

# **STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021**

# INSPIRING

ACTION.

"Never doubt that a small group of young thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." --Margaret Mead



# INTRODUCING THE NOW STRATEGY!

## **RONALD TUGUME**

## **FOUNDING BOARD CHAIRPERSON**

Worldwide, youth face myriad challenges in terms of access to equal opportunities to jobs and having a voice in decisions which affect their lives.

When we started Youth Line Forum in 2014, our common vision was '**communities where all youth thrive**'. Yet, youth everywhere face issues threatening their development and wellbeing, including poverty, inadequate education, abuse, delinquency, violence, inadequate access to services, adolescent pregnancy, and substance abuse. These issues are intricately linked, and may lead to more adverse outcomes, including school failure and dropout, unemployment, child neglect and abandonment, or sexually transmitted diseases.

The last number of years have seen a radical deterioration in the position of the Youth Work sector. The sharp cuts in funding (some 6 times the rate of general cuts to public expenditure) have led to major reductions in services. Young people have suffered most in this recession according to all independent commentators. The context in which we deliver this work is changing rapidly. Demographically we are approaching a rapidly increasing youth population in the next few years. After 2014 every year that passes will see an increase in size of all age cohorts between 10 and 20 years of age. A greater proportion of these will be in urban and suburban areas, (young people make up a greater percentage of the population in rural areas). In this strategy, we promise to scale up our services to meet this demand. We are open to greater and more streamlined organizational methods and combinations to achieve our goals

In response to the worldwide phenomenon of young men and women calling for meaningful civic, economic, social and political participation, including in recent consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, this new Strategy identifies development challenges and issues facing youth today, and more importantly offers forward-looking recommendations for strategic entry points and engagement of a broad range of partners, including young people themselves, in addressing youth empowerment issues around the world.

In this strategy we shall createan environment where youth are recognized, their strengths, interests, and abilities nurtured to bring out meaningful change. In this way our model maximizes voluntary impact, combines funding, policy and practice in an integrated holistic way and responds to the needs of local communities.

We commit to social entrepreneurship, promoting good governance and accountability while ensuring that young people make safe sexual reproductive health choices. The first stage of this process is to urge young people to formally organize themselves as fundamental agents and catalysts for change in the continent.

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## ACRONYMS

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASRH - Adolescent sexual reproductive health
AU - African union
CSO'S - Civil society organizations
FP - Family planning
GOU - Government of Uganda
HIV - Human immune virus
ICT - Information and communication technology
MCH - maternal and child health
SBCC - social and behavior change communication
SRH - Sexual Reproductive Health
STI - Sexually transmitted infections
UBOS - Uganda bureau of standards and statistics
UDHS – Uganda demographics and healthy survey
UNAIDS - United nations program on HIV/Aids
YLF - Youth line forum

## **THE YOUTH POSITION- Understanding the global and country**

### context.

This youth generation is the largest the world has ever known. More than 60 percent of the population in many countries are youth aged 15-24. Their opportunities for communicating, acting and influencing are unprecedented. The challenges they face are unprecedented, too, from climate change to unemployment to multiple forms of inequalities and exclusion, in particular for youth belonging to vulnerable or marginalized group. Africa is called a youthful continent as its majority is characterized by the Youth. The African Union (AU) acknowledges the imperative of empowering and prioritizing this group of people as their role in attaining and sustaining a free and liberated Africa is paramount.

**ON VOICE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**: On issues of governance and accountability, the youth around the world have for some time now been pushing for democratic changes and advocating to be involved in designing, implementation and monitoring of policies that affect them. However, there is still limitation in their participation<sup>1</sup> as they are seen as receivers and not as active participants in decisions that affect them. The above is true for most communities and explains why the governance measure of political space<sup>2</sup>, on voice and accountability, political stability and government effectiveness assessed Uganda as below average. More so, recent legal and policy reforms in the country further restrict citizen's participation and freedom of expression<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, policies and PROGRAMs for youth are poorly resourced including government ministries and departments that coordinate youth issues, with little involvement of the private and civil society sectors. They are also poorly coordinated, being implemented through vertical -silo sectoral approaches that do not address common and related challenges in a collective, comprehensive and sustainable manner. Youth Interventions are therefore less effective, often duplicative, more costly and typically with short-lived impact. There is a gross lack of adequate data and information, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems to inform the situation of youth, policies and PROGRAMs, and progress made in addressing their specific challenges.

In terms of barriers to youth participation in decision making - the National Youth Council, is largely underresourced, undermining its ability to lead substantial advocacy initiatives to actualise this policy. Although the youth are represented at all levels by the Ugandan Constitution and other instruments, these representations have not produced functional youth friendly legislation, regulations and institutions to date

**CHALLENGE OF DECENT AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT:** The promise of decent and productive employment is within the grasp of a new generation of Africans. Africa's economies are growing faster than they have in two decades. Yet joblessness remains a reality for too many young people. Armed with tertiary degrees and wide-eyed hopes for better futures, they search for jobs with which to feed and clothe their families. Unemployment is one of the greatest problems facing young people Africa. In most African countries, unemployment amongst young people is considerably higher than the general population andYouth employment is often insecure and poorly paid. While this may be normal for new entrants to the labor market, informal employment and limited job opportunities mean that there are few opportunities for career advancement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> DFID, 2000 defines participation as enabling people to realise their rights to participate in, and access information relating to, the decision-making processes which affect their lives."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>as demonstrated by World Bank Indicators 2011

<sup>3</sup> Oxfam Country Strategy 2015-2019

The youth continue to face challenges of poverty and inequality, stemming among others, from unemployment, lack of formal employment, irregularity of work and social protection. The large youth population in the region creates a window of opportunity, which if properly harnessed, can translate into better economic growth and development, and produce a demographic dividend. The youth unemployment challenge is compounded by the dearth of quality information and data on the situation of youth employment

**CHALLENGE OF RELEVANT, ACCESSIBLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING:** The future holds the promise of education and training. Many African countries are close to attaining universal access to education for primary school children. Yet for too many there is the fear of being left behind. In many countries in Africa there are 4 significant barriers to education and training. These include the high costs of school fees, uniforms and textbooks, the need for families to put children to work to earn income, and discrimination against girls and young women. Those young people who are excluded from the education system are more likely to be unemployed, face health problems and participate in criminal activities than their peers. While getting young people into schools is a challenge, so too is the quality and relevance of what they learn. Governments have recognized the need to both diversify and vocationally orient the curriculum taught in education and training institutions so that young people are provided with knowledge and skills that can assist them in dealing with the demands of adult life and increase their potential for gaining employment. A good education lays the foundation for youth empowerment and development:

**YOUTH AND ICT:**Information and communication technology (ICT) is crucial for youth development. The digital era has opened doors to improved communication and participation. ICT has the potential to create social and economic opportunities in general through continuing education, employment and empowerment opportunities

In Africa, ICT has revolutionized the way production, market access and distribution of goods and services are organized. This has led to new business models emerging on the horizon leading to changes in the way enterprises relate to consumers. In Uganda, more and more people use the Internet daily to communicate and transact business. This becomes has helped in improving the lives of youth.

Challenges around ICT have been: 1) Affordability: where most youth don't have the capacity to afford the latest or at least average technology like a personal computer, a good smart phone, or buying bundles or daily network subscription to access the internet. 2)Accessibility: as most youths in rural areas can't access internet or computer services due to poor network or live in rural areas with no electricity. 3) Lack of Skills: The skills of using these ICT devices like computers hinder them from putting technology to use.

Despite the above challenges, several opportunities exist in the use of ICT that the youth can take advantage of like online social interactions where the youth can share experiences, problems and solutions to the day to day challenges of using ICT

**SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**: Today, youths in Uganda face numerous challenges related to their individual health, including STIs, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, and drug abuse. By the age of 18, over 62% of young women and almost 48% of young men in Uganda have already had their first sexual encounter (UBOS and ICF International, 2012). The UDHS report, 2012 further reveals that 36% of young women and 49% of young men in Uganda are engaging in high-risk sexual activity, coupled with: (i) low contraceptive use of 35.3% & 47.9% among sexually active unmarried female youth aged 15-19 & 20-24 years respectively; and (ii) low rate of safe sexual intercourse e.g. only 24.3% and 23.3% of sexually active unmarried female youth aged 15-19 and 20-24 years respectively use condoms. In 2011, UNAIDS reported HIV rates of 4.8% for female youth and 2.3% for male youth aged 15-24 years and it is clear that these behaviors are placing youth's health and lives at risk. Voluntary Family Planning (FP) is one of the most

efficacious and cost-effective means of improving individual health, gender equity, family well-being and national development (Jacobstein et al, 2013). And in Uganda, the National Health Sector Strategic 2011-2015 (HSSP III) identifies Reproductive Health as a priority national PROGRAM. Accordingly, the national Ministry of Health, through the same HSSP III, prioritized increasing access to quality Adolescent Health services as one of the strategies to reduce the high maternal mortality in Uganda (HSSP III).

According to the State of Uganda Population Report (2016), Government of Uganda (GoU) and its development partners have continued to support programs aimed at meeting the SRH needs of youth, but such efforts have been "outmatched" by the country's large and sexually active youth population, further raising the stakes for addressing youth health needs in Uganda. In addition, the national government has formulated several national policies and strategies such as The National ASRH Strategy that seeks to integrate Adolescent/Youth SRH into the general health service system; and Uganda National Youth Plan (2010). All these, combined are expected to create an enabling environment for socio-economic empowerment of the young people and women and promote socio-economic transformation of the communities and the country. Unfortunately, these policies and strategies have not adequately been implemented, leaving a persistently poor situation for the young people and women.

**POWER DYNAMICS:** There is a danger that development will proceed without considering and engaging the interest of those it will most affect-the youth. The power dynamics that affect youth are usually rooted in cultural norms which make it difficult for youth and adults to be comfortable working together. Culturally, youth are expected to get answers from adults and adults often under-estimate the value and contribution of the youth, whom they may not see as significant contributors to decisions that affect them. These cultural factors exclude youth from decision-making and hinder youth development.

There is still significant social exclusion which has affected the youth to have power over their own lives. It is often the case that in poorer communities, the majority of youth operate at the margins of society, and are excluded from the mainstream aspects of life. Young people have been denied access to resources and services, and lack opportunities open to others because of who they are.

**GENDER INEQUALITIES:**Being a predominantly patriarchal society, communities in Uganda have high prevalence of strong negative socio-cultural stereotypes, many of which aggravate gender inequality against girls and women and inhibit partner and inter-generational communications on rights and limit access to social services and opportunities. Indeed, gender-based, and especially sexual violence still prevails, further inhibiting women and girls' ability to realize their rights and also limits them from accessing social protection/justice against any violation thereof. Therefore, the social-economic status of young people in Ugandan communities is poor, characterized by unfulfilled rights, especially among girls and women and worse still in the rural communities and in the urban slums.

**THE YOUTH SECTOR UNCOORDINATED:** Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in general are weak, undemocratic, and largely oriented towards donor compliance than the real issues affecting society and young people. Consequently, they lack capacity to advance issues affecting different people in society and lack a common voice required to advance issues affecting the youth. They still need to be organized and strengthened to engage in rights-based community development processes, including advocacy and accountability and to encourage young people especially the girls to take leadership, make them more dynamic, inclusive and focused on the youth agenda. Analyzing the youth engagements from the government angle, youth structures have been put in place called Youth Councils. These youth councils are supposed to be independent of political ideologies and aimed at developmental issues for the youth. However while the formation is viewed as a good strategy by the government to the uplift the well-being of the youth, not much has been achieved because even the youth holding those offices seem to run after their own agendas and there is a lot of political infiltration, which has hampered the achieving of the council objectives.



### The Vision

A generation of inspired and empowered young people transforming their communities

### **Mission**

A dynamic institution championing and synergizing youth actions to foster economic development and good governance

## Values

**Integrity and trustworthiness:**We conduct our business in accordance with the highest standards of professional behavior and ethics. We are transparent, honest and ethical in all we do.

**Passion:** Our energy and enthusiasm are contagious. We are inspired to make a lasting impact. We're very excited to continue working with young people and our strategic partnership will ensure better outcomes for the young people we work with and maximize the strengths.

**Ambition:** We believe that we can and do change the world. We inspire young people to dream big and we work with them to attain their dreams. If it is not going to be big, we do not even attempt it! Together with young people we learn tools for life, foster dreams, offer hope and realize our greatest expectations.

**Down to earth**: We are young. We always see the best in people. We trust each other. We value people's opinions. We value learning. We value voluntary participation. We believe in serious fun. We are down to Earth!

## **IDEOLOGY:**

We are grounded in (a) the recognition that young people, in all their diversity, have both a right and a duty to participate and contribute to development at the community level and beyond, and (b) the belief that participation of young men and women in community development, labor markets, political processes, public life, environmental stewardship, peace-building and conflict prevention will increasingly shape and transform the quality of and prospects for sustainable human development. Underpinning all these efforts

is a human rights-based approach, recognizing the universal human rights of all young men and women, without discrimination.

## THE PLAN:

YLF will continue working as a non-profit organization which works with young people to inspire and empower them to transform communities. Youth Line Forum will:

- 1- **SUPPORT** through capacity development of young people and youth organizations, including youth caucuses in government, parliament or other representative bodies.
- 2- ENGAGE through outreach, advocacy and mainstreaming of youth issues in all spheres of development planning
- 3- **EMPOWER** through skilling, capacity building and facilitating access to markets for young people so that they can contributes to their house hold incomes.
- 4- INFLUENCE through thought leadership, national policy debates and networks, that include the voices of marginalized youth, and build on improved data collection to monitor the post-2015 development process
- 5- **SUSTAIN** through support to national policy, more effective strategies to protect young men and women from exploitation and neglect, and support their informed and active participation in all spheres of society.

#### **OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

**Resilience building:** We shall ensure that the capacity of young people men, women, communities, institutions, and countries to anticipate, prevent, recover from, and transform in the aftermath of shocks, stresses and change.

**Working by, with and for young people** as initiators, collaborators and target groups, by further integrating youth across programming creating mechanisms that empower, engage and include young people – especially the vulnerable and marginalized.

**Protecting youth human rights** by promoting a human rights-based approach to programming and developing the capacity of young people to claim and exercise their economic, political, social, civil and cultural rights. and empowerment of young women, understanding that sustainable human development will not be fully achieved unless women and girls are able to contribute on an equal basis with men and boys to their societies.

**Seeking sustainable human development** through livelihood creation for poor youth and, in all actions, being guided by processes that enlarge young people's choices by expanding their capabilities and opportunities in ways that are sustainable from the economic, social and environmental standpoints

**Being guided by national ownership and leadership**, including youth leadership, making decisions about how best to meet their young people's aspirations and with YLF helping to develop the policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities and institutional capacities that can sustain results for youth.

**Ensuring youth participation and voice** in pursuit of equitable access for young women and young men to development opportunities, recognizing young people as agents of positive change for their own development, strengthening youth civic engagement and participation in politics and public institutions.

**Encouraging innovation for transformational change**, by investing in the development of new and innovative tools and approaches, and considering throughout, the potential to replicate and scale up successful experiences.

Advancing regional integration: to promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences, best practices and other resources that promise development solutions for youth, especially solutions generated by young entrepreneurs.

**Optimizing youth volunteerism for development** to engage young people in tackling development challenges, gaining both skills and strengthening trust and solidarity in society, and creating opportunities for participation.

**Sharing inter-generational knowledge** by supporting the two-way transfer of information and experiences between younger and older generations, strengthening dialogue between traditional community leadership, elders and young

#### THEMATIC AREA 1: SOCIAL ENTREPRENUERSHIP

Society needs ethically driven social entrepreneurs to break out of negative patterns and cause positive change. YLF focuses on social enterprise as a means of providing the much-needed employment to young people and part of the sustainability plan for the organization:

#### We commit to:

- Encouraging the formation of national and district youth forums on decent employment;
- Advancing regional integration, and promoting social cohesion among youth at national and regional levels;
- Encouraging young women and men to participate in finding solutions to the challenge of climate change and realizing opportunities that emerge with national climate change responses;
- Encouraging regional youth innovation competitions, promoting and sustaining a culture of entrepreneurship among young women and men at community, national and regional levels;
- Promoting apprenticeship training, business incubation, internship, mentorship, career and employment guidance, and counselling for young women and men in schools, out-of-school, colleges and in public employment centers including in rural areas;
- Promoting youth exchange/learning/networking programs and youth business fairs in the country and east African region and internationally;

• Incentivizing private sector to impart skills on youth through on-the-job training programs, attachments, mentoring and apprenticeships /learnership/ internships;

#### THEMATIC AREA 2: VOICE, GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We give young people a platform to participate in policy formulation and equip them with leadership, economic and life skills which empowers them to become accountable and hold their leaders accountable.

#### Wecommit to:

- Improving government accountability towards citizens including electoral processes
- Encouraging youth participation in social dialogue processes on matters affecting them;
- Strengthening citizen engagement for government accountability
- Promoting access to information and civic (voter) education: human rights, legal aid education/ information
- Strengthening youth and women participation and representation in leadership and governance processes
- Improving participatory decision-making
- Coordinating the youth sector and youth programming for joint advocacy
- Promote youth engagement and partnerships to strengthen programs and benefit youth
- Youth-serving organizations and partnerships are staffed by individuals who are well-trained, knowledgeable in the field, competent, compassionate, and culturally responsive.
- Youth are recognized by their community for their strengths and provided multiple opportunities for civic engagement, service, and leadership

#### THEMATIC AREA 3: RIGHTS

We advocate for human rights and educate young people about their rights and responsibility so that they can make informed demands. We recognize there is:

- Lack of knowledge about safer, healthier SRH behaviors
- Lack of space for open discussion about SRH issues
- Lack of SRH services supporting access by young people
- Poverty, leading to intergenerational, transactional sex and power imbalances within relationships
- Traditional practices such as dry sex, that increase the risk of HIV transmission, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and reproductive tract infections
- Alcohol consumption that increases risky behavior
- Negative attitudes towards condom use amongst young people, especially unmarried young people
- Social norms that support men having multiple sexual partners, men as decision makers and endorse the sexual coercion of women, forced sex and early marriage

We commit to:

- Encouraging youth participation in social dialogue processes on matters affecting them;
- Strengthen Local Drama clubs/associations.
- Build the capacity of selected model facilities to provide youth friendly spaces and services:
- Conduct community dialogue meetings on Gender relations and youth rights
- Support community radios and the national TV broadcaster to develop and broadcast innovative youth-led, participatory radio and television programs to address SRH and Rights issues.
- Set-up of a network of Youth Community Journalists who will be trained in basic journalism skills, community reporting, health reporting and writing for the web. The Youth Community Journalists will play a key role in gathering stories and voices from the youths and in particular in bringing out the key issues concerning child and maternal mortality
- Conduct training on masculinities for key/influential male individuals
- Capacitate/strengthen and functionalize formal social support systems
- Advocate for rights of marginalized and minority youth groups.
- Form/strengthen district and national youth networks, organizations and alliances.
- Establish and functionalize Youth Advisory Panels in CSOs: Facilitate establishment of fully functional youth advisory panels to promote youth engagement in governance in CSOs and foster an equitable and meaningful interaction among young people and decision makers

### THEMATIC AREA 4: DATA AND RESEARCH:

Data available on youth especially in Uganda is inadequate. YLF carries out strategic research and makes this data available to the youth for analysis, validation and use to enable them engage in informed discussions with their leaders to foster the desired change. We will

- Undertaking research to identify bottlenecks to effective transitioning from informal to formal economy;
- Strengthening statistical offices to collect, analyze, store data, and report on youth labor market information that is disaggregated by age, gender, race, disability, worker education, formalinformal and urban-rural divides;
- Encourage the adoption of evidence-based strategies, and support their implementation.
- Support innovation and deepen the evidence base to fill gaps in knowledge.
- Assess and disseminate models of collaboration that provide a pathway to opportunity for youth, and yield other positive results.
- Centralize and disseminate information on promising and evidence-based strategies for youth, including promising youth engagement and partnership strategies.
- Promote data collection and long-term evaluation of youth programs.
- Promote youth led research for decision making and advocacy

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE:

#### **IMPACT**

The **<u>overall impact</u>** for this program is: An economically empowered youth positively engaged in development.

#### **OUTCOMES**

#### Long-Term Outcome

• An empowered youth community with ability to transform their social and economic wellbeing through effective participation in governance and development processes.

#### Medium term outcomes

- Females and males as active citizens asserting their rights and influencing change.
- Increased number of employable creative initiatives among the youth resulting from supportive engagement structures.
- Stronger and wider alliances supporting youth empowerment and engagement programs.

#### Short Term Outcomes

Youth and ICT

• Youth Embracing ICT technologies for productivity and influencing change.

#### Youth skills and Knowledge

- Young females and males demonstrating the core life skills that will enable them make informed economic.
- Youth Ideas forming community opinions and stand.

#### Youth Entrepreneurship

- Young female and male accessing internship and apprenticeship programs.
- Increased entrepreneurship knowledge and skills among female and male youth in targeted communities

#### Youth Participation and Governance

- Expanded Youth Participation Space
- Youth as Community Leaders
- Female and male youth participating in decision making processes at local and national levels.

## Monitoring the strategy.

YLF will develop aim at 1) tracking progress against work plans, 2)generating learning and sharing lesson learnt with others 3) providing the organization with the opportunity for the team to adapt the project during its implementation 4) Influencing or leveraging additional resources to support future programming 5) Communicating to the wider public and 6) Producing information for donor reporting and accountability purposes.

# TRACK RECORD: OUR EXPERIENCE, ADDED VALUE AND EXPERTISE IN THIS AREA

Youth Line Forumhas an excellent track record on working with community media and mass media in general on Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) and on delivering innovative, targeted and engaging programming across a variety of platforms. Evidence and our own research highlights the essential role media and communication plays in changing social norms and influencing the uptake of healthier behaviors, particularly sensitive issues such as sexual and reproductive health

**Youth Line Forum**has proven on the ground experience in delivering youth interpersonal school/community, college and advocacy activities that have established clear impact in increasing youth participation in decision-making and improving access to sexual and reproductive health services and comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents and young people

**Youth Line Forum**has delivered large-scale social and behavior change communications projects with particular focus on sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and maternal and child health (MCH). Health campaigns are developed and delivered in partnership with local organizations (governments, civil society organizations, media houses etc.), with a view to building their capacity.

**Youth Line Forum**adopts a creative approach, delivering locally produced, local language campaigns on radio, television, online and mobile phones and using entertainment to promote acceptance and recall of messages on key health issues. Dramas, interactive discussion programs, public-service announcements, reality TV shows, music videos, competitions, outdoor advertising and even mobile ring tones help raise awareness of critical health issues, break down taboos and change behavior and attitudes.

One of the central tenants of the **Youth Line Forum** is that is it a creative organization, and as such, **Youth Line Forum** conducts all of its creative work in-house.

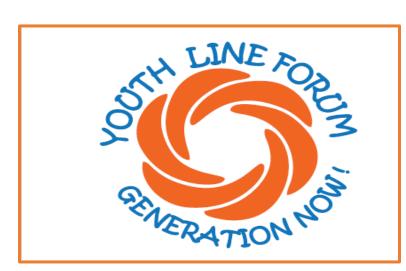
Youth Line Forum interventions recognize youth potential to contribute to development, and the value of investing on empowering and building youth capabilities for the purpose of realizing their full human capabilities (physical, psychological, moral, spiritual, emotional, economic and political). Youth Line Forum interventions consider age-specific needs and differences of youth, and life- long learning. For example, there are interventions made specifically for in school youth and those designed for the out of school youth. Youth Line Forum believes that views of the youth should be sought for, acknowledged and respected to inform policies and programs.

Youth Line Forum is one of the most established, effective and respected national organizations in Uganda. Youth Line Forum's national reach is extensive, working with partners and allies to find lasting solutions to youth priority issues especially youth unemployment.

# THIS TIME IN 2021, WE WILL HAVE...

- Increased youth understanding on social and economic rights.
- Built a stronger sector and a body of evidence for the power and impact of youth led development.

- Restructured our own Organization to reflect the Model, putting our leadership and direction to suit the needs of the young people. Increased our internal capacities to reach out to the rest of the East African Region
- Positioned young people as election candidates ready to lead the development of their communities.
- Built a network of young leaders influencing change in their communities.



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