

PROJECT DOCUMENT**Ghana**

Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Project Title: Young Africa Innovates

Award Number: 1131135 (Multi-country Programme in Ghana and Nigeria)

Implementing Partners: UNDP Ghana and UNDP Nigeria.

Start Date: 1 Aug 2023 **End Date:** 31 December 2025 **PAC Meeting date:**

Brief Description

This Programme document, developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with input from Mastercard Foundation (MCF), sets out a shared vision to leverage youth innovation to support economic transformation. It is a high-level Programme document which describes principles of the Young Africa Innovates (YAI) Programme across Ghana and Nigeria. Further, detailed information can be found in the respective country specific Programme documents for Ghana and Nigeria.

1. Through its Young Africa Works (YAW) program, MCF seeks to enable 30 million young people, including atypical and often under-represented youth (e.g. women and persons from rural communities), to be in dignified and fulfilling employment by 2030. MCF aims to create these opportunities, by harnessing skills of young people, including through its Lean Innovation Fund (LIF).
2. UNDP recognizes the huge opportunities to leverage youth innovation to support Africa's economic transformation and MCF's emphasis on integrating under-represented youth into innovation ecosystems, resonates with UNDP's focus on ensuring "no one is left behind".
3. Over 2.5 years, UNDP will implement an inclusive Young Africa Innovates (YAI) Programme to nurture a large, diverse population of young people to develop innovative solutions to critical social challenges. UNDP will leverage its Accelerator Lab (AccLab) network as a framework for YAI. AccLabs deploy UNDP's social innovation capabilities to work alongside national innovation ecosystems to surface user-led solutions to complex development challenges.
4. YAI will test the strategic hypothesis that creating an inclusive and repeatable process to seek out and foster atypical actors is critical to unlocking new solutions and unearthing jobs at scale. It will involve *Pipeline Activation, Solution Submission, Evaluation Processes, Rapid testing and Support, Continuous Feedback and Iterative Learning* and *Ecosystem Engagement*. UNDP expects to derive a coherent and practical model to funnel and support youth-led solutions, unlock opportunities to create high-quality jobs for young people, and strengthen national innovation ecosystems.

Contributing Outcome (UNDAF/CPD, RPD or GPD):

Expected UNSDP Outcomes:

Country specific Programme Documents provide more detail on the Contributing Outcomes.

Gender Marker: 2

Total resources required:	25,876,535	
Total resources allocated:	UNDP TRAC:	-
	Donor:	25,876,535
	Government:	-
	In-Kind:	-
Unfunded:	0	

Agreed by (signatures)¹:

UNDP
Print Name:
Date:

¹ Note: Adjust signatures as needed

² The Gender Marker measures how much a project invests in gender equality and women's empowerment. Select one for each output: GEN3 (Gender equality as a principle objective); GEN2 (Gender equality as a significant objective); GEN1 (Limited contribution to gender equality); GEN0 (No contribution to gender quality)

I. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

It is predicted that Africa's youth population will increase by 42% by 2030, and could double from present levels by 2055². Africa has the world's youngest population, with 65% of its population under the age of 25³. The UN predicts that by 2050, there will be 2.5 billion Africans, about a quarter of the global population, with 10 of the youngest countries in the world (in terms of youth population) on the continent⁴. This demographic dividend is apparent across the continent.

However, despite significant commitments and investments made by African governments, the private sector, civil society and others to create employment opportunities for the youth (including networks of accelerators and innovation hubs), significant challenges remain. In particular the increase in the youth population across many African countries is not always positively correlated with the creation of employment opportunities for them. There are disparities in terms of employment and other outcomes, including in Ghana and Nigeria.

Across Africa, many talented youth have innovative ideas and potential solutions to societal challenges, but are still unable to unlock economic opportunities.

1. For example, it has been estimated that about 50%⁵ of start-ups in Africa fail for various reasons including the lack of systems and pathways to support development and scaling of innovations, and a regulatory framework which is often seen as not conducive to start-ups, particularly atypical start-ups.
2. African Fintechs are 13 times less likely to reach profitability than European counterparts.
3. There are also long-standing patterns of exclusion which mean that atypical actors including young women, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), persons from rural communities, those with low levels of English literacy, those who lack financial and business histories, and those with little prior exposure to the innovation ecosystem, often struggle to access opportunities in the innovation ecosystem.

The data is in line with UNDP's own experience of working with grassroots innovators, where we have put in place measures to address the lack of systems and pathways to support the development and scaling of innovations. This situation calls for action, including by developing models and structures which support youth-led innovation and entrepreneurship and create employment opportunities, while ensuring that those often "left behind" such women, PWDs and those from rural communities also find dignified and fulfilling employment.

II. STRATEGY

While the core pillars of the YAI Programme remain the same across both countries, detailed implementation approaches will vary. For example, Ghana is sector agnostic while Nigeria is sector specific. Below are the high-level activities with some country-specific nuances. More detail can be found in the country specific Programme Documents.

Pipeline Activation

1. To attract at least 70% atypical actors, UNDP will activate a pipeline of actors to identify a minimum of 10,000 high-potential solutions at different stages of maturity (early stage, prototype, and advanced). By leveraging existing networks, UNDP will try different approaches to funnelling a wide variety of applicants through the Programme, particularly traditionally marginalized applicants such as women and underserved communities. UNDP will also build upon previous experiments by Mastercard Foundation to identify optimum approaches to reaching atypical actors.
2. There will be calls for innovative solutions in the 2 participating countries, using different methods e.g. innovation scouts, leveraging grassroot organizations and government structures like the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP) in Ghana, and the Nigeria Development Group, local radio shows and village roadshows. Calls will also be shared through organizations which focus on women, PWDs and rural communities, along with specific outreach to remote areas to include those who are less connected to digital and urban networks. UNDP will engage innovation scouts (small groups or individuals with deep understanding of local innovation ecosystems and community networks) to visit communities and encourage and enable not less than 70% of atypical actors with compelling solutions to be part of the YAI Programme.
3. In Nigeria, YAI will include partnering with existing community groups or committees within religious institutions to raise awareness of the Programme by organizing events, distributing promotional

² United Nations Development Programme Regional Project for Youth Empowerment in The Sahel (RPYES), 2020, p:4

³ L Tracey and E Kahuthia, 'Beyond rhetoric Engaging Africa's youth in democratic governance' Institute of Peace and Security Studies, Policy Brief 99, February 2017 p 2

⁴ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/business-is-booming-in-africa-these-5-charts-show-how>

⁵ [At 61%, Nigeria's startup failure rate tops African peers - Businessday NG](#)

materials translated into various local languages, and engaging with the congregation to apply. There will also be an awareness push through youth influencers and social media to cast a wider net for more youth to apply to the fund through websites, community and volunteers.

4. Ghana's approach will include working with solution scouts through volunteer groups and innovation hubs in rural and marginalized communities, to create awareness and provide support to interested applicants who wish to apply. The scouts will utilize their community involvement to identify and engage with marginalized groups or individuals who may benefit from the challenge fund. They will conduct presentations, workshops, roadshows, and informal gatherings to raise awareness and provide information about the fund as well as instant application support. They will also leverage their connections within local organizations, schools, and other community groups to identify potential applicants who might be otherwise overlooked and assign a contact person to help in the application submission process.

Solutions Submission

1. At the core of the YAI Programme's approach is the utilization of diverse systems and methods for solution submission. This includes a wide range of tools such application forms, toll-free numbers, community volunteers, radio and TV stations. UNDP will utilize multiple avenues specific to each country to simplify the process of submitting solutions and adopt strategies to make the process very inclusive such as:
 - Using clear, straightforward language and avoiding industry jargon or overly technical terms.
 - Bias-free language by avoiding terminologies or other descriptors that may inadvertently discriminate against certain groups. UNDP will use inclusive language that appeals to all potential participants.
 - Diverse advertising channels and application support channels: YAI will be advertised on various platforms including minority and underrepresented group-focused boards, community information centers and religious groups with a focal person to support the submission process.
 - Accessible and supportive application process: UNDP will ensure that the application process is accessible to all, including those with disabilities. In some special situations, applicants will be accommodated and supported to apply to the Programme.
 - Blind recruitment: UNDP will implement blind recruitment practices, such as removing names, photos, and other identifying information from applications or forms, to reduce unconscious bias in the initial application process.
 - Both countries will include developing an online YAI Portal targeted primarily at urban and rural IT-literate youth. For the less IT-literate, there will be support for video-assisted solutions submission to the portal.

Access to these channels will be further supported by dedicated helplines from call centers with trained staff fluent in different local languages. We expect to generate a large number of submissions and will develop a technology-based approach to pre-screening or long-listing within the portal to bring the number of entries to a minimum of 5000 solutions (2500 per country).

Bootcamps

UNDP will progress 50% (but not exceeding 5,000 applicants) across Ghana and Nigeria to bootcamps where applicants, particularly atypical actors, will be helped to refine and better articulate their solutions. Applicants will be guided to edit their applications through a unique ID generated during the application process.

Shortlisting/Evaluation Process

25% of longlisted solutions will go through short-listing. Shortlisting will involve judging panels comprising multiple stakeholders to make the process robust, transparent and inclusive.

Stage Gating

It is envisaged that selected solutions will be at 3 levels of maturity corresponding to Stages 1,2 and 3 gates:

1. Stage 1 solutions will be very close to minimum viable product (MVP), but innovators will require some mentoring, and solutions will need further testing leading to a robust MVP. Most of the pipeline will be at this stage, indeed, 30% of the shortlist are expected to transition to Stage 1, where they will be provided with technical and refinement support up to \$5000 (expected average of \$3,000 per solution).
2. Stage 2 solutions will be MVPs without a clearly defined market, so the focus will be on evaluating the MVP and market-testing. 5% of the shortlist will enter this stage directly, and 30% of Stage 1 solutions are expected to proceed to Stage 2, after meeting all requirements for Stage 1 support. Requirements will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, but we envisage an average support package of \$25,000.
3. Stage 3 solutions will have solid MVP and would have been market-tested, so could receive average support of \$100,000 for scaling up. Given the nature of the program, solutions will be expected to at least validate key criteria rapidly within Stage 2 before entering Stage 3. As such, 20% of Stage 2 solutions are expected to proceed to this stage.

4. As noted previously, the level of support and capacity development will take most solutions to the appropriate scale even at Stage 1 or Stage 2, and not necessarily following the linear gates to scale. For instance, we expect grassroots solutions in many cases to fit a specific context/community/region where Stage 2 support takes it to the appropriate level of scale. In those cases, a solution would be considered effectively scaled without ever having to enter Stage 3.

Scaling

In each country, some shortlisted solutions will be given more intensive and tailored support at Stage 3. The scaling approach will consider various innovative approaches beyond expanding scope or replicating the product. There will be consideration on which scaling approach is appropriate for solutions including horizontal scaling (replicating the innovation in new locations), vertical scaling (integrating the innovation into existing systems), or functional scaling (expanding the innovation's scope).

Institutional Strengthening and Safeguarding

Institutional strengthening and safeguarding are critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the organizations Mastercard Foundation partners with or supports. YAI will put in place explicit guidelines, resources, and processes to ensure that beyond the Programme, the organizations are both strengthened and have adopted best safeguard practices. These processes involve improving an organization's capacity to manage risks, deliver services, and achieve its goals such as strengthening governance and leadership, improving financial management, developing and implementing policies and procedures, building organizational capacity, establishing monitoring and evaluation systems, and promoting transparency and accountability.

III. RESULTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The country specific Programme documents (for Ghana and Nigeria respectively) provide more detail on Results and Partnerships.

IV. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The country specific Programme Documents provide more detail on Programme Management arrangements.

V. RESULTS FRAMEWORK⁶

The country specific Programme Documents provide more detail on Results Frameworks, however, the Programme Metrics outlined by the donor (which inform the Results Frameworks) are presented below.

Programme Metrics

While Mastercard Foundation's wider Lean Innovation Fund has a long-term impact ambition of unlocking new/existing economic opportunities such that 1% of the 300 million (or 3M) underemployed or unemployed youth on the continent are in dignified and fulfilling work by 2030, there are auxiliary metrics both quantitative and qualitative that will be measured to ensure progress towards ambitions of YAI. The target metrics for Ghana and Nigeria are as below, followed by intermediary metrics.

Lean Innovation Stage Gates						
Stage	Screen	Long List	Short List	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Recap of Stage	Submissions to portal through a variety of channels, basic AI screen	Long list applicants develop their idea further (bootcamp or training)	Short list applicants presents idea to panel or completes interviews	Solution Mapping	Experimentation	Scaling
% Advancing from previous stage		50%	25%	30%	30%	20%
% Advancing directly from Short List					5%	0%
# of unique solutioneers				375.00	63.00	0.00
# Solutioneers	10,000	5,000	1,250	375	175	35

⁶ UNDP publishes its project information (indicators, baselines, targets and results) to meet the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards. Make sure that indicators are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound), provide accurate baselines and targets underpinned by reliable evidence and data, and avoid acronyms so that external audience clearly understand the results of the project.

		Target by Lean Innovation Stage Gates						Shared Measures Framework (the LIF Metrics are not intended to map 1:1 to each shared measure, but are related)
LIF Critical Metric		Screen	Long List	Short List	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	
		Submission to portal through inclusive channels	Develop idea with support from local facilitators	Establish Metrics for Value, Impact, Scale	Solution Mapping	Experimentation	Scaling	
Develop Inclusive Process	% of Atypical Actors in Cohort Advancing from Previous Stage	75%	65%	50%	50%	50%	50%	L1.1.1.1 Number of youth who participated in training opportunities L1.1.1.2 Number of youth who completed training opportunities L1.2.1.3 Number of non-financial products/services offered
	% Solutioneers ranking experience with NPS Score of 8 or higher	30%	50%	50%	60%	70%	80%	L1.1.1.5 Views of learners on the quality, usefulness, and relevance of trainings
	% Partners ranking experience with NPS Score of 8 or higher	50%	60%	60%	N/A	N/A	N/A	L1.1.1.6 Views of target influencers on usefulness and relevance of training
Unlock Economic Opportunities	% Solutioneers with a validated value hypothesis (customer and stakeholder conversion and engagement) VALUE				50%	80%	90%	L3.6.1 Changes in mindsets among individuals L4.1.1 Number of employed youth L4.2.1 Number of self-employed youth L4.3.1 Number of youth in dignified and fulfilling work L4.4.2 Number of enterprises reporting a change in offering/markets L5.1.1 Views of youth on their abilities to access and participate in the growth of the sector and/or their communities L5.2.1 Individuals own assessment of their resilience L5.2.2 Individuals reporting change in access to capitals / resources L5.2.3 Number of households / communities who reported change in their access to capitals / resources
	% Solutioneers with a validated impact hypothesis (increased employment opportunities for dignified and fulfilling work) IMPACT				N/A	50%	90%	
	% Solutioneers with a validated market reach hypothesis (percent of target constituent reached) SCALE				50%	80%	90%	
	% Solutioneers with a validated financial sustainability hypothesis (cost recovered through earned income) SCALE				N/A	N/A	80%	L3.3.1 Change in resources flows to target issue or group L4.4.1 Number of supported enterprises reporting increases in revenues L4.4.4 Number of operational enterprises (after 6 and 24 months since receiving support among total number of enterprises)

During the YAI Programme, it is expected that the following direct youth in work and outreach numbers will be achieved in both countries:

Stage	Unique Solutions	Anticipated YIW
Bootcamp	5000	
Shortlist	1250	1250
Stage 1	375	375
Stage 2	175	539
Stage 3	35	336
Total		2500

The youth in work metric is derived from the following assumptions from learnings from existing programs from the Foundation and UNDP Ghana.

- Applicants going through shortlisting would have been supported to refine and improve their solutions such that the solutions can be supported by other programmes beyond the YAI. Solutions can continue to operate their ventures leading to self-employment.
- Each solution is driven by at least 2 people once onboarded to stage 1
- Stage 2 solutions will create 2 more employment opportunities on average.
- Stage 3 solutions will create 6 additional employments during the project.

Beyond these metrics, we will work to understand and capture the various levels of holistic impact these solutions to significant challenges faced by young people will create. Given the nature of this program – giving agency to those who are most affected by challenges will uncover significant impact at an individual, community, institutional, and ecosystem level. This includes factors such as reducing economic inequality and driving rural economic development. To monitor progress towards achieving the ultimate vision of unlocking an effective model, intermediary outcomes have been developed at every step of the process to serve as proxies for broader progress and to enable iterations during implementation.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The country specific Programme Documents provide more detail on Monitoring and Evaluation.

VII. MULTI-YEAR WORK PLAN ⁷⁸

The country specific Programme Documents provide more detail on respective Multi-Year Work Plans and budget allocations. Below is the high level budget allocated to both countries for YAI. Note that "Year" refers to a 12 month period.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Pipeline Activation	\$ 1,649	\$ 1,331	\$ -	\$ 2,980
Early Stage Application Support	\$ 458	467	-	\$ 925
Solutions Submission	\$ 360	368	-	\$ 728
Longlisting	\$ 1,507	1,538	-	\$ 3,045
Shortlisting and Evaluation of Applicants	\$ 899	917	-	\$ 1,816
Stage Gate 1 (Solution Mapping)	\$ 1,308	1,334	-	\$ 2,642
Stage Gate 2 (Experimentation)	\$ 3,030	3,090	78	\$ 6,198
Stage Gate 3 (Scaling)	\$ 2,211	2,459	99	\$ 4,769
Evaluation of YAI Programme	\$ 200	204	21	\$ 425
Project delivery fee	\$ 1,159	1,171	20	\$ 2,350
TOTAL	\$ 12,781	\$ 12,879	\$ 218	\$ 25,878

⁷ Cost definitions and classifications for programme and development effectiveness costs to be charged to the project are defined in the Executive Board decision DP/2010/32

⁸ Changes to a project budget affecting the scope (outputs), completion date, or total estimated project costs require a formal budget revision that must be signed by the project board. In other cases, the UNDP programme manager alone may sign the revision provided the other signatories have no objection. This procedure may be applied for example when the purpose of the revision is only to re-phase activities among years.

VIII. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The country specific Programme Documents provide more detail on country specific Governance and Management Arrangements. As agreed with the donor, UNDP Ghana will lead on managing alignment between the 2 country Programmes and reporting to Mastercard Foundation.

IX. LEGAL CONTEXT

This Programme Document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Governments of Ghana and Nigeria and UNDP, signed on (date, date). All references in the SBAA to “Executing Agency” shall be deemed to refer to “Implementing Partner.”

This project will be implemented by UNDP as the “Implementing Partner” in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of UNDP.

X. RISK MANAGEMENT

The country specific Programme Documents provide more detail on Risk Management.

XI. ANNEXES

The country specific Programme Documents include detailed Annexes.