

SCS Zambia: Youth Lead Activity

Overview

The Youth Lead Activity (2018 – 2021, \$2.8 million) is a USAID/Zambia-funded initiative to support, network, and elevate outstanding young leaders from across Zambia to amplify the impact of their work and inspire civic innovation and promote a culture of sustained, citizen-responsive leadership.

Zambia Context

Zambia is currently facing a large youth bulge, with more than 70% of the population comprised of young people under the age of 30 and with 36.71% between the ages of 15 and 35. Young people are not well incorporated into Zambian society. USAID/Zambia's 2017 Fragility Assessment highlights increased civic exclusion among youth.

Major Program Components

Increased youth development through:

- Providing youth with internship and mentorship opportunities in government, private sector and civil society
- Equipping Zambian youth with leadership and civic-engagement skills
- Youth-led capstone projects in which youth choose issues about which they are passionate, and identify and implement solutions

Institutional strengthening of local actors through:

- Building the capacity and network of Zambian government entities, businesses, and civil society organizations to oversee a youth internship program
- Supporting the capacity of the National Youth Development Council (NYDC) to engage youth in decision-making for policies and ministry activities.

Achievements

- Established a 25-member Advisory Board comprised of youth leaders, representatives from faith-based organizations, local and international CSOs, business leaders and government officials
- Co-creation process, including a youth-mapping exercise, contributed to the design of the training curriculum and selection of the National Youth Development Council as a key local partner

- 25 youth mappers were trained in research and interview skills and presented their findings to USAID, the Advisory Board, and other key stakeholders, and influenced the design of the internship and training components, including adding a requirement for defined scope of works for the interns and an established mentor; and strong technical and soft skills development in the training curriculum.
- 95 youth interning with and being mentored at 41 different public and private sector entities; during their internships, youth participate in ongoing civic education and leadership skills trainings.
- Completed an organizational and technical capacity assessment of the two local partners and created corresponding action plans focused on improving organizational capacity and youth programming.
- Youth in the first cohort were divided into six groups and have used the design thinking process to identify key issues within their communities, focusing on three thematic areas: women's rights, governance, and health. They are now implementing their proposed solutions with support from YLA, their intern hosts, local mentors and civil society organizations.

"I have always felt so certain that I wanted to be a social worker. But during the youth mapper training, I was challenged to explain why, to spell out my goals and how I would achieve them. Then we went out and interviewed different people running their own business, working in government or with civil society. Now I am re-thinking my career goals."

Chinyama Shamamba, 23-year-old student

"Being a trainee among so many youths that already finished university was a bit intimidating. But I found out that I am good at public speaking. I love researching and debating issues. During the training I realized I am actually very confident and capable of getting up in front of a classroom full of students."

Towela Nyirenda, 18-year-old youth mapper

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