



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION: Executive Version

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The International Youth Foundation first wishes to thank Microsoft for its strong support of the Youth Empowerment Program since 2007. The leadership provided by Microsoft's Community Affairs program in Africa has demonstrated the power of partnership to enhance opportunities for disadvantaged young people across the continent. Special thanks are due to our main counterparts in Microsoft's Community Affairs program in Africa: Jeffrey Avina, Ntutule Tshenye, Heather Third, Abey Tau, Mark Matunga, Alex Nyingi, Samba Guissé, and Jummai Umar-Ajjola. Their vision of empowering African youth and believing in the ability of young people to contribute to their communities and their countries have inspired all of the partners engaged in the Youth Empowerment Program.

The Youth Empowerment Program evaluation presented here owes a debt of gratitude to the young people in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania who participated in the evaluation. We also express our heartfelt thanks to the local partner organizations – the African Centre for Women, Information & Communications Technology (ACWICT); the Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI) of the Strathmore Educational Trust; LEAP Africa; NairoBits; Synapse Center; and the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) – who led the on-the-ground implementation of the program and were so generous with their time in participating in the evaluation. In particular, we acknowledge Constantine Obuya, Tom Siambi, Andrew Olea, Emmanuel Oduor, Cecil Agutu, Mosun Layode, Ngozi Obigwe, Oje Ivagba, Anne Ikiara, Roseirene Githige, Mark Kamau, Ciré Kane, Andrew Kitumbo, Wilhard Soko, and all of their colleagues who contributed to this work. We are grateful as well to the employers who agreed to be interviewed for the evaluation.

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We are grateful to all who contributed to the successful implementation of the Youth Empowerment Program and to the completion of the six individual project evaluation reports as well as the executive version presented here, and trust their efforts will be of use to others seeking to support effective approaches to empowering Africa's greatest asset, its young people.

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YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE VERSION

Introduction

With 28% of the population ranging from 12 to 24 years of age, Sub-Saharan Africa is the most youthful region in the world. As highlighted in the *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation*, youth are this continent's most abundant asset – representing enormous opportunities as well as challenges. The youth unemployment rate in Sub-Saharan Africa stands at around 21%, the second highest rate in the world after the Middle East and North Africa and 3.5 times higher than the adult unemployment rate in the region. Youth underemployment, particularly in rural areas, is even higher. Several factors account for high youth unemployment in Africa, including low quality of education and low levels of educational attainment, weak economic growth and investment, and a mismatch between labor market needs and available skills. Young people often lack the opportunity to gain formal work experience, while a lack of general and job-related skills also puts them at a disadvantage. Moreover, the health status of young people affects their employment situation; the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate among youth reduces their productivity and lowers chances of employment. Finally, the youth population in Sub-Saharan Africa is growing rapidly and will be a continuing demographic and socio-economic challenge in the decades ahead, making more urgent the need to empower young people to participate productively in their communities and contribute to the positive development of their countries.

From 2007 to 2010, Microsoft's Community Affairs program in Africa (Microsoft) and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) worked in partnership to address the challenges of youth employment in Africa through the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP). The YEP aimed to improve the employability and civic engagement of disadvantaged African youth, ages 16 to 35, through the provision of demand-driven training in information and communications technology (ICT), life skills, entrepreneurship, and employment services. Leveraging private sector and civil society resources, experience, and expertise to achieve common goals, the partnership supported Microsoft's programmatic and thematic objective of helping Africa realize its potential through people and technology and IYF's mission to prepare young people to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens.

Overview of the Youth Empowerment Program

Supported by a US\$1 million grant from Microsoft, the YEP was implemented by IYF and seven local partner organizations in four countries: Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania. The program leveraged additional funding support from the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, the USAID Mission in Tanzania, and the Aga Khan Foundation. The YEP aimed to reach 40,000 individuals, with 10,000 young people benefiting directly from technology, life skills, entrepreneurship, and marketable job skills training. Expected outcomes of the program included increased employability and engagement of youth beneficiaries as well as enhanced capacity of local implementing organizations in four countries to deliver high-quality youth employability programs to disadvantaged youth. Specifically, the program aimed to support skills acquisition and behavior change among youth as well as positive changes in young people's educational and work status. The YEP's target was to place at least 70% of the youth beneficiaries in internships, voluntary community service, jobs, and/or income-generating self-employment.

In the four target countries, YEP projects on the ground included the following:¹

- **Kenya**

In Kenya, the YEP partnered with three local non-profit training institutions – the African Centre for Women, Information and Communications Technology (ACWICT), the Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI), and NairoBits – to provide ICT, life skills, employability, and entrepreneurship training, job placement, and enterprise development services to over 3,300 young people in Nairobi's informal settlements and slum areas. Projects incorporated innovative approaches to equipping disadvantaged young people with technology skills needed in the local labor market, along with business planning know-how to create their own enterprises.

¹ A summary of each of the projects is included in Appendix 1.

- Nigeria**
 In Nigeria, the YEP worked with core partner LEAP Africa (Leadership Effectiveness Accountability Professionalism) and other local partner organizations in Lagos, Kano, Bauchi, Calabar, and Uyo to offer life skills and job seeking skills as well as ICT training and placement services to nearly 2,500 disadvantaged young people. The U.S. Embassy in Nigeria joined the partnership to train Muslim youth in technology and employability skills in the northern part of the country.
- Senegal**
 In Senegal, the Synapse Center offered its “Passport to Employment” and “Empacto” entrepreneurship programs to over 1,900 youth in Dakar, Tambacounda, Thiès, and Saint-Louis. Youth participants included unemployed high school graduates, current students at training colleges and universities, and unemployed school drop-outs. The program’s job and internship placement and mentoring programs involved partners in the private, public, and non-profit sectors, including chambers of commerce, apprenticeship centers, and the National Agency for Youth Employment.
- Tanzania**
 In Tanzania, the Vocational Education & Training Authority (VETA) in Dar es Salaam supported 1,500 vocational/technical students as well as 300 orphans and vulnerable children in a program providing computer and ICT training, vocational skills, life skills, and entrepreneurship training. In Zanzibar, the NGO Resource Centre (NGORC), a project of the Aga Khan Foundation, joined the YEP to offer opportunities for training in tourism and hospitality sector job skills, foreign languages, ICT and life skills; internships and job placement assistance; and business support services for 200 youth.

Evaluation Methodology and Key Findings

An external evaluation of the program was conducted between November 2009 and June 2010 as the program neared completion to determine the effectiveness of the program in achieving expected outcomes. FocusAfrica, a management consulting and research firm based in Dakar, Senegal, was contracted to perform this evaluation across the four target countries. FocusAfrica surveyed a sample of 380 youth beneficiaries from the six YEP projects approximately six months after youth exited the projects through one-on-one interviews conducted using standardized questionnaires.² Project evaluations were based on one to two cohorts (or graduating classes) as opposed to all of the youth who went through a project, given cost and time constraints. The evaluation team used baseline and exit data, captured by each project through standardized questionnaires, which they compared with *ex post* data (follow-up survey data collected approximately six months after youth exited the projects) to measure changes in youth employment, engagement, and educational outcomes. In addition, the evaluation team conducted focus group discussions with smaller groups of youth participants from each project and interviewed employers of program graduates, Microsoft staff, and local implementing organizations’ staff in each country.

By June 2010 when the independent evaluation was completed, the program had trained 9,544 youth; the program will train a total of more than 9,700 youth by the time each of the projects concludes.³ Findings of the six individual YEP project evaluation reports completed by FocusAfrica evaluators are presented below. The six individual project evaluations are included as separate appendices to this report and are available on the IYF website (www.iyfnet.org). Key findings gleaned from all of these of the evaluations, taken together, included:

- Strong outcomes in youth placement and engagement, despite challenging environments.** Based on the sample surveyed, the program recorded high rates of productive youth engagement after training, with an average placement rate of 72% when including youth who returned to school / continued education and 61% when not including those who continued their education.⁴ Across the six projects, between 52% and 94% of

² A summary of the evaluation methodology is included in Appendix 2.

³ The YEP in Zanzibar was ongoing at the time of this report’s completion; the Aga Khan Foundation project was launched in June 2009 and therefore was not included in the evaluation conducted by FocusAfrica. In Tanzania, Senegal, and Kenya, program activities continue with support from other donors and will reach additional youth past the time of the conduct of this program evaluation.

⁴ Consistent with the overall program objectives of the YEP to empower youth by enhancing employability as well as civic and community engagement, placement is defined as dependent or self-employment or participation in an internship or voluntary community service activity. If a beneficiary engaged in dependent or self-employment or participated in an internship or voluntary community service activity between the end date of his/her program and the time of the follow-up evaluation, s/he is counted in the placement rate. If a beneficiary was employed in one or more of these activities, s/he is counted only once. Though not a target outcome for participants in the program, continuing education or returning to school was also measured as an indicator of positive engagement of participants after the program.

youth found jobs (dependent or self-employment) and/or participated in internships, community service, or went back to school. In all cases where a comparison between baseline and follow-up data could be made, the percentage of youth employed increased. The increases were the greatest in the NairoBits and Synapse Center projects, where the percentages of participants employed increased by 30% and 29%, respectively, between baseline and follow-up.

These positive results are encouraging, especially when considered in light of the challenging market environments in which projects were operating, where a range of structural factors, including low capacity of local labor markets to absorb new employees and barriers to self-employment and access to credit, make achieving high placement rates quite difficult in each country. Even among youth not working (and not in school) at the time of the follow-up evaluation, projects recorded high activity rates, with youth reporting that they were actively looking for work and had positive expectations for their employment prospects.

In terms of salary, the average monthly salaries of employed graduates of the ACWICT, ISBI, and NairoBits projects were up to three times more than the monthly minimum wage in Kenya. Salaries of LEAP graduates were also above the minimum wage on average. Salary ranges in the VETA project fell within a very broad range, depending upon the vocational trade specialization selected by each participant. The majority of employed young people were contract/temporary workers who were not earning benefits, a finding consistent with youth employment trends in each country. Levels of job satisfaction ranged from 38% to 63%.

- **Promising outcomes in youth entrepreneurship and self-employment.** At the time of the follow-up evaluation, approximately 9% of program graduates surveyed were operating small businesses, the majority of which were not yet formally registered with local authorities. This finding is consistent with IYF experience in other youth employability programs, where an average of 10% of program graduates have opted to pursue self-employment. The VETA program recorded the highest rate of self-employment at six months *ex post*, with 37% reporting self-employed status. Based on YEP graduates' assessment of the impact of entrepreneurship training on their employment prospects, skills acquired through YEP training, and the rate of youth venturing into self-employment within six months of graduating, it is expected that larger numbers of program graduates will pursue self-employment in the future, especially considering local labor market characteristics which tend to favor self-employment over dependent employment.
- **Positive learning gains and impact on employment prospects from life skills, ICT, and entrepreneurship training.** Life skills data analyzed in each project evaluation reflect that YEP participants reported increases in their life skills and perceived that they were better prepared for employment. Large majorities of participants rated their ICT skills as excellent, very good or good on a range of dimensions, including computer fundamentals, use of Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, Web design, and Internet, demonstrating their increased levels of comfort in using the computer. Between 62% and 98% of participants in each of the follow-up evaluations believed that the ICT training positively impacted their employment prospects. Youth surveyed assessed their entrepreneurial skills after training as high, with an average of over 90% rating their skills in areas including business plan development, bookkeeping / accounting, management, and marketing, as either excellent, very good, or good. Large percentages of evaluation participants indicated that the entrepreneurship training had an impact upon their employment prospects (between 75% and 89% in the four countries for which data was reported).

“I can now look for jobs on the internet and apply for them online.”
- **High youth satisfaction.** An average of 95% of youth respondents rated YEP training as excellent or good, and an average of 99% said they would recommend the program to other youth without any reservations. 92% of those surveyed said their quality of life was much better or better, compared to before they started the program.
- **Positive impact on organizations' capacity and sustainability.** YEP implementing organizations reported that the program contributed to a positive impact on their own capacity and sustainability. In particular, they noted having learned helpful strategies for conducting labor market research and seeking input from employers on a regular basis, which enabled them to make their training more relevant to local needs. Some partners noted that the program helped them to develop internship programs or integrate and enhance life skills training, while others said their organizations gained experience in providing more practical and on-the-job training and introducing participatory learning techniques. All of the partners valued the program's monitoring and evaluation system, introduced by IYF, which they said improved their performance management and

organizational learning. They also reported benefiting from the learning and exchange agenda supported by the Youth Empowerment Program.

Finally, YEP partners found that the program had helped them broaden their networks and create partnerships with companies, employer associations, and placement agencies. These partnerships enhanced the visibility and sustainability of the organizations, with nearly all of the partner organizations noting that the YEP had helped them to leverage support from other donors and partners.

A More In-Depth Look at Youth Empowerment Program Results

More detailed findings are divided into the following categories: Demographic Information, Placement Rate, Employment, ICT Skills, Life Skills, Perceptions of the Future, Perceptions of the Program, Employers' Feedback on the Program, and Capacity of Local Partner Organizations.⁵

Demographic Information⁶

Although the ACWICT and ISBI projects in Kenya exclusively targeted women and men respectively, the other projects aimed to have an equal number of men and women beneficiaries. In total, 60% of program participants were male and 40% were female. (The percentages are 57% male and 43% female if the ACWICT and ISBI projects are excluded.) The predominance of male beneficiaries can partly be explained by the fact that projects primarily targeted young people who had completed secondary school; across the four countries males typically have reached higher levels of education than females and thus are more likely to have completed secondary school. Approximately 60% of YEP beneficiaries were age 24 or younger; 31% were between the ages of 25 and 30. Ninety-two percent of all participants were single at the time the program began.

Educational attainment criteria for entry into the program were defined by each project based upon local needs of youth and labor market opportunities. The table below reflects the highest level of education program participants had attained at baseline. The majority of participants had completed secondary school.

Highest Level of Education Achieved at Baseline (All Program Participants)

Level of Education	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP ⁷	SYNAPSE	VETA
Less Than Secondary School	5%	6%	1%	0%	13%	50%
Secondary School Completed	75%	82%	98%	11%	3%	45%
Some University/Tertiary Institute Studies	3%	0%	0%	20%	84%	5%
University/Tertiary Institute Studies Completed	17%	12%	1%	69%	0%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

⁵ Findings in this section are based on FocusAfrica's follow-up survey of 380 youth and review of beneficiary baseline and exit data contained in the individual project databases, which contained a total of 7,921 baseline and exit records at the time the evaluation was launched.

⁶ Demographic information was compiled from beneficiary information collected at baseline. More detailed project-by-project demographic information is available in Appendix 4.

⁷ Baseline data from LEAP Africa is only available for 21 of the 27 cohorts that participated in the project.

The table below reflects the employment status of youth participants at the beginning of the program. Although being unemployed was sometimes a criteria for being accepted into a project, partners recognized that many beneficiaries suffered from underemployment and/or low or unstable incomes even if they were employed. In these cases, the project aimed to help the young people find better jobs.

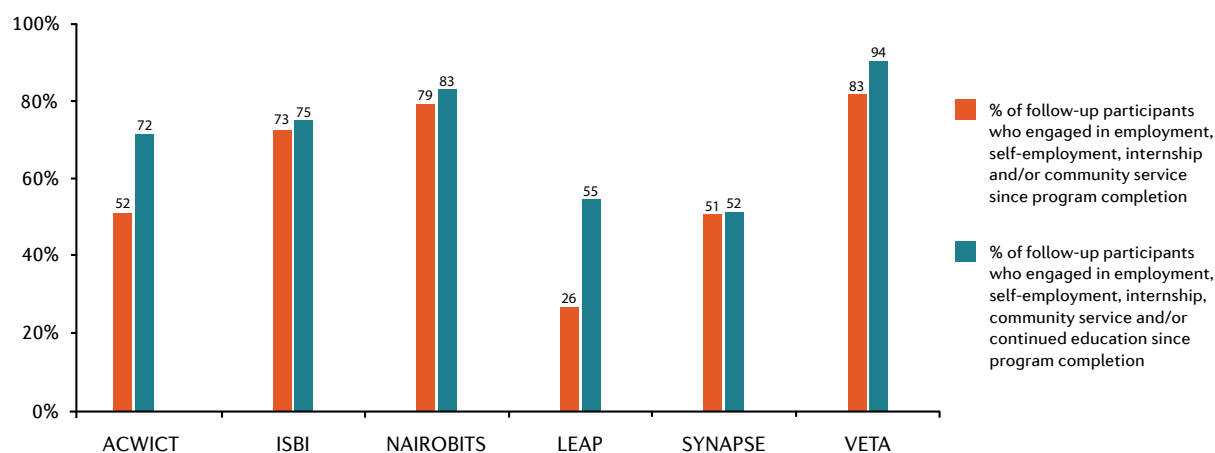
Work Status at Baseline (All Program Participants)

Work Status	KENYA		NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Employed	7%	36%	22%	13%	3%
Not Employed ⁸	93%	64%	78%	87%	97%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Placement Rate

The target placement rate⁹ for the entire program was 70%. Based upon follow-up data, the average placement rate for the entire program was 61% (with a weighted average of 59%). This increased to 72% (with a weighted average of 70%) when one takes into account those participants who continued their studies after program completion.¹⁰ The placement rates of the individual projects can be found in the table below.

Placement Rate by Project



⁸ Some young people who were not working were studying.

⁹ Consistent with the overall program objectives of the YEP to empower youth by enhancing employability as well as civic and community engagement, placement is defined as dependent or self-employment or participation in an internship or voluntary community service activity. If a beneficiary engaged in dependent or self-employment or participated in an internship or voluntary community service activity between the end date of his/her program and the time of the follow-up evaluation, s/he is counted in the placement rate. If a beneficiary was employed in one or more of these activities, s/he is counted only once. Participants who continued their studies after completing the program are not included in the placement rate.

¹⁰ Weighted averages were calculated by multiplying the placement rate by the sampled population (for each project), adding the sum of all these products and then dividing by the total number of occurrences.

In the majority of projects, the placement rate increases slightly when participants who have continued their education are taken into account. In the case of ACWICT and LEAP, however, the placement rates increase more dramatically. With respect to the ACWICT project, participants who returned school indicated that the training provided them with the ICT skills and courage necessary to complete their studies. The LEAP project, on the other hand, worked with young people who were in school; the majority of youth surveyed from the LEAP project reported planning to complete their formal studies rather than immediately seek employment.

The table below provides more detail on the activities young people engaged in after completing Youth Empowerment Program training.

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Participated in an Internship	5%	56%	49%	6%	44%	50%
Worked in a Job (Part-Time, Temporary, Contract, Staff)	41%	59%	54%	44%	47%	23%
Volunteered	31%	23%	36%	6%	6%	0%
Worked Independently	15%	23%	13%	44%	9%	37%
Went to School	26%	25%	11%	29%	1%	37%

Note: Because participants may have engaged in more than one of the above activities, the totals do not add up to 100%.

Overall, the program recorded high rates of productive youth engagement after training, with an average placement rate of 72% (when including youth who returned to school). Across the six projects, between 52% and 94% of youth found jobs (dependent or self-employment) and/or participated in internships, community service, or went back to school. This finding represents a strong positive outcome of the program in helping youth to transition from “inactivity” (participation in neither school nor work) to participation in the range of productive activities shown above.

“Coming from the slums, it’s hard for women to realize their potential and gain confidence. I was one of the lucky ones; I gained so much from ACWICT and want other women to know what I know. That is why I wanted to volunteer.”

Reasons for the varied rates of youth participation in dependent and self-employment, internships, community service activities, and further education include:

- Varied country contexts and local labor market realities in which project activities were undertaken;
- Diverse approaches pursued by local implementing partners to promoting youth employment and civic / community engagement;
- A range of youth recruitment and selection strategies;
- Different levels of emphasis on promoting particular outcomes (for example, the extent to which different projects supported self-employment versus voluntary community service, or encouraged internships or further education);
- Ability of local partners to respond to changing market circumstances;
- Available project resources per youth beneficiary;
- Quality and extent of placement services provided.

Links between these factors and specific YEP project outcomes are described in the individual project evaluation reports.

The percentages of youth who worked in a job (dependent employment) after completing training were quite high, ranging from 41%-59%, except in VETA's case in Tanzania, where 23% of youth found dependent employment, 37% became self-employed, and 37% continued their education (the largest rate of continuing education among the six projects). Based on follow-up survey responses, four of the six projects promoted youth participation in internships to a greater extent than did the ACWICT and LEAP projects. At the same time, most of the local implementing partners' staff reported difficulty in assisting youth with securing internships on account of the relative rarity or "newness" of internships as a means of providing youth with work experience in African countries, combined with the need expressed by youth to work for pay. Projects in Kenya placed greater emphasis on youth community service, with between 23-36% of youth engaging in volunteerism after completing training. Youth community service was quite low in Nigeria, Senegal, and especially in Tanzania, where no youth reported participation in volunteerism, perhaps owing to beneficiaries' need to work for pay and the priority placed by VETA on encouraging youth to continue their training and education rather than engage in other activities. In keeping with market trends in many African countries, relatively large percentages of youth pursued self-employment after completing training.

“I was fortunate enough to find a job after the training program and now earn enough money to support myself and my family. I am able to provide for my father and brothers.”

Employment

Employment Status

The following table reflects the employment status of evaluation participants at baseline and at the time of the follow-up evaluation:

Country	Partner	% Beneficiaries Employed at Baseline (Among Follow-Up Cohort)	% Beneficiaries Employed at Follow-Up (Among Follow-Up Cohort)
KENYA	ACWICT	14%	26%
	ISBI	N/A ¹¹	44%
	NAIROBITS	36%	66%
NIGERIA	LEAP	22%	26%
SENEGAL	SYNAPSE	19%	48%
TANZANIA	VETA	N/A ¹²	51%

In all cases where a comparison between baseline and follow-up data could be made (ACWICT, NairoBits, LEAP and Synapse), the percentage of youth employed had increased. The increases were the greatest in the NairoBits and Synapse projects, where the percentages of participants employed increased by 30% and 29%, respectively, between baseline and follow-up.

¹¹ Employment status at baseline among ISBI participants was not analyzed because beneficiaries did not provide this data in their baseline questionnaire.

¹² This information was not included in the project evaluation report.

The table below reflects type of employment among employed YEP graduates at the time of the follow-up evaluation:

Country	Partner	% of Employed Beneficiaries in Dependent Employment	% of Employed Beneficiaries in Self-Employment	% of Employed Beneficiaries in Internships
KENYA	ACWICT	64%	36%	N/A ¹³
	ISBI	70%	30%	N/A ¹⁴
	NAIROBITS	74%	7%	17%
NIGERIA	LEAP	44%	44%	6%
SENEGAL	SYNAPSE	59%	10%	24%
TANZANIA	VETA	31%	59%	6%

With the exception of the projects in Tanzania and Nigeria, the percentage of youth in dependent employment is greater than is the percentage engaged in self-employment. In the case of the VETA project, this finding may be in part the result of the institution's emphasis on preparing youth for self-employment through VETA's five-module entrepreneurship track.

The ultimate goal of these projects – to place young people in paid employment, self-employment, internships and/or community service activities – must be understood in the context of each country. In terms of placement in paid employment, there are structural reasons, including the low capacity of the labor market to absorb new employees and difficulty accessing credit, that make achieving high placement rates very difficult in each country. For example, the overall unemployment rate in Senegal is 48%. Yet participants in the follow-up study who were not currently working provided a variety of explanations for why they were not working. In the VETA program, 74% indicated that it was because they were in school; the same was true for 34% of the ISBI graduates and 29% of the LEAP graduates. In these cases, many of the participants indicated that they would not be ready to seek employment until they complete their education. In Kenya, 38% and 76% of program graduates not currently working from the ACWICT and NairoBits projects respectively indicated that employers were looking for more experience than they had. In Senegal, 66% of Synapse Center's graduates said they were awaiting responses to job applications.

Entrepreneurship Activities

While large percentages of evaluation participants indicated that the entrepreneurship training in each program had an impact upon their employment prospects (between 75% and 89% in the four countries for which data was reported), only about 9% of program graduates surveyed were operating small businesses at the time of the evaluation, the majority of which were not yet formally registered with local authorities. Still, participants self-assessed their entrepreneurial skills after training as very high. For example, in Tanzania where participants were asked to assess themselves on eight entrepreneurship skills, more than 95% of participants rated their skills either better or much better in six of them, while 70%-80% of participants rated their skills better or much better in the other two. In the NairoBits program, participants self-rated their entrepreneurship skills in three areas (how to develop a business plan, how to identify business opportunities, and bookkeeping) as good, very good or excellent 91% of the time in two of the skills and 85% of the time in the third skill. Finally, in the ACWICT program, out of five skills participants were asked to self-assess, participants rated their skills as either good, very good or excellent between 87% and 97% of the time.

“I started making and selling peanut butter, and the life skills training showed me how to deal with customers much better and how to talk to people - respect them, and they respect you.”

¹³ This information was not included in the project evaluation report.

¹⁴ This information was not included in the project evaluation report.

Placement Services

While placement services were part of the program package across all projects, four of the program partners were able to provide more comprehensive placement services in-house: ACWICT, ISBI, NairoBits, and VETA. LEAP and Synapse Center relied to a greater extent on external program partners and service providers. Among all of the projects, ISBI and NairoBits seemed to provide the most successful placement services according to program participants' ratings of the services. Placement services were used by 56% and 55% of the follow-up participants respectively and were rated as good or excellent by 93% and 100% of the follow-up cohort respectively. On the other hand, only 11% of participants in the VETA follow-up group used the program's services. A primary reason for this low usage is that 38% of those in the follow-up group who did not use the placement services said they were not aware of the services available. As part of the YEP, VETA created a "One Stop" career center to collect labor market information and provide placement services; however, evaluators found that the One Stop center needed to continue to build up its capacity and conduct more outreach to students. Of those youth that did use the services, 43% rated the services as good while 57% rated them as average. In the case of ACWICT, placement services were not equally available to all participants for budgetary reasons, resulting in only 24% of the follow-up group using the services. However, 100% of these participants rated the placement services as good or excellent.

"I would have never found the courage to use a computer. It was encouraging to see that the training involved working on an actual computer! Especially since training in my school did not use computers and was simply theoretical."

Quality of Employment

The quality of employment found by program graduates was assessed based upon four characteristics: type of employment, salary, benefits, and overall job satisfaction. In terms of salary, the average monthly salaries of employed graduates of the ACWICT, ISBI, and NairoBits projects were up to three times more than the monthly minimum wage in Kenya. Salaries of LEAP graduates were also above the minimum wage on average. Salary ranges in the VETA project fell within a very broad range, depending upon the vocational trade specialization selected by each participant. The majority of employed young people were contract/temporary workers who were not earning benefits, a finding consistent with youth employment trends in each country. Levels of job satisfaction ranged from 38% to 63%.

ICT Skills

The table below reveals that between 62% and 98% of participants in each of the follow-up evaluations believed that the ICT training positively impacted their employment prospects.¹⁵ The percentages were especially high in all three Kenyan projects, with over 90% of Kenyan respondents affirming the impact of ICT training on employment prospects.

Country	Partner	% of Following Up Participants Who Indicated the ICT Training Impacted Employment Prospects	% of Following Up Participants Who Indicated the ICT Training Did NOT Impact Employment Prospects
KENYA	ACWICT	92%	8%
	ISBI	98%	2%
	NAIROBITS	96%	4%
NIGERIA	LEAP	78%	22%
TANZANIA	VETA	62%	38%

Many of those who indicated that their employment prospects had not been impacted said it was because they had not yet found a job that had allowed them to use their ICT skills. However, these participants stated they were still optimistic and believed they would find employment in the near-term.

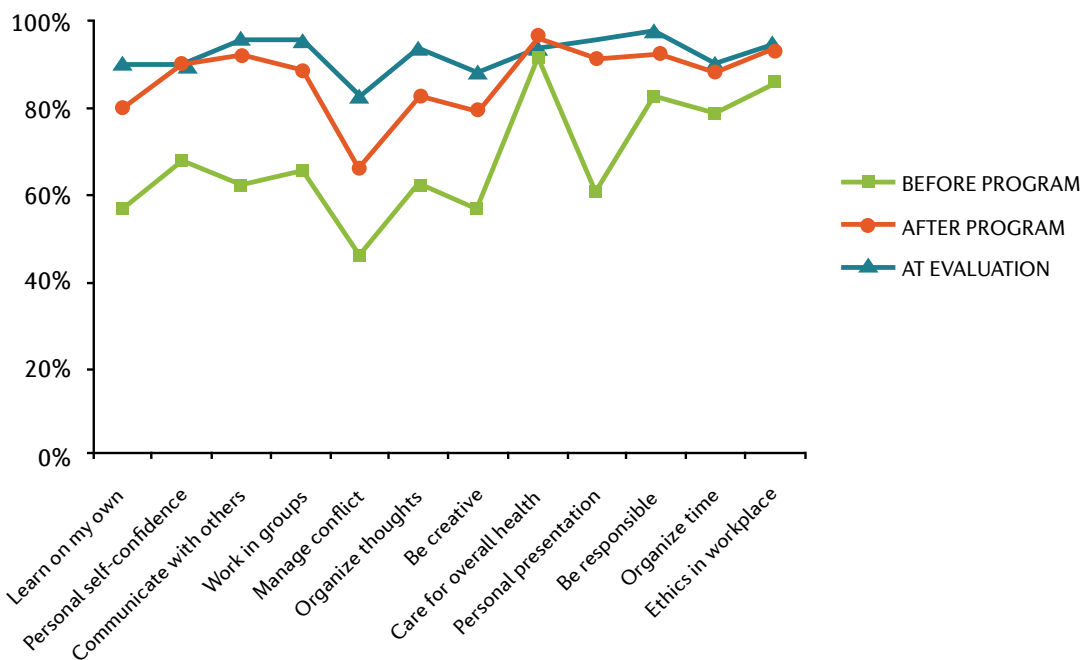
¹⁵ Data for this question was not available for the Synapse Center project in Senegal.

Life Skills

Through the follow-up evaluation, life skills were measured through self-assessments, i.e. participants were asked to assess their level of competency in the same set of life skills at baseline, exit and then again at follow-up. Overall, the life skills data reflects that participants reported increases in their life skills (although these increases are not always statistically significant¹⁶) and perceived that they were better prepared for employment. A brief summary of the life skills data from each project follows:

“The life skills training taught me that the way you see yourself is how people see you. I used to see myself as worthless. But now, I know how to present myself better and now have the motivation not to give up on life.”

- Participants in the ACWICT program reported positive changes in 12 of the 12 life skills attributes between baseline and exit and in 10 of the 12 life skills attributes between baseline and follow-up. The changes at the follow-up evaluation were particularly evident with respect to personal self confidence, ability to communicate with others, and personal presentation. 70% of the participants stated that the life skills training helped them the most in their self-improvement, and 96% of the sample follow-up cohort believed that the life skills training positively affected their employment prospects. Below is a chart depicting ACWICT respondents’ self-assessment of life skills at all three points in time (baseline, exit and follow-up).



- Participants in the ISBI project reported that their skills increased in 8 of the 12 attributes from baseline to follow-up, particularly in their ability to learn on their own, organize their time, and be creative. There was a statistically significant change in participants’ perception in their ability to work in groups, although respondents assessed themselves lower in this attribute, indicating a negative change in this life skill. At baseline, participants rated themselves relatively high in this skill (second only to care of overall health), so it could be that participants gained a better understanding of this life skill through training and gave a more informed or mature assessment of their skill during the follow-up evaluation. The finding also underscores the complexity of interpreting self-reported life skills data. The evaluation also found that 100% of the participants believed that the life skills training had a positive effect on their employment prospects.
- An analysis of respondents’ self-assessments from the LEAP program at baseline and at the time of the evaluation shows that there is statistical significance in the positive evolution of the ability to communicate with others and the ability to manage conflicts.

¹⁶ Statistical significance was defined by FocusAfrica as p is below or equals 0.05 or a 5% margin of error throughout their analysis.

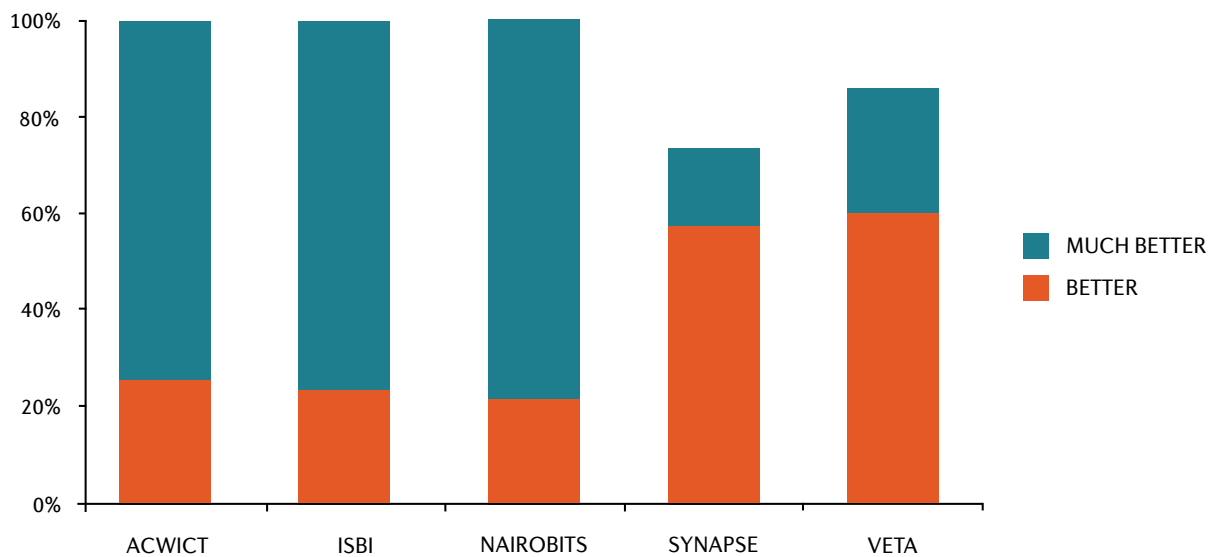
- At the time of the evaluation,¹⁷ at least 93% of participants in the NairoBits project follow-up study rated themselves good or higher in 10 out of the 13 attributes assessed. Similarly, more than 95% believed that the life skills training had a positive effect on their employment prospects.
- With respect to participants in the Synapse Center project, participants assessed their life skills very high at baseline, resulting in a regression from baseline to exit and also to follow-up, with the exception of the ability to learn on one’s own and ICT skills. Six of these decreases were statistically significant from baseline to follow-up for the following skill areas: working in groups, managing conflict, personal presentation, ethics in the workplace, being responsible and organizing time. The high self-assessment at baseline may be related to the fact that 84% of program participants were involved in or had completed tertiary education at the start of the program. With such a high education background, participants may have assumed that their life skills were high. In any case, regressions in life skills self-assessments are not unusual to see. Participants often assess their own skills as high before they have participated in life skills training. Once participants learn more about the individual skills, and their own abilities in the skill areas, it is often the case that they self-assess their skills lower after completing training.

Participants in the VETA project were not asked to assess themselves in the 13 life skills at baseline, so the follow-up evaluation asked participants to compare their perception of their life skills at the end of the project with their life skills at the beginning. Participants generally reported an improvement in their skills, with the highest positive change (100% responding that their skills were “much better” and “better”) on the ability to relate to and communicate with others, the ability to work in groups, the capacity to care for one’s overall health, ethics in the work place, and the ability to take initiative. The skills where participants saw the least improvement in their self-ratings or rated themselves as the same were: ability to learn on one’s own, capacity to be creative, personal presentation, and capacity to be responsible.

Perceptions of the Future

Youth participants perceived that participating in the Youth Empowerment Program had a positive impact upon their lives. The chart below shows that in three of the six projects, 100% of young participants perceived their quality of life to be better or much better when compared to before the training.

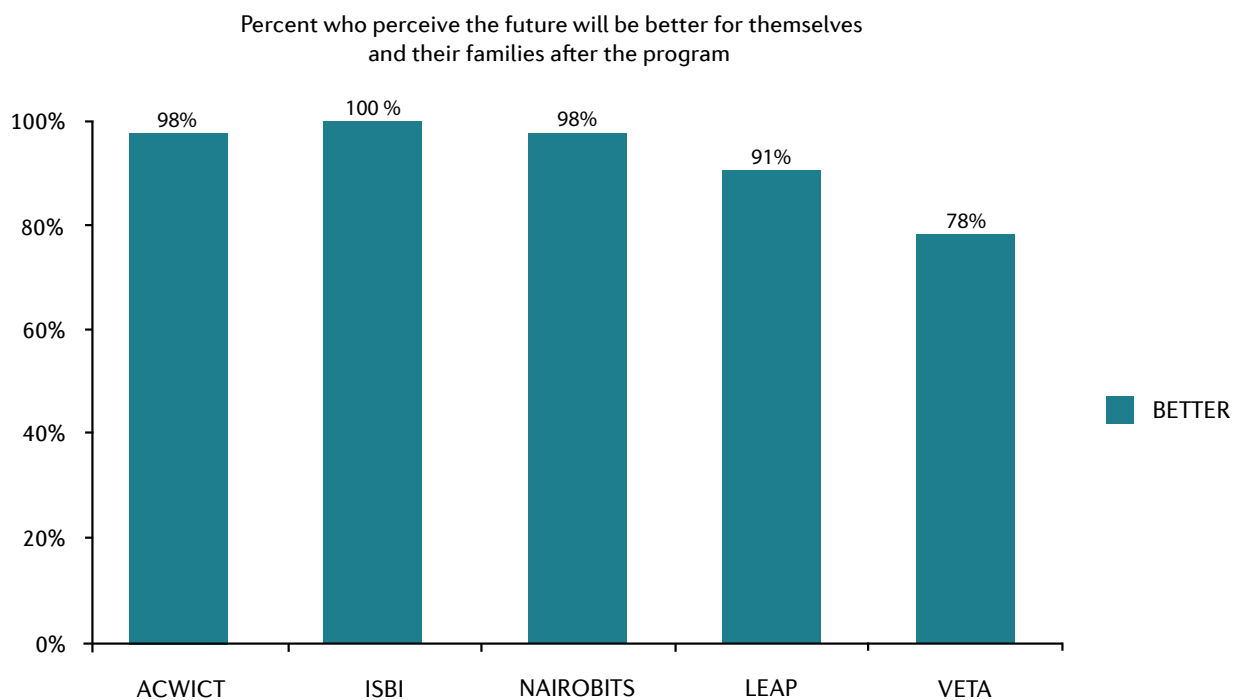
Follow-Up Participants’ Perception of Quality of Life Compared to Start of Program



¹⁷ Baseline life skills data from participants in the NairoBits project was not available for analysis.

One interesting thing to note is that 78% of unemployed graduates of the ACWICT project indicated at follow-up that their quality of life was much better compared to only 64% of employed participants. FocusAfrica found that this was because the unemployed youth believe they now have additional skills that make them more marketable in the job market and are confident they will be employed in the future.

There were similarly high percentages of participants who reported that their perception of the future for themselves and their families was either better or much better than it was prior to participating in the program as demonstrated by the chart below.



Perceptions of the Program

Overall, participants rated the training programs extremely highly. In each of the six programs, between 79% and 100% of participants rated the program as good, very good or excellent. Consistent with this finding, between 90% and 100% of participants indicated they would recommend it to others. Participants cited a variety of reasons for this positive outlook towards the program, including increased employability, comprehensive workshops, and dynamic training. However, there were some who indicated that the program fell short of their expectations. Reasons given for this included: training duration was insufficient, inability of the program to place the participant in a job, interest in learning a more specialized technical area, insufficient availability of computers, and trainers that lacked requisite skills.

Employers' Feedback on the Program

Owing to resource and time constraints, evaluators interviewed only a small sample of employers who had hired YEP graduates. Generally, the feedback provided by employers was positive with regard to the program and the training graduates had received. In general, the employers interviewed rated program graduates as performing better than their peers who had not participated in the program. In some cases, employers highlighted YEP graduates' ICT skills as a particular asset; in other cases, employers stated that although they were satisfied with the work employees were performing, the young employees' skill sets remained limited as they were not specialized in a field and would benefit from additional technical or vocational training. Employer ratings of graduates' life skills were very high in general, and, in particular, in the areas of personal responsibility, communication skills, motivation, ability to learn, ability to take initiative, and team work. The majority of employers interviewed stated that they would be willing to offer internships to other YEP graduates in the future. In addition, they recommended that the program be advertised more broadly to enable more employers to recruit YEP graduates.

Capacity of Local Partner Organizations

Finally, the six Youth Empowerment Program partner organizations included in the evaluation were also asked to fill out a questionnaire asking about the impact the program had on them from an organizational perspective, lessons learned, and their recommendations for future programs. In terms of training curricula and delivery, the partner organizations reported having learned helpful strategies for conducting labor market research and seeking input from employers on a regular basis, which led them to revise their curricula to align them better with labor market needs. Some partners noted that the program helped them to develop internship (or attachment) programs, and others noted revising their approach to include more practical and on-the-job training as well as participatory learning techniques that enable youth to “be active participants in their learning process”. Partners highlighted the benefits of Microsoft’s provision of its Unlimited Potential curriculum, which they found effective in building young people’s computer literacy and employability.

“I am now more confident in talking to people, and I know how to be more presentable, and it has helped in economic aspects as well. I learned how to do interviews better and because of that, I got the job.”

Four of the partners, who had not provided life skills training in a structured way prior to undertaking the YEP, noted the benefits they perceived from having adapted an IYF life skills curriculum to their local contexts; ISBI, for example, noted that the life skills curriculum “proved to be very effective in training young people ... who saw in the life skills training the opening of new horizons in their lives (more self-confidence, maturity, and self-knowledge)”. VETA noted that the program enabled the institution to mainstream life skills, entrepreneurship, and ICT training across its vocational programs, “boosting chances for employment” of its graduates.

Several of the partners explained that the program had helped them broaden their networks and create partnerships with companies, employer associations, and placement agencies, as well as civil society organizations and universities that supported their outreach and placement efforts. These partnerships also proved to enhance the visibility and sustainability of the organizations, with nearly all of the partner organizations noting that the YEP had helped them to leverage support from other donors and partners, including local companies and national government agencies, international donors such as USAID, and international companies such as Samsung and Google. It should be noted that in Kenya, Senegal, and Tanzania, program activities continued with support from other donors and were expected to reach more young people beyond the original timeframe of the YEP.

All of the partners valued the program’s monitoring and evaluation system, which raised the level of rigor of their own performance management and organizational learning, and, importantly, enabled them to track more effectively the results of their activities, including the placement of youth, and make adjustments and improvements as the program continued. They also reporting benefiting from the learning and exchange agenda supported by the Youth Empowerment Program, including a YEP partners’ workshop at the IYF Global Partner Meeting and participation in international conferences such as the IYF “Youth – Employability – Opportunity” conference held in Kenya.

Regarding recommendations for future programs, YEP partners highlighted their interest in more platforms for information sharing between program implementing partners. In addition, several partners pointed to the ambitious goals of the program, in terms of numbers of youth to be trained and placed relative to program resources, and emphasized the importance of aligning program objectives with available resources. Partners’ responses to the questionnaire on organizational impact are presented in the table included as Appendix 2.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

FocusAfrica evaluators offered several recommendations to improve each project in the future. The following recommendations pertained to more than one project:

- **Deepen/Extend Training.**

Five of the six projects were encouraged to deepen and or extend the training curriculum provided, including offering sector-specific training. This was suggested to: (1) give students more time to better grasp content, techniques, and practices in order to increase their technical expertise; (2) broaden employability prospects for participants in more basic training courses; (3) provide more specialized entrepreneurship and ICT skills.

- **Strengthen Placement Services.**

There were a number of suggestions related to enhancing placement services. Partners were encouraged to: (1) leverage existing partnerships to create an internship program for students that will provide them with more

work experience and better prepare them for full-time work; (2) create partnerships with job placement agencies; (3) build/strengthen relations with organizations that focus on enterprise development, such as microfinance institutions, for those interested in starting or growing their own businesses; (4) collaborate with universities and other training institutions to upgrade training quality; and, (5) build/ strengthen partnerships with employers to keep continually updated with the skills needed to be successful in the workplace.

- **Strengthen Program Marketing.**

A number of projects were encouraged to strengthen the marketing of program activities. Enhanced marketing was suggested in order to: differentiate program services from other similar programs in the country (VETA), broaden the applicant pool (ISBI), increase program visibility (LEAP), raise additional funds (LEAP and Synapse), and better inform/attract employers (LEAP AND ACWICT).

- **Enhance Program Follow-Up.**

Recommendations were made for programs to increase their follow-up activities to help track participants and provide ongoing support or mentoring to program alumni. For example, ACWICT was encouraged to take a more comprehensive approach to building an alumni network, and it was suggested that Synapse create a dynamic system to monitor participants after they complete the program through event planning and reaching out to the media.

- **Target Recruitment Efforts and Group Program Beneficiaries According to Knowledge, Skill Levels and Individual Needs.**

It was found that programs could benefit from focusing recruitment of youth more narrowly, in order to attract only youth within the program's target beneficiary profile. In the case of the Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania projects, FocusAfrica found that the program would be more effective if participants were grouped according to ICT and education levels, respectively.

In addition to evaluators' recommendations aimed at improving future youth employability programming, IYF also derived lessons based on its experience in implementing the YEP:

- **Value of building capacity of implementing organizations.**

Interestingly, it was found that building capacity of implementers in key areas such as technical and life skills training, program monitoring and evaluation, and placement services remained a critical component of program success, even for relatively strong local partner organizations that had been vetted by IYF through a rigorous due diligence and selection process. The provision of technical assistance, sharing of curricula, and exchange of lessons and experience through workshops and online for a proved to be well worth the investments made by Microsoft and IYF in strengthening the capacity of local organizations to provide high quality youth employability programming.

“The training taught me not to just rely on a job for employment but on myself and my skills to find that job and do well in it. I know how to take care of myself now.”

- **Benefits of building partnerships to promote relevance and sustainability.**

The program's emphasis on building partnerships with companies, employer associations, placement agencies, universities, and other civil society organizations served to improve training relevance, strengthen placement activities, and support program and organizational sustainability. These partnerships helped implementing organizations to better adapt their curricula to local market needs, identify placement opportunities for youth, and promote the program. In nearly all cases, the program led implementing organizations to attract additional financial and in-kind support from other donors and partners.

- **Critical role of life skills and challenges of measurement.**

According to program graduates, the life skills training was a critical component of the program and played a key role in empowering them to pursue and find positive life opportunities including internships, community service activities, and jobs. Organizations that had not offered life skills training in a structured way prior to implementing the YEP benefited from the provision and adaptation of an IYF life skills curriculum and integration of participatory teaching and learning methodologies. Yet the measurement of life skills gains remained challenging for YEP projects. The program's monitoring and evaluation system compared youth self-assessments of life skills at baseline, exit, and follow-up. Yet this method of measurement is subjective and can actually underestimate life skills gains, as participants sometimes assess their own skills as high before they have

participated in life skills training and lower after completing training, having learned more about the individual skills and their own abilities in the skill areas. For this reason, it is recommended for future programs that life skills be assessed either through retrospective self-assessment techniques (asking life skills trainees to assess their skills only after completing training), or through external evaluation of individuals' levels of mastery of life skills, either by trainers or by employers who have hired the trainees.

Conclusion

Between 2007 and 2010, the Youth Empowerment Program provided employability training and support services to over 9,500 African youth across Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania by working in close partnership with well respected local organizations in each country.¹⁸ According to the independent evaluation conducted by FocusAfrica, the program's comprehensive approach to enhancing youth employability and life opportunities demonstrated strong, measurable outcomes in equipping young people at risk with technical and life skills, providing them with work experiences through internships as well as community service activities, placing them in jobs, and helping those with entrepreneurial aspirations to become self-employed or create new small businesses.

Microsoft's partnership with the International Youth Foundation through the Youth Empowerment Program demonstrates the benefits realized when the private and civil society sectors work together to enhance the prospects for disadvantaged youth. The program has catalyzed further work in support of youth employability in Africa and leveraged additional resources from other donors, including USAID, the U.S. State Department, the World Bank, Samsung, national governments, and local companies in each country. A second phase of the Youth Empowerment Program, with support from Microsoft and the World Bank, is now underway, providing an opportunity to draw on best practices and lessons learned and refine program models for broader application in support of greater life opportunities among African youth.

¹⁸ The final YEP project in Zanzibar, launched in 2009, was ongoing at the time of this report's completion.

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF YEP PROJECTS

PARTNER NAME	DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION	TARGET BENEFICIARIES	BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROJECT	CONTACT HOURS-TRAINING	YEP BUDGET
Kenya					
African Centre for Women, Information and Communications Technology (ACWICT)	Established in 2001 as a Kenyan-based ICT for Development organization to promote women's access to knowledge of ICT as a tool for social, economic and political advancement.	1,200 young women (ages 18–35) from the informal settlements and slums of Nairobi, Kenya	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To scale up the ICT skills, life skills and entrepreneurship skills component of ACWICT's "Reaching the Unreached" program being implemented in partnership with Microsoft through the Unlimited Potential Project (UP). To provide employment opportunities to 1,200 young women, ages 18-35, in the informal settlements of Nairobi, Kenya. Participants would acquire ICT, entrepreneurial and life skills, as well as access to job placement or financing for self-employment. 	150 Hours: 60 hours of ICT training, 50 hours of entrepreneurship training, and 40 hours of life skills training	US \$74,080
Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI), Strathmore Educational Trust (SET)	Established in 2002 by Strathmore Educational Trust, a Public Charitable Trust incorporated in Kenya, in order to directly benefit the least privileged people in Kenya.	1,000 young people (ages 18-25) in the Lavington, Easton and Embu districts of Kenya	To provide 1,000 youth with ICT skills, entrepreneurial skills and life skills training as well as job placement and enterprise development support.	130 Hours: 80 hours of IT training, 20 hours of entrepreneurship training, and 30 hours of life skills training.	US \$61,420
NairoBits Trust	Established in 1999 to help improve the conditions of youth in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The organization works to bridge the digital divide by providing youth with Web design skills.	300 young people (ages 16-25)	To improve the employability of 300 disadvantaged young people, ages 16-25, in Kenya. Participants would acquire IT, entrepreneurial and life skills, as well as access to placement in internships, jobs, self-employment or community service. NairoBits offered four levels of ICT training in partnership with community-based organizations.	1,932 Hours: Course 1: 204 hours (Basic ICT, life skills, entrepreneurship); Course 2: 120 hours (ICT level 2); Course 3: 456 hours (ICT level 3); Course 4: 1,152 hours (ICT level 4 including internship)	US \$24,500
NIGERIA					
Leadership Effectiveness Accountability Professionalism (LEAP)	Established in 2002 with the goal of providing leadership training programs and coaching services to young people, the business community and social entrepreneurs in Nigeria. LEAP seeks to equip these groups with the skills, tools and support necessary to become agents of change in Nigeria.	2,500 young people (ages 16-35) in Nigeria	To improve the employability of 2,500 young people in Nigeria. LEAP Africa coordinated project activities and life skills and employability training of young people and partnered with organizations with expertise in youth job placement and recruiting, entrepreneurship, ICT training, and community service.	124 Hours: 40 hours of life skills and employability skills training, 64 hours of ICT skills training (ICT skills training was provided in all Bauchi and Kano cohorts)	US \$160,000

PARTNER NAME	DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION	TARGET BENEFICIARIES	BRIEF SUMMARY OF PROJECT	CONTACT HOURS-TRAINING	YEP BUDGET
SENEGAL					
Synapse Center	Established in 2003 to promote creative leadership and innovative entrepreneurship, personal, organizational and community development in order to help youth become entrepreneurs and leaders in the development of their communities.	2,200 young people (ages 16-35) in Dakar, Thiès, Saint-Louis, and Tambacounda, Senegal	To improve the employability of 2,200 young people in Senegal. Participants would acquire ICT, employability, entrepreneurial, and life skills, as well as assistance with placement in jobs, internships, self-employment, or community service. The project consisted of two key programmatic components: "Passport to Employment" which focused on employability and placement of youth, and "Empacto" which centered on the development of entrepreneurial skills and assisting youth with enterprise development.	Passport to Employment was organized in 20 sessions, which consisted of 24 hours of training and four weeks of one-on-one coaching for each participant. Empacto consisted of 14 sessions including 40 hours of training and 20 hours of coaching, in which Synapse facilitated sponsorship and financing for youth enterprise development projects and provided ongoing support to new microenterprises.	US \$150,000
TANZANIA					
Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) – Dar es Salaam Zone	Established in 1994 by an act of Parliament as an autonomous government agency, responsible for regulating, coordinating, financing and providing vocational training in Tanzania.	2,200 disadvantaged young people and 300 OVCs (15-24) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania	To improve the employability of 2,500 young people in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Participants would acquire ICT, entrepreneurial, and life skills, as well as access to placement in jobs, internships, self-employment, or community service.	388 hours: 40 hours of life skills, 85 hours of entrepreneurship, & 262 hours of ICT training, not including additional vocational training and attachments (internships)	US \$125,000

APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF SURVEY OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS ON THE IMPACT OF THE YEP ON THEIR ORGANIZATIONS

CURRICULA & TRAINING	SERVICES	SYSTEMS	PARTNERSHIPS & VISIBILITY	RECOMMENDATIONS
African Centre for Women, Information & Communications Technology (ACWICT) Kenya				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved ICT training through use of Microsoft's Unlimited Potential curriculum. Upgraded ICT infrastructure. Introduced structured life skills training through adaptation of IYF life skills curricula, enhancing ACWICT's approach to employability training and empowering youth to succeed. Integrated use of labor market data to design employability and entrepreneurship curricula that respond to labor market dynamics. Enhanced staff teaching methods to emphasize participant-centered learning. Introduced more practical, on-the-job training to balance theoretical training. Youth employment has now become ACWICT's largest area of programming and resource allocation, and the organization now patterns other programs on the YEP model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened placement efforts by working with partners and upgrading staff capacity in job / internship placement. Improved execution of outreach events focused on employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced operations with the Microsoft- donated software. Improved goal-setting and results-tracking through the YEP M&E system; information improved program implementation on a continual basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefited from YEP learning forums and conferences. Developed new partnerships with the public and private sectors, including key relationships with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, credit providers, and employers. Earned positive visibility and public trust and attracted national and international media attention. Approached by community-based organizations and NGOs for partnerships and information on good practices in youth employment. Strengthened leadership capacity in negotiating with government, businesses and donor agencies to respond to youth employment issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More platforms for programmatic information-sharing amongst program implementing partners, to provide quick benchmarking and lesson-sharing throughout program implementation.
Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI) / Strathmore Educational Trust (SET) Kenya				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved ICT training through use of Microsoft's Unlimited Potential curriculum, "initiat[ing] students to the IT world". Introduced structured life skills training through adaptation of IYF life skills curricula, opening horizons for beneficiaries. Improved relevance of employability training, especially in the areas of ICT and Business. Improved training quality through training of trainers and updating of training manuals. Enhanced practical training, focused on providing youth with marketable skills for employment beyond certificates. Because of the YEP program, ISBI is now implementing other programs that build on the knowledge acquired through YEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased organizational focus on youth, resulting in new departments (e.g., Placement Office) and engagement of more staff to provide services to youth. Improved support services to youth entrepreneurs. Learned how to follow up with beneficiaries and gather relevant information regarding status after training in order to provide better follow-up support to graduates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved results-tracking through the YEP M&E system, including introduction of the program's electronic database, enabling better follow-up of graduates after training. Strengthened staff capacity in use of M&E tools and systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefited from YEP / IYF conferences, enabling ISBI to connect with similar organizations around the world and adapt best practices for other programs. Opened opportunities for sourcing of new program resources. Created new partnerships resulting in additional funding and support (e.g., Samsung and Centum Investment, which donated resources and is providing business mentoring for ISBI students). Enhanced visibility, resulting in higher levels of youth and parental interest in ISBI programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate more vocational skills training to enhance youth skills and employability. Strengthen emphasis on incubation services for young entrepreneurs.

CURRICULA & TRAINING	SERVICES	SYSTEMS	PARTNERSHIPS & VISIBILITY	RECOMMENDATIONS
NairoBits Trust				
Kenya				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised curricula based on employers' feedback, resulting in "more cutting edge and effective" training. Introduced structured life skills training through adaptation of IYF life skills curricula, making the training more comprehensive for beneficiaries. Received accreditation for courses, increasing recognition of NairoBits training. Increased training capacity, enabling NairoBits to train larger numbers of youth. Replicated program model in Ethiopia and Zanzibar, with another planned for Uganda. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved placement services for youth job seekers. Improved assistance to youth entrepreneurs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefited from donation of Microsoft software. Improved organizational learning, program tracking, and results measurement through implementation of the YEP M&E system, in particular the baseline and exit surveys and program database. Improved resource management and efficiency, enabling NairoBits to better utilize few resources to achieve impact. Engagement of advisory board in organization's management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefited from interaction with IYF and YEP partners. Increased number of partnerships with Web design companies in the effort to place students, resulting in increased number of job placements. Increased credibility among government and donors, including Ministries of Information and Communication, Youth Affairs, and Education, contributing to the Kenyan Government's attention to youth employment issues. Supported resource base and sustainability, attracting funding from firms such as Google and Samsung. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better match resources with targets; logistics of program and financial monitoring required significant management time, beyond available program resources. Enhance orientation in financial reporting requirements to improve time efficiency.
LEAP Africa				
Nigeria				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened LEAP Africa's curricula in employability skills training, including development of new modules in career development, conflict management, and others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YEP placement strategy led LEAP Africa to expand networks and partnerships to promote placement efforts. Increased LEAP's good will as the organization is now seen as a partner that can support recruitment through its large database of vetted CVs and job seekers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of new modules in employability broadened staff knowledge and skills in employability issues and training. Improved results measurement on beneficiary outcomes through the YEP M&E system, especially implementation of baseline and exit surveys. Enhanced actualization of LEAP's vision for its youth programs, which is, "By 2025, LEAP's alumni will be recognized as dynamic, principled and innovative leaders in the private, public and non-profit sectors, spearheading Africa's ascent into the international arena." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened partnerships and increased the level of collaboration with organizations working in the areas of youth employability and placement. Enhanced visibility in Bauchi, Calabar and Uyo, where LEAP had not worked before, as well as in locations where LEAP was already active. Provided opportunities to share LEAP's vision and strategy with influential individuals and corporate bodies, increasing chances to cultivate these relationships for future funding support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide both formal and informal training to beneficiaries. Increase attention to the diversity of the needs of participants. Allow more time for placement efforts; place emphasis on monitoring and coaching participants after training. Require that ICT training be compulsory. Align program resources with targets; ambitious targets strained staff capacity given time and resource constraints.

CURRICULA & TRAINING	SERVICES	SYSTEMS	PARTNERSHIPS & VISIBILITY	RECOMMENDATIONS
Synapse Center Senegal				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded Synapse's network of trainers, consultants, and mentors to support youth training and placement efforts. Refined curricula based on input from employers and partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported development of innovative placement strategies, including targeted outreach events such as job fairs and networking events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved program management, effectiveness accountability through YEP M&E system which required quarterly review and reporting. Learned to design evaluation strategy in conjunction with program design and planning of training. Improved focus and quality of website and communications materials. Introduced new performance management system and staff training program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened capacity to collaborate with the private and public sectors, resulting in the development of a niche of partnerships and alliances with business leaders, academic institutions, NGOs and government agencies that support recruitment and placement for beneficiaries. Increased engagement with stakeholders and media. Increased awareness of community about Synapse Center's work and perception that it is a dynamic and effective organization. Led to recognition of Synapse Center as one of the leading organizations supporting youth in the country. The organization has been used as a case study in two publications. Leveraged additional program funding from USAID and the Finnish Children and Youth Foundation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better match resources with targets; there were difficulties in meeting high standards for quality with the training of large cohorts.
Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) Tanzania				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduced structured life skills training through adaptation of IYF life skills curricula. Led to institutional mainstreaming of ICT, life skills and entrepreneurship skills training for all vocational trainees. Increased emphasis on internships ("attachments"), resulting in more effective training that combined practical and hands-on training with classroom work. Strengthened capacity of teachers through training of trainers in entrepreneurship. Upgraded ICT equipment for benefit of student learning experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learned that placement of trainees requires resources and commitment. Led to staffing of placement officer (Inplant Training Officer) whose focus is on outreach to employers (a new approach for VETA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved monitoring and evaluation of training through YEP M&E system; learned to set targets and establish M&E system at program outset. Introduced database to track trainees (a new approach for VETA). Led to preparation of reports, newsletters, and dissemination to stakeholders (a new approach for VETA). Improved team spirit among VETA staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned from the program will assist VETA with future fundraising efforts and help build new and stronger partnerships. Led to leveraging additional funding support from USAID. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YEP was a very ambitious program; organizations need to be prepared well in advance to achieve successful results. Prepare for additional resource mobilization from program outset in order to ensure sufficient resource levels for effective program delivery.

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

FocusAfrica, a management consulting and research firm based in Dakar, Senegal, was selected to conduct an independent evaluation of the Youth Empowerment Program through a competitive bid process through which IYF received seven proposals evaluated on standardized criteria. IYF conducted interviews with the agencies that submitted the five top proposals. FocusAfrica was selected based upon its experience conducting research and evaluation projects, proposed methodology, knowledge of the region, and cost.

Data Collection and Analysis

IYF developed the program's monitoring and evaluation system, which aimed to assess outcomes for youth by surveying beneficiaries at three points—at baseline, at program completion, and approximately six months after completion of the program. IYF and local partner organizations adapted both the baseline and exit surveys to specific project/country circumstances based on tested and validated models IYF developed in its *entra21* program in Latin America. Each survey included the participant's unique identification number (assigned at baseline), personal and contact information, demographic and socioeconomic data, and self-assessments of the participant's life skills. Each project was responsible for collecting baseline and exit data for its individual youth beneficiaries. This data was captured through an electronic database in Excel designed by IYF. FocusAfrica reviewed a sample of the participant database from each project against hard copy participant files to verify data accuracy.

Follow-up data (*ex post* data collected approximately six months after youth exited the projects) on youth beneficiaries was collected through in-person interviews conducted by FocusAfrica. The interview protocol again was based upon IYF's *entra21* follow-up survey model. FocusAfrica adapted the tool to each country and tested it before it was used for this evaluation. The objectives of the questionnaire were to assess the outcomes of the projects in terms of youth skills acquisition and placement, including employment, internship, voluntary work, and entrepreneurship, and to gauge respondents' overall perceptions of the program, approximately six months after project completion. The assessment also measured young people's self-perceptions of a core set of life skills as well as youth attitudes toward the future. For this evaluation, FocusAfrica used the baseline and exit data captured by each project, and compared it with follow-up data to measure changes in skills, employment, and educational outcomes.

Follow-Up Sample Selection

The follow-up sample group of beneficiaries from each project was selected according to the following criteria:¹⁹

- A post-training period of at least six months at the time of the evaluation.
- Training cohort(s) that would provide a sample size closest to 5% of the total trained participants in each project, assuming a 20% non-response rate of participants.

A total of 380 youth across the six projects were interviewed for the follow-up evaluation.

¹⁹ In the Nigeria program, only cohorts trained in the northern part of the country received ICT training in addition to life skills for employability training. One of the cohorts whose training included ICT skills was selected for the sample.

Below is a Summary of the Follow-Up Evaluation Participants:

Country	Partner	Program Totals		Follow-Up Evaluation Totals		% of Total Program Participants in Follow-Up Evaluation
		No. of Program Participants (At Time of Evaluation) ²⁰	No. of Cohorts Trained	No. of Cohorts Evaluated	No. of Participants In Follow-Up Evaluation ²¹	
KENYA	ACWICT	1,105	40	2	56	5%
	ISBI	1,288	11	2	55	4%
	NAIROBITS	1,224 ²²	48	2	50	4%
NIGERIA	LEAP	2,487	27	1	69	3%
SENEGAL	SYNAPSE	1,917	39	2	86	4%
TANZANIA	VETA	1,188 ²³	2	1	64	5%

In addition to one-on-one interviews with project participants, FocusAfrica interviewed a small selection of employers in each country to gauge their perceptions of the program and to assess the skills of program participants from the perspective of employers. The employer questionnaire was also adapted from a tested and validated employers' survey tool developed by the *entra21* program. FocusAfrica conducted one focus group per project with approximately 10 youth participants in each group to gain further insights into the effects of the program on the participants, gather participants' general impressions on the program, and potential areas of growth. Focus group participants were selected by FocusAfrica based on their level of engagement during individual interviews. Finally, FocusAfrica held meetings with key stakeholders, including Microsoft staff, government partners, and local project staff, and conducted a thorough document review.

²⁰ The project databases contained baseline and exit data for participants in each project. The numbers in this column of the table reflect the number of participant records contained in each database at the time the evaluation started.

²¹ FocusAfrica found follow-up sample groups representative of each project's total beneficiary population due to the high levels of homogeneity among youth served by each project.

²² The NairoBits training program included four levels of successive ICT courses. Nearly 70% of beneficiaries participated in more than one ICT course.

²³ The VETA training program includes two to three years of success employability training programs. Some beneficiaries participated in multiple trainings.

APPENDIX 4: SELECTED DATA COMPILED FROM THE SIX YEP PROJECT EVALUATIONS

Demographic Information of Program Participants (Baseline Data Compiled from Partner Databases)²⁴

Gender of Program Participants (At Baseline)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA	TOTALS
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA	
MALE	0%	100%	49%	61%	51%	68%	60%
FEMALE	100%	0%	51%	39%	49%	32%	40%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Age of Program Participants (At Baseline)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA	TOTALS
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA	
24 and under	80%	48%	99%	35%	35%	83%	59%
25-30	14%	9%	1%	58%	59% ²⁵	14%	31%
31-35	6%	3%	0%	7% ²⁶		2%	3%
35+	0%	0%	0%			6% ²⁷	0%
No Information	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%	1%	5%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

²⁴ Data reported is based upon the percentage of program participants that responded to each question.

²⁵ This is the number of respondents who indicated they were between the ages of 25 and 34 at baseline.

²⁶ This is the number of respondents who indicated that they were 31 years old or older at baseline.

²⁷ This is the number of respondents who indicated that they were 35 years old or older at the time of baseline.

Marital Status of Program Participants (At Baseline)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Single	84%	52%	100%	93%	87%	99%
Married	15%	5%	0%	7%	13%	1%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No Information	0%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Education Level of Program Participants (At Baseline)²⁸

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA	TOTALS
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA	
Less Than Secondary	5%	6%	1%	0%	3%	42% ²⁹	11%
Did Not Complete Secondary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10%	8%	4%
Completed Secondary	75%	82%	98%	11%	3%	45%	58%
Did Not Complete Post-Secondary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5%	1%
Completed Post-Secondary	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0%	0%
Some Tertiary Education	3%	0%	N/A	20%	84% ³⁰	0%	1%
Completed Tertiary Education	17%	12%	0%	69%	N/A ³¹	0%	25%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

²⁸ While this question was asked similarly of participants in each project, the responses offered differed. If a response was not available for certain participants, this is noted by "N/A".

²⁹ This is the percentage of respondents who completed primary school.

³⁰ Some of these respondents may have completed their tertiary education.

³¹ This information was not collected for participants in the Synapse project.

Employment Status of Participants (At Baseline)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA	TOTALS
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA	
Employed	7%	N/A	36%	22%	13%	3%	16%
Not Employed	93%	N/A	64%	78%	87% ³²	97%	84%
TOTAL	100%	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Demographic Information of Follow-Up Evaluation Participants³³

Gender of Follow-Up Evaluation Participants (At Follow-Up)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Male	0%	100%	54%	72%	61%	84%
Female	100%	0%	46%	28%	39%	16%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Age of Follow-Up Evaluation Participants (At Follow-Up)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
24 and under	79%	89%	100%	61%	9%	63%
25-30	16%	7%	0%	36%	58%	31%
31-35	4%	2%	0%	3%	26%	3%
35+	2%	2%	0%	0%	7%	3%
No Information	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

³² Of the Synapse project participants who were not employed at baseline, 61% of them were studying.

³³ Data reported is based upon the percentage of program participants who responded to each question.

Marital Status of Follow-Up Evaluation Participants (At Follow-Up)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Single	91%	96%	98%	81%	78%	91%
Married	9%	4%	2%	19%	22%	9%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
No Information	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Education Level of Follow-Up Evaluation Participants (At Follow-Up)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Less Than Secondary	7%	0%	2%	1%	7%	27%
Completed Secondary	72%	96%	87%	45%	7%	73%
Some Tertiary Education	17%	4%	11%	42%	49%	0%
Completed Tertiary Education	4%	0%	0%	12%	37%	0%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Employment Status of Follow-Up Evaluation Participants (At Follow-Up)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Employed	26%	44%	66%	27%	48%	51%
Not Employed	74%	56%	34%	73%	52%	49%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Percentage of Follow-Up Participants Who Had Engaged in One or More Targeted Activities Since Project Completed — Placement Rate (At Follow-Up)

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Participants who have been engaged in employment, self-employment, internships or volunteer activities after the training	52%	73%	79%	26%	51%	83%
Participants who have been engaged in employment, self-employment, internships or volunteer activities or continued their education after the training	72%	75%	83%	55%	52%	94%

Placement Activities of Follow-Up Participants (At Follow-Up)³⁴

	KENYA			NIGERIA	SENEGAL	TANZANIA
	ACWICT	ISBI	NAIROBITS	LEAP	SYNAPSE	VETA
Participated in an Internship	4%	40%	38%	1%	22%	50%
Worked in a Job (Part-Time, Temporary, Contract, Staff)	29%	42%	40%	12%	24%	23%
Volunteered	21%	16%	26%	1%	3%	13%
Worked Independently	11%	16%	10%	12%	5%	37%
Went to School	25%	24%	10%	32%	3%	37%

³⁴ Since participants may have engaged in more than one of these activities, the percentages do not add up to 100%.

Probability That Perception of Life Skills Changed from Baseline to Follow-Up Because of the Program

LIFE SKILLS	ACWICT PROBABILITY	ISBI PROBABILITY	NAIROBITS PROBABILITY	LEAP PROBABILITY	SYNAPSE PROBABILITY
Learn On My Own	0.0009	0.1824	0.7160	0.6730	0.8132
Personal Self-Confidence	0.0000	0.2796	0.7080	0.3730	**
Communicate With Others	0.0000	0.3509	0.3450	0.0018	0.0897
Work In Groups	0.0001	0.0315	0.7500	0.1590	0.0181
Manage Conflict	0.0013	0.0733	**	0.0183	0.0005
Organize Thoughts	0.0149	**	0.5910	0.1460	**
Be Creative	0.0003	**	0.3050	0.2430	0.4146
Care for Overall Health	0.0958	**	0.3780	0.4190	**
Personal Presentation	0.0000	**	0.8920	0.3880	0.0099
Be Responsible	0.0200	0.1176	**	0.1590	0.0177
Organize Time	0.0490	0.8212	0.8860	0.2240	0.0010
Ethics In Workplace	0.1669	**	0.4370	0.0205	0.0178
Ability to Take Initiative	**	**	0.0210	**	**
Notes:	All perception changes were positive.	All perception changes were positive, except for the perceived changes in "work in groups", "manage conflict" and "ethics in the workplace."	All perception changes were positive.	All perception changes were positive, except for the perceived changes in "organize my time" and "ethics in the workplace."	All perception changes were positive.

Statistical significance present if $P \leq 0.05$ based on a marginal error of 5%.

**DATA NOT AVAILABLE

Note: Data for the VETA program is not available because perceived life skills changes were measured only using retrospective data.

Probability That Perception of Life Skills Changed from Baseline to Follow-Up Because of the Program

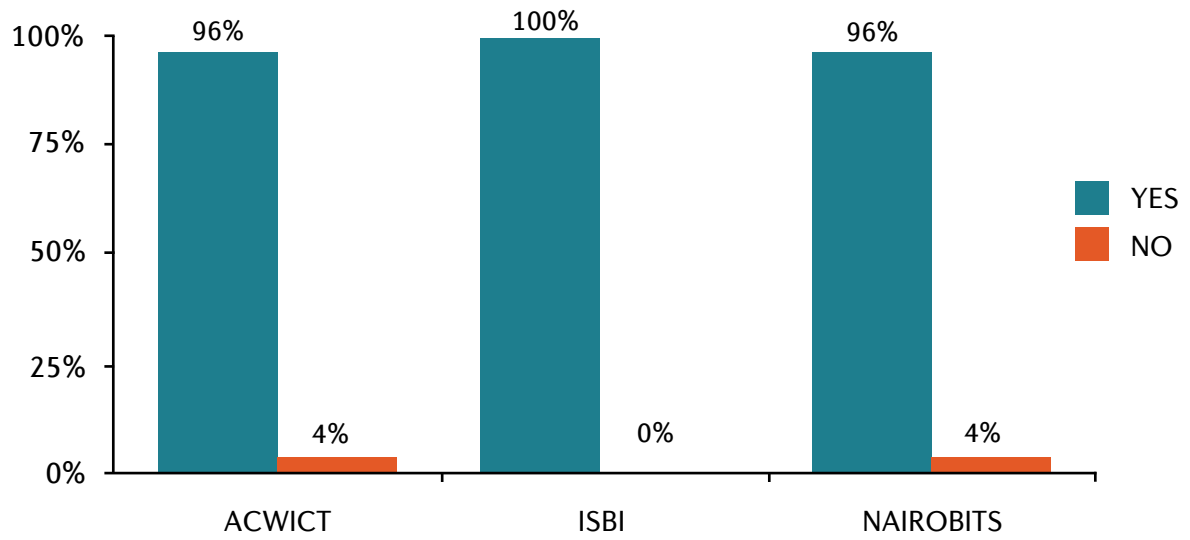
LIFE SKILLS	ACWICT PROBABILITY	ISBI PROBABILITY	NAIROBITS PROBABILITY	LEAP PROBABILITY	SYNAPSE PROBABILITY
Learn On My Own	0.0000	1.0000	0.0026*	0.0001	0.2043
Personal Self-Confidence	0.0000	0.0958	0.0000*	0.0144	**
Communicate With Others	0.0000	0.0034	0.0000*	0.0089	0.0000
Work In Groups	0.0000	0.8427	0.0000*	0.0113	0.1658
Manage Conflict	0.0000	0.5078	0.0000*	0.0000	0.0000
Organize Thoughts	0.0000	0.0169	0.0000*	0.0024	0.2766
Be Creative	0.0000	0.1824	0.0000*	0.8729	0.0660
Care for Overall Health	0.0002	**	0.0065*	0.0229	0.3274
Personal Presentation	0.0000	0.6219	0.0000*	0.0000	0.2861
Be Responsible	0.0000	0.0151	0.0000*	0.0438	0.0389
Organize Time	0.0000	0.0064	0.0006*	0.0021	0.0002
Ethics In Workplace	0.0000	0.1594	0.0000*	0.2468	0.0009
	All perception changes were positive.	All perception changes were positive.	All perception changes were positive, except for the perceived changes in "manage conflict", "organize thoughts," "be creative", "be responsible" and "ethics in the workplace."	All perception changes decreased from baseline to exit.	All perception changes were positive.

Statistical significance present if $P \leq 0.05$ based on a marginal error of 5%.

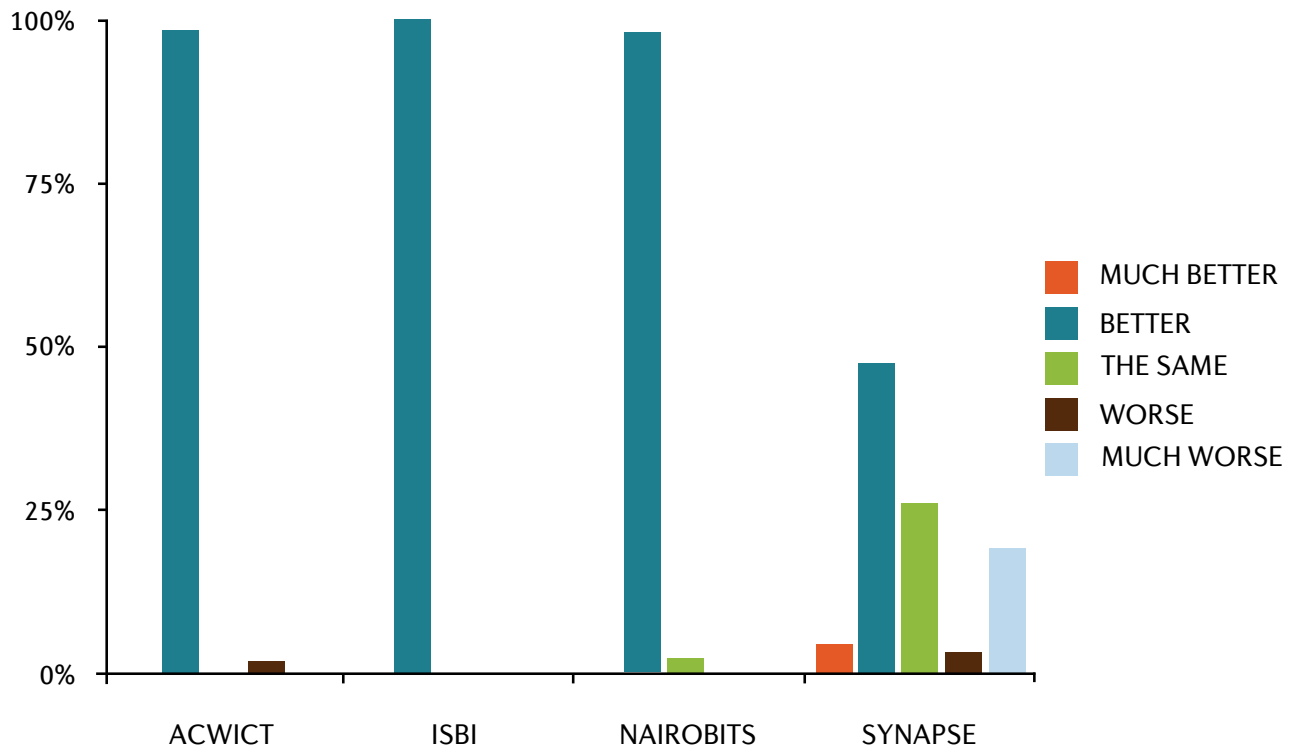
**DATA NOT AVAILABLE

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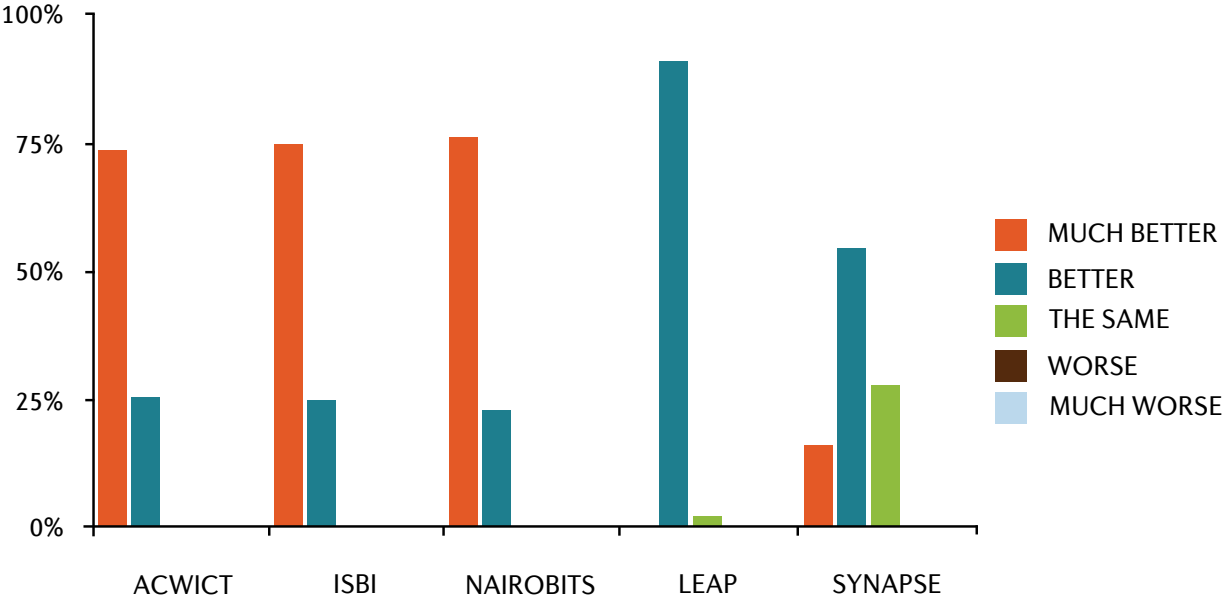
Percentage of participants in the follow-up cohort who indicated that the life skills training impacted their employment prospects



Compared to before the program, how will the future be for follow-up participants and their families?



Compared to before the program, how do follow-up participants rate their quality of life?





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The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil-society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities. To learn more, visit www.iyfnet.org