online resources to market his product.

Additionally, BYST also connected Yogesh with the entrepreneurs across India through their Entrepreneur Exchange Programme for resource and knowledge exchange among the young entrepreneurs. These connections helped Yogesh find new markets for his product, and he still enjoys the support from BYST. “We continue to support Yogesh with his ongoing training on specific topics as well as access to the mentors of BYST”. said Mohanish Wagh, a project manager at BYST. “The ongoing support from BYST and the other entrepreneurs I met through BYST really gives me confidence because I know I can always reach out to get some help to solve a problem I might face”, said Yogesh.



Yogesh's business has had a ripple effect, leaving an impact on his life, family, and community. When he first considered starting his business, his father expressed doubts and encouraged him to search for a job instead. Today, his father is an important partner in the company and often identifies opportunities for new products that solve specific agricultural challenges for farmers. With his 25 years of experience as a farmer himself, he often has some good ideas for what problem they could solve.

Yogesh has also signed up as a mentor for some university students and allows them to make products using his factory and supports them with materials to develop their own ideas. He guides them on how they can convert their projects to actual products capable of turning them into businesses. In this way, Yogesh now gives back what he was fortunate to get from his mentor. But Yogesh's products have also laid the foundation for others to start businesses.

Around 20-30 farmers who have bought the sprayer have started renting the machines to the others: an idea that inspired Yogesh to do the same in his village as well. Like many other businesses, Yogesh was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. When lockdowns started, he could not supply his customers despite having received plenty of orders.

Together with his mentor, Yogesh managed to seek new opportunities. The sprayer could be used for sanitisation purposes. He managed to sell the sprayers to hospitals, companies, and factories to sanitise their facilities and equipment. This pivot has allowed him to sustain his business through the pandemic, and he now plans to expand his product line with more innovations that can help farmers become more efficient in the field. Today he has three people working on research and development and five people working on manufacturing.

## Yogesh x BYST

Establishing and building Niyo Innovative Solutions LLC



Yogesh creates his **product**, winning a competition.

BYST begins **providing technical guidance and training** through the Awareness Generation Programme to help Yogesh develop his product and business.

BYST matches Yogesh to his **mentor**, a local business leader relevant to his product.

BYST supports Yogesh with a **grant** of 8 Lakh Rupees, or roughly \$10,600 USD.

Yogesh **networks with peers** in the BYST-coordinated Entrepreneur Exchange Programme, allowing for resource-sharing.

Yogesh continues to receive support from BYST through **ongoing training programmes and mentor matching**.

Yogesh has an **established business** that has impacted his community, inspired his family, employed **8 people**, and given the means for others to become entrepreneurs using his product.



## Attaining the skills to transform knowledge into a viable business

Olabisi Akinbajo

By making shea butter more pleasant to use, 29-year-old Olabisi Akinbajo has built a growing beauty brand, Toke Cosmetics, while empowering women in rural communities.

With Olabisi as its leader, Toke Cosmetics in Nigeria is a skincare and cosmetics company with big ambitions offering shea butter, natural soap, body oil and lotions manufactured from scratch. The idea for the company came about when Olabisi wanted to use shea butter but found that the smell made the experience rather unpleasant. Shea butter has many dermatological benefits she wanted to share with her community, and she set out to make the ingredient more appealing to consumers, thereby filling a gap in the market.

She started the company with some technical know-how after having studied industrial chemistry at university in 2013, and she worked with a few people to develop the formula for the product. However, she realised that she needed some support on how to run and grow her business. In 2018, she enrolled in the one-month Aspiring Entrepreneurs training programme with FATE Foundation, a YBI member in Nigeria. During the training programme, she learned

how to take her business online, and she acquired important skills to structure it better through courses on accounting, taxes, hiring, and other management topics covered. The training programme also helped Olabisi strengthen her mindset as an entrepreneur. Through the programme, Olabisi grew more confident in her knowledge and leadership skills, and she gained the strength needed to overcome her fears around management and leadership.

**“One thing I like about the training with FATE Foundation is that it made me feel good about myself. We had many activities focused on learning about ourselves, and we did personality tests and learned to see the impact of our behaviour more clearly. We used to role-play and case studies and had to present to the rest of the participants,”**

she explains.

Following the training programme, Olabisi has continued to tap into the support network from both her peers and the business advisors from FATE Foundation. For example, one of the alumni from her training group helped her with marketing her products and building a website for her business.

FATE Foundation continues to provide Olabisi with real-time support. They have been consistently accessible to provide her with guidance and support throughout her journey and provided access to new markets by allowing her to exhibit products and collect feedback.

“Twice a week, we have consulting clinics for the alumni network. The support to alumnus is a major focus area for us because we know that they often face challenges after they end the training programme. The clinics address important topics and provide an opportunity for the entrepreneurs to learn from each other and the advisors. Olabisi has often attended the clinics,” explains Fatai Olayemi, Head of Growth Support Services at FATE Foundation.

FATE Foundation was also able to help Olabisi access a loan for her business in 2019, connecting her to a support programme from the Central Bank of Nigeria, a partner of FATE Foundation. Through the programme, young entrepreneurs receive affordable funding opportunities for their small business.

Since founding Toke Cosmetics, Olabisi has worked with women in rural areas of Nigeria to extract sesame oil and process the shea butter. Her business has also grown, requiring her to hire employees.

Today, Olabisi has 20 permanent staff members and contracts out to rural women helping to create her products. She has over 50 distributors nationwide and sells her products to supermarkets across Nigeria and more than 100 wholesalers.





## Olabisi x FATE Foundation

Establishing and building Toke Cosmetics



Olabisi has an established business that has 20 permanent staff members and contracts out to rural women who produce the raw materials for her products. She has 50 distributors and sells her products via 100 wholesalers.

FATE Foundation helps Olabisi acquire a **loan** in 2019 through connecting her with their partner, the Central Bank of Nigeria.

Olabisi **continues to receive real-time support** from FATE Foundation staff members and via their social media content.

Olabisi taps into the network she accessed through FATE Foundation to get marketing support.

To the top

Olabisi **enrols in the Aspiring Entrepreneurs Training Programme with FATE Foundation**, gaining technical skills and personal development skills through training and networking opportunities.

Olabisi **develops her product** and begins her business, Toke Cosmetics.



# 7. Achieving impact on behalf of aspiring young entrepreneurs

## Achieving impact on behalf of aspiring young entrepreneurs

Support for young entrepreneurs is critical to overcoming the youth unemployment challenge the world faces.

Achieving this goal can be made possible by multiplying the number of opportunities offered to young people with good ideas. The impact potential of youth entrepreneurship will not be achieved by one idea but by the aggregate sum of ideas that get a chance to grow. Scaling efforts to help young entrepreneurs in local communities who can create new employment and income opportunities requires concerted efforts from a range of stakeholders within government, the private sector and civil society.

As established at the outset of this report, youth unemployment is a pervasive problem plaguing societies worldwide. YBI and its network of members have offered a viable solution, and their leadership in doing so over the past 20 years is evident throughout this report. The members have highlighted the value the resources provided by YBI has had on their programming and curriculum development. And the stories of the young people themselves illustrate the positive impact their growth has on their respective lives, their families, and their communities.



# 34,000

young entrepreneurs have secured a job



# 78,000

young entrepreneurs supported still trading



# 81,000

young entrepreneurs strengthened their existing business



# 100,000

jobs created by young entrepreneurs



**YBI's unique approach, combined with members' local implementation methods, has enabled young people to better fulfil their potential.** They have collectively generated lasting impact as they share best practices and critical learnings with the aspiration to continually evolve and improve. Their integrated approach puts young entrepreneurs, particularly those who are disadvantaged, at the centre of all they do.

**The network of globally dispersed members successfully creates space for high-quality knowledge sharing and collaboration through a trust carefully built and maintained by YBI.** And the benefit to young entrepreneurs can be seen in the commitment of the people involved in driving the support. YBI members carefully match mentors and facilitate transparent peer-to-peer conversations, as well as provide ongoing support to help the entrepreneurs through the varying obstacles that arise through their entrepreneurial journey.

**With the support, young entrepreneurs have learned resilience, formed positive mindsets, gained technical skills needed to develop their businesses, and attained the access to finance, markets and networks needed to enable their success and foundation for future growth.**

**The young people who participate in these programmes are proof that YBI's unique methods work, and they continue to inform the evolution of those methods as new technology and societal needs emerge and impediments to establishing a business arise.** It is worth reiterating here that the individual

outcomes of the programmes differ according to the path charted by each young person. Some will go on to become successful entrepreneurs who transform the idea developed with support from the YBI member organisation into a lasting business. But others will fail on that first try, and – using the resilience they learned during training – they will pick up the pieces and try again. Still, others will become successful employees who support their companies with their talents and bright ideas; and others become solopreneurs who never employ others but will financially provide for their families.

**All these journeys empower youth, and all of them are enabled by YBI's approach to preparing young people for entrepreneurship.**

While YBI has indeed impacted the lives of young people and their communities, there remains a growing opportunity to curb the worsening youth unemployment problem by scaling their programmes. YBI has also indicated an intention to lead the incorporation of more inclusive practices in efforts to empower more marginalised young people; guide how to encourage and support social and green enterprises, and technically prepare young people for an increasing shift to digital platforms. This necessitates an expanded membership and partnership base committed to youth entrepreneurship that can support and adopt these methods. **YBI has the potential to expand its reach and deepen its impact with the support of the global community for the betterment of young people and their communities.**



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# Thank You

Sharing YBI's experience and learnings have been made possible by:

- the young entrepreneurs who challenge them to do better and inspire them with their ideas and the passion with which they realise them,
- the members who motivate them and ground them in their lived experiences,
- their partners who share their deep commitment to enabling youth entrepreneurship,
- the mentors who volunteer their time to help young people bring their dreams to fruition.





## Afterword

YBI, from its inception, has been grounded in its values. Tenacity - we won't give up until every young entrepreneur has the opportunity to succeed. Collaboration - We work together, building trust to connect and empower. Quality - we strive to set the highest standards in youth entrepreneurship support. These tenets have guided us for the past twenty years and will guide us into our future.

This research has helped us articulate our integrated approach to making entrepreneurship inclusive and within reach and explains how we help each young person to beat the odds and achieve their full potential. We believe this is the foundation through which we will continue to grow our impact. We are pleased to share our blueprint for effective entrepreneurship with others.

As we look to tomorrow and the next twenty years, we recognise we are living in a rapidly changing world filled with opportunities and challenges. We need to be ready to equip a new generation of young people with even more inclusive youth entrepreneurship services. We will help young entrepreneurs start and grow green and social businesses and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world. In our work, we will drive innovation and digital transformation of youth entrepreneurship services as well as help young people embed digital solutions into their business models.

We hope you will engage with us on our journey to continue to make entrepreneurship within reach to young people across the globe.

**Anita Tiessen**

CEO | Youth Business International





## About the YBI - Accenture Partnership

As a long-standing supporter of Youth Business International, Accenture has been essential over the last decade in helping YBI increase the size and impact of their global network. Today, the partnership is multi-faceted, and the network continues to expand the number of young people it supports. YBI members are providing budding entrepreneurs with access to business mentoring, training and capital, and they are helping to hone this younger generation's skills and build their businesses in a rapidly evolving economy and environment.

Accenture is proud to act as an advisor and partner to YBI, providing the funding, time and skills of their employees to guide YBI's strategic development in empowering underserved youth. In recent years, Accenture and Accenture Foundations have awarded YBI and its country members more than \$11 million in both cash and pro bono services.

As part of the Skills to Succeed corporate citizenship initiative, which aims to train people with the skills to get a job or build a business, Accenture has provided valuable support to grow and strengthen YBI's global network. Over the last five years alone, Accenture and YBI have worked together to equip some 250,000 young people with the skills necessary for success in a digital future focused on sustainability.

In recent years, a key aspect of this partnership has been stimulating innovation and digital approaches for both YBI members and young entrepreneurs, alongside building the core capabilities of members around the world in skills such as mentoring and training. Accenture's support has been particularly critical during COVID-19, enabling the network to rapidly pivot to the virtual delivery of crucial support for entrepreneurs and global crisis mentoring and skills for young entrepreneurs.



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Click the arrows to return to the references

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# Dalberg

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The findings in the report were the result of in-depth research encompassing over 70 document reviews, multiple group discussions and many one-on-one interviews with member organisations and young entrepreneurs. Raw data collected by YBI and members from 2014 through 2020 was also reviewed.

