



GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITIES

ROADMAP

Digital Inclusion in Kenya



How community-led solutions are building digital access, skills, and infrastructure to unlock meaningful employment for Kenya's youth.

Executive summary

Kenya's youth population, estimated at over 20 million people aged 15 to 34, represents more than one-third of the country's total population¹. Each year, over 800,000 young people enter the workforce, yet formal job creation has not kept pace². As a result, many are absorbed into low-productivity employment, and in some cases, exploitative labor and organized crime. These challenges are particularly acute for the unseen majority, including youth from low-income areas and young women, who face compounded barriers to quality work due to structural gender inequality.

Widespread unemployment and stalled mobility have led to growing disillusionment and frustration. In Kenya, recent protests and calls for value-based leadership reflect a generation demanding both recognition, opportunity, and meaningful reform. Addressing this crisis requires more than job creation. It demands recognition of the informal and creative economies and urgent action to ensure that digitally connected platforms and support systems reach the young people most often left behind—those living in informal settlements, secondary cities, and rural communities.

Bridging the digital divide to unlock youth potential

As part of the Digital Superhighway Project³, a pillar of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), Kenya has made a national commitment to advancing digital inclusion. This commitment is intended to strengthen information communication, provide improved access to digital services, and enable economic resilience and connectivity for those otherwise cut off⁴. Key components of this agenda include the planned installation of 25,000 public Wi-Fi hotspots and the development of Digital Village Smart Hubs. This focus on digital transformation is further evident in Kenya's Vision 2030, and the

¹ Africa Youth Employment Clock, by World Data Lab – Kenya. (n.d.). <https://africayouthjobs.io/>. Sourced 25th July, 2025.

² Kenya Vision 2030, Youth Employment Initiatives in Kenya, <https://vision2030.go.ke/publication/youth-employment-initiatives-in-kenya/>. Sourced 25th July, 2025.

³ International Trade Administration, Kenya Digital Superhighway Project, <https://www.trade.gov/market-intelligence/kenya-digital-superhighway-project>. Sourced 29th July, 2025.

⁴ Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, Digital Superhighway: Powering Kenya's Blue Economy, <https://ict.go.ke/digital-superhighway-powering-kenyas-blue-economy>. Sourced 29th July, 2025.

allocation of Ksh 12.7 billion in the 2025/26 budget⁵ for ICT infrastructure and youth employment.

Despite these investments, digital infrastructure remains unevenly distributed, particularly in areas where young people lack safe, reliable, and relevant spaces to learn, create, and earn. Barriers such as affordability, lack of mentorship, limited connectivity, and weak coordination between national and county governments continue to prevent many youth from turning digital access into meaningful economic opportunity. In contrast, community-based organizations (CBOs) working in these contexts have developed practical, low-cost, and youth-centred models that respond directly to the needs and aspirations of Kenya's unseen majority. These CBO-led approaches demonstrate what is possible when digital infrastructure is grounded in trust, tailored to local conditions, and supported by mentorship and creativity.

This roadmap, informed by direct consultations with CBOs part of the [Global Alliance for Communities](#) and grounded in policy analysis and budget review, outlines six action points to reframe how digital access can serve as a pathway to income generation and long-term opportunity for marginalized youth:

1. Position digital hub investments as a partnership model with CBOs
2. Support CBO-led training that links digital access to real livelihoods
3. Streamline partnerships for direct impact
4. Extend access to secondary cities, peri-urban, and rural areas that face digital exclusion
5. Connect digital access to financial inclusion and enterprise
6. Recognize the digital creative economy as a pathway to employment and income generation

Together, these actions offer a blueprint for more inclusive, youth-driven digital development that centers dignity, accountability, and opportunity.

⁵ The National Treasury and Economic Planning, Budget Statement, FY 2025/26, https://www.treasury.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Budget-Statement-for-the-FY-2025_26-Budget...pdf. Sourced 29th July, 2025.

Position digital hub investments as a partnership model with CBOs

Overview

The Kenyan government has set ambitious targets for expanding digital access, aiming to establish over 1,450 Digital Village Smart Hubs nationwide. These hubs are designed to provide public internet access and digital skills training to young people. Yet despite this investment, many hubs remain poorly located, underutilized, or disconnected from the realities of the youth they aim to serve, particularly in marginalized areas. Barriers such as limited hours, lack of mentorship, and unsafe environments have left many young people excluded from meaningful digital engagement.

Member insights

Youth-led and -informed CBOs across Kenya maintain long-standing digital hubs and youth centers that reflect the lived realities of the young people they serve. These hubs combine infrastructure, mentorship, flexible access, and relevant programming, addressing many of the limitations of government-run centers.

A digital entrepreneurship hub founded and operated by United Destiny Shapers, a CBO based in Kisumu, a secondary city in Western Kenya, started in 2017 by providing unlimited Wi-Fi to address the lack of reliable government-supported access points outside the capital. They observed that while many young people own smartphones, the cost of data bundles limits their ability to access information and opportunities. In some cases, this barrier prevents youth from completing even basic tasks such as filling out online forms.

During the initial implementation phase, they recognized the importance of pairing connectivity with relevant human resources, such as mentors and coaches, who could guide young people in using the space constructively. Without this support and contextual relevance, which is often missing from government-led hubs, they witnessed the risk of these spaces becoming underutilized and misused. The organization also noted that its hub acts as a gateway to engage young people in other capacity-building opportunities, while providing a social space where young people in their community can connect with peers who share similar goals.

At a glance

- Many youth, especially young women, report feeling unsafe or stigmatized in public digital spaces that lack privacy and fail to provide inclusive environments for learning, creating, and working.
- Inconvenient locations and costly transport prevent access for young people in informal settlements and rural communities often avoid centers that require costly transportation, yet government-supported digital access points are frequently poorly located.
- When hubs operate without adult mentorship or youth-informed programming, they risk being misused or fail to generate long-term impact.
- Government-run hubs typically close by 5pm and on weekends, making them inaccessible to youth who juggle school, work, and other responsibilities. Youth consistently prefer spaces with flexible hours that fit their complex lives.



Today, their hub manages as many as 230 visits per day and has trained more than 3,000 people in digital literacy.

In addition, United Destiny Shapers has operationalized 15 further digital hubs in Kisumu, creating a network of access points with their partners.

Gem Youth Agripreneurs, a CBO based in Siaya County, emphasized that awareness and outreach are critical to hub success. One of the key challenges is that many young people remain unaware of government hubs and the services they offer. According to the organization, even young women who are aware often report feeling unsafe attending the hubs, as they are male-operated and present a risk of gender-based violence. To improve uptake, the organization recommends hiring female, youth-friendly staff, sensitizing youth to the benefits and available services, and using community events like trade fairs to boost engagement, which is an approach grounded in their experience mobilizing rural youth.

Rebirth of a Queen, a CBO operating in Kiserian in Kenya's Rift Valley Province, highlighted a significant lack of youth-friendly digital spaces in Kiserian. They opened the One Digital hub in 2023, which in its first year, recorded 30 daily visits and launched a three-month IT training program in computer literacy, coding, web design, and graphic design, which are skills that align with freelance work opportunities. By embedding mental health and creative workshops, including photography and paper craft, the hub created a holistic environment for young people to learn, connect, and thrive, positively impacting 210 youth.

Rather than creating parallel infrastructure, there is an opportunity for digital hub investments to be reframed as long-term partnerships with CBOs that already have deep community trust and experience serving youth at scale. SHOFCO, a CBO founded in Kibera and now active in 35 counties, has built an ecosystem of 22 libraries and community centers in Kenya. These hubs provide digital access points, computers, tablets, and other resources such as books and magazines for young people in under-resourced communities and have played a role in supporting over 13,000 young people in finding gainful employment.

Recommendations

1. Anchor digital access investments within community spaces managed by trusted CBOs that have established youth engagement models, rather than duplicating infrastructure through parallel systems.
2. Design county-level rollouts based on local youth behaviors, barriers, and demand, using participatory approaches that reflect diverse needs, especially of marginalized groups.
3. Strengthen CBOs by building their internal digital literacy and capacity, enabling leaders and teams to model digital skills, mentor youth, and grow pipelines of young people who can step into similar roles.
4. Integrate mentorship, psychosocial support, and job-readiness services into digital hub operations, ensuring facilitators are trained, trusted, and accessible to youth.
5. Measure success based on youth engagement and outcomes, including digital skills acquisition, employment pathways, and user satisfaction, rather than hardware installations.



Support CBO-led training that links digital access to real livelihoods

At a glance

- Most digital training fails to align with young people's employment goals or creative ambitions. Outdated curricula, lack of mentorship, and one-off training without access to tools limit decent work opportunities and real livelihood outcomes.
- The digital economy is not limited to ICT careers. Young people are using digital tools for content creation, online marketing, freelance work, and entrepreneurship, especially in the creative sectors
- CBOs demonstrate that consistent mentorship, peer learning, and physical spaces to practice are essential to help youth apply skills and build confidence.
- Effective training goes beyond technical content. It must support youth in defining career goals, building business readiness, and developing the mindset and networks to pursue long-term opportunities.

Overview

Despite increasing digital access, many young people in Kenya lack the knowledge, skills, and support needed to use digital tools productively and translate that access into viable livelihoods. Training programs are often short-term, misaligned with youth needs, and delivered without the tools, mentorship, or continuity needed to create meaningful employment. This gap is especially evident for youth pursuing informal or creative work pathways, where digital training falls short. Addressing this challenge requires a deeper understanding of how young people engage with technology, the barriers they face after training, and the broader conditions necessary for digital skills to lead to sustainable livelihoods.

Member insights

Training is most effective when it reflects the realities of young people's lives, connects to their existing tools and talents, and provides sustained guidance beyond one-off courses.

Rebirth of a Queen highlights that while many youth own smartphones and have internet access, few have the digital literacy needed to use these tools for education or employment.

Their priority is bridging foundational knowledge gaps through early digital literacy and accessible mentorship, which is more urgent than investing in infrastructure alone.

This approach translates into meaningful work. They also advocate for stronger government partnerships that scale both training and market linkages.

Other CBOs such as Maono Africa Centre for Transformation in Dandora, an informal and underserved estate in Nairobi, and Pwani Youth Network in Kilifi, a rural town along Kenya's coast, illustrate how digital skills can power income generation in creative sectors. Their programs combine dance, photography, and content production with digital literacy, supporting youth to monetize their talents through social media.



30,000+

**young people
reached annually**

5,192

**entrepreneurship
graduates from 2023–
2024 were in work**

Inua Village to Global Foundation, a CBO operating in Nairobi and Vihiga counties, emphasizes that while linkages are important, the first step must be supporting young people to form a clear vision for their lives and careers. The organization runs an initiative that coaches youth to develop holistic 5-year plans, helping them map out relevant skills training, define audacious personal and professional goals, and actively track their progress. The planning process encourages youth to reflect on all aspects of their lives, including spiritual and mental wellbeing, social connections and networks, economic and professional aspirations, and personal goals such as the kind of family they hope to sustain. The aim is to help them walk their journey before they start with intention.

Alongside this visioning process, the organization emphasizes the need for programs that equip individuals with skills that grow with them over time.

Building on this approach, SHOFCO reaches over 30,000 young people annually through targeted business and job readiness training.

Their programs cover entrepreneurship, business plan development, and job search skills, enabling youth to succeed in business, navigate job searches, and enter formal employment with greater confidence and knowledge. A follow-up survey of entrepreneurship graduates from 2023 and 2024 showed that 5,192 young people (2,195 males and 2,997 females) were in work, including 2,881 young parents, 93 refugees and 131 persons with disabilities, providing insight into how the training impacted employment.

Gem Youth Agripreneurs notes that a gender gap persists in access to digital literacy and skills training, driven by factors such as time constraints and family responsibilities. They prioritize training women agripreneurs to use digital platforms to market their products, connect with others in the value chain, and increase their sales and reach, efforts that also help build confidence and self-esteem.

Recommendations

1. Scale CBO-led training in digital literacy, storytelling, social media marketing, and online freelancing, tailored to the real economy that youth are navigating.
2. Integrate job search, business, and entrepreneurship modules, as well as training on how to use smartphones and apps to create, produce, and share work, into digital skills training to support income generation.
3. Position CBOs as talent pipelines for the private sector, creating linkages from CBO digital and creative training to private-sector jobs.
4. Support youth to build robust 5-year life and career plans that align their passions and motivations with practical opportunities.



03

Streamline partnerships for direct impact

Overview

Digital inclusion programs in Kenya are often shaped by fragmented implementation chains, where funding flows through multiple intermediaries before reaching communities at the local level. These top-heavy models have continued to be inefficient and poorly aligned with the realities on the ground. When CBOs are included only as late-stage implementers, they are unable to shape programming around real youth needs or sustain efforts beyond short-term project cycles. In this context, the Training of Trainers (ToT) model, commonly used by international donors and county governments, undermines local ownership, limits skills adaptability, and frequently produces superficial outcomes. Reorienting partnerships to center CBOs from the outset is essential for more accountable, contextually grounded, and sustained impact.

Member insights

CBOs have developed robust, context-specific training models, yet they remain underfunded and overburdened by restrictive grant conditions. Many operate without core funding, rely on volunteers, and are expected to deliver outcomes within tight timelines and limited resources. Shifting to direct partnerships with CBOs would unlock greater relevance, accountability, and sustainability, rooted in the lived realities of youth and the organizations closest to them.

Pwani Youth Network observed that many funders introduce externally designed curricula that are not suited to the local context. Their experience shows that its young people need programs that reflect their lived experiences and aspirations, rather than imported models that overlook context.

They also highlighted inefficiencies in digital infrastructure rollouts. For example, free public Wi-Fi installed by the county government at Kongowea Market in Mombasa is heavily congested and frequently used for non-productive purposes, limiting its benefit for youth who need reliable internet for learning or work.

The organization suggests that investing in CBO-run youth spaces, which are safer, quieter, and better managed, would make digital infrastructure more accessible and impactful.

Inua Village to Global Foundation highlights the risk of fragmented efforts in youth programming. Rather than coordinated, networked approaches between CBOs and

At a glance

- When programs are designed and owned locally, youth participation increases, outcomes are more relevant, and learning is sustained over time.
- Funding structures for digital inclusion programs are implemented through intermediary-led or ToT models that often bypass or constrain CBOs, dilute youth relevance, and reduce long-term impact.
- Funding rarely covers operational infrastructure such as staffing, internet, rent, and electricity, yet CBOs are tasked with maintaining high-quality services.
- Infrastructure investments bypass CBOs and youth voices and are deployed in inaccessible locations that are congested or misused.
- Youth report frustration with disconnected and overlapping initiatives and question whether programs deliver lasting value.



county governments, young people often experience a series of overlapping initiatives that lack cohesion or lasting impact. Many express frustration and disillusionment, asking “What has changed since this project started?” or “How does this compare to three years ago, before this initiative?” These questions signal a need for better program integration and stronger evaluation frameworks that track long-term outcomes and not just short-term delivery.

Recommendations

1. Fund CBOs directly to design and deliver youth-informed digital training, avoiding intermediary-led and co-managed ToT models that reduce flexibility and impact.
2. Strengthen coordination between CBOs and county governments to reduce duplication, align efforts, and build program continuity across funding cycles.
3. Strengthen coordination between national and county governments to improve the implementation of local interventions.
4. Develop shared frameworks for tracking long-term outcomes that reflect youth feedback and include comparative assessments over time to measure lasting impact.
5. Engage CBOs as long-term partners in the design, deployment, and management of digital infrastructure in underserved areas.

04

Extend access to secondary cities, peri-urban, and rural areas that face digital exclusion

At a glance

- Youth living outside of Nairobi rely on expensive and inconsistent mobile data or cyber cafés to get online. Rural-based CBOs report that even when internet access exists, supporting infrastructure (such as electricity, routers, and space) is unreliable or inadequate.
- National digital strategies tend to deploy resources based on population density and economic activity, deprioritizing smaller counties or remote regions, reinforcing access gaps.
- Youth in these regions are motivated to participate in digital learning and content creation, but lack access to the tools, platforms, and mentorship that make this possible.

Overview

Young people in Kenya's secondary cities, rural, and peri-urban areas face systemic digital exclusion. National infrastructure rollouts often prioritize population density and economic centers, leaving smaller counties and hard-to-reach communities behind. According to the Communications Authority of Kenya¹, internet penetration remains low in rural areas at just 25%, compared to 56.5% in urban areas. In many communities, youth encounter digital tools for the first time during training sessions. Publicly funded digital hubs often lack functionality or relevance to rural youth needs. Distance, affordability, and limited public awareness compound these challenges, especially in rural areas where young people must travel long distances to reach training hubs.

Member insights

Young people in secondary cities, rural, and peri-urban areas represent significant untapped potential in Kenya's digital economy, but remain underserved by national infrastructure efforts. Investing in and equipping CBOs already embedded in these communities offers a pathway to more relevant, affordable, and sustainable digital inclusion.

Amazon Theatrix Ensemble, a CBO in Kisumu County, supports youth eager to learn design, coding, and media, but faces major infrastructure challenges. In many parts of the region, basic tasks like uploading a video can be difficult due to poor connectivity. Government youth centers in Kisumu are often inactive or lack digital capabilities. Bureaucratic delays and unclear responsibilities between national and county governments further hinder effective youth programming.

The organization stresses the need for local governments to include CBOs in digital planning processes to improve relevance and impact.

¹ The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2023-24 Kenya Housing Survey, <https://www.knbs.or.ke/reports/2023-24-kenya-housing-survey-basic-report/>. Sourced 25th July, 2025.



Rural to Action has identified distance and cost as primary barriers to digital inclusion. Many young people are forced to travel long distances to access hubs and training opportunities, often at significant personal cost, limiting participation. These challenges are amplified for young women, who may face cultural restrictions such as limits on how long they can be away from home, expectations to seek permission or be accompanied by a male relative, and caregiving responsibilities like looking after children, which make travel even more difficult. Gem Youth Agripreneurs notes how in Siaya County, where they are based, there is only one digital hub across six wards. The organizations call for expanded rural coverage to at least one hub per ward, stronger awareness campaigns, and travel stipends to increase program uptake.

Rebirth of a Queen reports that in many rural areas, young people encounter a computer or keyboard for the first time during training sessions. Without foundational digital literacy, they remain unaware of what minimal digital access can enable. The organization also stresses the importance of building digital skills within CBO teams, enabling them to mentor youth and model effective technology use. In line with this, SHOFCO trained 30 CBOs in 2024 in assistive technology and digital literacy, combining training with coaching and mentoring.

Gem Youth Agripreneurs further highlights that digital literacy also strengthens public service delivery. In rural areas, community health workers are expected to use digital tools for data reporting, but usually lack training. Upskilling youth in these roles would improve health service delivery while creating employment. CBOs are well-placed to fill this gap and align youth training with public sector needs.

Recommendations

1. Use inclusion-based indicators, not just population size, to guide national and county-level infrastructure planning. These could include youth unemployment, school dropout rates, digital literacy levels, and remoteness.
2. Map underserved counties, towns, and sub-counties in partnership with CBOs to create a grounded and up-to-date picture of youth digital exclusion.
3. Equip trusted CBOs with grants to invest in reliable connectivity, routers, solar power backups, and co-working devices that allow for group access.
4. Pair infrastructure investment with programming funds, including training stipends, mentorship support, and basic digital literacy content.
5. Include youth and CBOs in local digital planning and coordination platforms to ensure relevance, accountability, and uptake.



Connect digital access to financial inclusion and enterprise

Overview

Across Kenya, young people are increasingly gaining digital and creative skills, but many struggle to turn these skills into income due to financial exclusion. Most youth lack access to formal banking, have no credit history, and are excluded from government youth funds or private loans due to their age, informal employment, or lack of collateral. This financial exclusion limits their ability to receive online payments, manage mobile money accounts, track income and expenses, or access capital to grow their ventures. Some turn to high-interest mobile loans, which can lead to debt cycles and further reduce financial security. As a result, motivation to pursue further training is diminished, and creative and entrepreneurial potential remains stifled. Bridging this gap, by linking digital literacy with financial tools, is critical to enabling youth-led enterprise, income stability, and long-term engagement in the digital economy.

Member insights

Connecting digital access to financial systems can help young people turn skills into sustainable income and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

SHOFCO, a community-based organization founded in Kibera, Kenya's largest informal settlement, launched a Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (SACCO) to address financial exclusion among youth and other marginalized groups in informal settlements.

Recognizing that many young people face structural barriers to formal finance, including a lack of collateral, credit history, or guarantors.

SHOFCO SACCO developed youth personas that reflect different age groups, education levels, employment status, income, and financial goals.

These profiles guide product design by capturing preferences such as loan size, repayment terms, and access channels.

The SACCO offers a youth-tailored suite of financial products, including inventory support for micro-entrepreneurs, asset financing, short-term working capital, savings products, and digital group savings (chamas).

At a glance

- Many youth lack financial literacy, tools to manage online earnings, or access to savings and credit, especially those involved in informal or micro-enterprise work.
- Digital skills alone are not enough. Without access to capital, financial accounts, or payment tools, youth cannot monetize their skills or scale ventures.
- Some youth default to high-interest mobile loans, which lead to unsustainable debt and demotivation.
- Financial exclusion erodes the value of digital investments and training unless addressed in conjunction with access and skills development.



1,379

young people completed the Financial Literacy course in two years

These services are accessible through mobile platforms and even via USSD codes for those without smartphones or reliable internet.

Financial literacy is embedded into SHOFCO's job readiness and skills programs, which are now active in six counties (Nairobi, Kisumu, Kakamega, Vihiga, Kilifi, and Mombasa). In just two years, 1,379 young people completed the course, gaining the knowledge to grow their businesses or pursue new income-generating ventures confidently.

To date, SHOFCO SACCO has disbursed 178 loans to youth-led businesses, totalling 13.9 million KES (approximately 107,800 USD). Youth now represent 31% of members, contribute 35% of total deposits, and account for 31% of loans. With a repayment rate exceeding 95%, the SACCO demonstrates that young people, when given access to appropriate financial tools, are capable borrowers and key drivers of inclusive economic growth.

Recommendations

1. Partner with SACCOs to design financial products tailored to youth entrepreneurs, including mobile-based saving tools, low-barrier access to credit, and flexible repayment systems.
2. Integrate financial literacy into digital skills and entrepreneurship training at CBO hubs, ensuring youth can learn to manage income, assess credit risks, and budget for growth. Foster local ecosystems, such as fairs where young people can showcase and monetize their work.
3. Subsidize start-up kits or seed grants for CBO-linked youth entrepreneurs.
4. Collect and share disaggregated financial inclusion data (age, gender, geography) to inform better-targeted interventions and policy frameworks.

Recognize the digital creative economy as a pathway to employment and income generation

At a glance

- Content creation offers a low barrier and high potential income path for young people who are out of school, self-taught, or lack access to tertiary education.
- Many talented youth are unable to afford the tools needed for high-quality content production, such as ring lights, editing software, or smartphones with sufficient storage.
- The platforms most youth use, such as TikTok, offer minimal monetization opportunities in Kenya, even for high-performing creators with hundreds of thousands of followers.
- Young creatives are often penalized for earning money through social media or performance work, which is viewed as unserious or inappropriate. This leads to stigma and discouragement from caregivers or educators.

Overview

Young people from marginalized communities and those with informal or non-traditional educational backgrounds are earning incomes as dancers, influencers, video editors, graphic designers, and musicians. However, their creative work is rarely recognized in policy and funding priorities. Most national digital strategies continue to focus on coding, cybersecurity, and other formal ICT tracks, overlooking the income-generating potential of creative work. This gap is even more pronounced outside of the capital, particularly in secondary cities and rural areas, where patriarchal norms and local political dynamics can present significant barriers. These challenges often limit the visibility and support available for community-led creative programs, especially those that do not follow conventional education or career pathways. As a result, many young people pursuing opportunities in the creative economy struggle to access the resources and recognition they need to succeed. Recognizing and investing in the digital creative economy would unlock a powerful vehicle for employment, enterprise, and self-expression.

Member insights

The digital creative economy presents a powerful yet often overlooked pathway for youth livelihoods, particularly in areas where formal employment is limited. When supported with the right infrastructure, mentorship, and policy frameworks, creative work can generate income, foster self-expression, and strengthen Kenya's cultural industries. Yet national strategies continue to prioritize formal ICT tracks like coding and cybersecurity, overlooking the informal creative sector where many young people are already active.

SHOFCO challenges this bias by hosting regular community talent showcases for young artisans living in informal settlements, including Kibera, Mathare, and Mukuru. These events feature local DJs, performers, and youth dance leagues, providing both visibility and validation for young creatives. The showcases bring together young people engaged through SHOFCO's Youth Voice forums, which in 2024 reached over 830,000 young people across 17 counties. They also serve as critical entry points to SHOFCO's wider support ecosystem. For example, Elvis



830,000

young people reached
in 2024 through Youth
Voice forums

17

counties covered

McKenzie, a young musician battling depression, found support after performing at a showcase in 2022. After the event, he made the courageous decision to confide in the organizer, having learned about SHOFKO's services. He soon began attending counseling, mental health training sessions, and financial literacy classes, demonstrating how creative spaces can also connect youth to holistic services.

Maono Africa Centre for Transformation illustrates the value in investing in the creative economy. The organization offers training in dance, video production, social media management, brand-building, and content creation. Lennah Njoki, a dance choreographer and influencer with more than 423,000 followers on TikTok, benefited from Maono Africa's support through training, access to equipment, and ongoing mentorship. She is now employed as a choreographer and has collaborated with both local and international artists. Brian Wachira, another alumnus, works as an influencer and creative lead, while also mentoring young people in his community.

Recommendations

1. Develop and fund youth-led creative production labs that provide shared access to content creation tools, editing software, and co-working space.
2. Integrate creative economy pathways to national youth employment and digital strategies, alongside ICT and STEM.
3. Recognize and validate creative income as part of youth economic inclusion strategies, including youth funding criteria to enable access to financing schemes.
4. Invest in creator education, including monetization strategies, copyright, and digital ethics.
5. Convene cross-sector partnerships between ministries (Youth, ICT, Culture), digital platforms, and CBOs to create tailored monetization models and expand creative career infrastructure.
6. Challenge stigma through public campaigns and parent and educator engagement, showing how creative work contributes to the economy and offers meaningful livelihoods.

About

The Global Alliance for Communities is a coalition of community-based grassroots organizations of color that drive impact in underserved populations across the Global South. It has a mission to empower and amplify grassroots leadership through research, advocacy, and resource mobilization, driving systemic change with local solutions and equitable funding.

Contributors

This roadmap was developed in close consultation with members of the Global Alliance for Communities. We extend our thanks to the following CBO leaders for their insights and contributions:

Edwin Koga,

Amazon Theatrix Ensemble, Kisumu County

Benta Akoth Akech,

Gem Youth Agripreneurs, Siaya County

Zachuas Ogonji,

Inua Village to Global Foundation, Nairobi County and Vihiga County

John Odero,

SHOFCO, Nairobi County and 35 other counties across Kenya

Kenneth Owili,

Maono Africa Centre for Transformation, Dandora, Nairobi County

Alfred Sigo,

Pwani Youth Network, Mombasa, Kilifi, and Kwale Counties

Pauline Akinyi Juma,

Rebirth of a Queen, Kajiado County

Beryl Atieno,

Rural to Action, Homabay Country

Gladys Akinyi,

United Destiny Shapers, Kisumu County



**GLOBAL ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITIES**

globalallianceforcommunities.org