

Empowering Futures

A steady strategic course for Young Africa 2024-26





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1. Goal 2026

Youth unemployment is a problem that is growing in urgency. This is especially true for Africa, where half of its population of 1.3 billion people is below the age of 25 years.

Young Africa, over the years, has proven to offer a high-impact solution to this problem by educating disadvantaged youths between the ages of 15 and 25 in skills for employability and entrepreneurship. This means an integral empowerment package including vocational training, entrepreneurship training and small business development support, life skills education, wellness and psychosocial support and talent development in sport and art.

All this is delivered in partnership with franchised entrepreneurs at our own training centres, through mobile training units and in collaboration with the private sector.

We have a bold ambition for 2026:

To have reached 200,000 youths by the end of this strategic plan: 70,000 students through TVET and 130,000 youths through community outreach. This would bring the total of youths empowered through Young Africa to half a million.





2. Mission, vision & values

Young Africa is a one-mission, purpose-steady organisation. We therefore remain committed to the same mission, vision and core values in the coming years.

Vision

A world of equality and shared wealth where the power of young people is channeled to transform the world around them.

Mission

We teach young people skills of the hands to make them self-reliant, skills of the heart and the mind to live with dignity and responsibility, skills of the soul to live with purpose.

Values

In everything we do, we stand guided by our core values:

Service to humanity and society – We believe every human being is called to serve and impact other people's lives. We desire to impact the lives of those who interact with our work.

Love for young people – At YA we believe in giving young people an education delivered with love. Ours is a spiritual calling to serve youths, and we serve with passion and love.

Faith in the change-making potential of youths – We believe young people have the will and energy to change their environment and determine their future. In our work, we constantly seek to stimulate this inherent transformative potential of young people.

A sense of **responsibility** to contribute to a world of justice, equality and shared wealth is our expression of the desire of genuine service to society.

The **joy** to do so together in a transformative way – Our success hinges on the quality of relationships among members of the YA family and the extent to which the YA DNA is shared by all.



3. Introduction

The youth population of Africa is a growing resource. They will be a source of development IF they are capable and equipped to contribute constructively to the economy of Africa. Investing amply in human capital development is, according to us, the best way to fulfil the potential of a rich continent.

Strategic Direction 2024-26

The approach we have chosen for 2026 builds on the strategy for 2021-23. The trajectory we have chosen will be intensified and scaled further in the coming years. Evaluations, research, and learnings have sharpened our interventions. The ever-changing context of youths, Africa, and global developments have made the need for innovation apparent.

We have formulated three strategic objectives that should make us reach the impact we believe we can achieve.

1. TRAIN YOUTHS AND EXPAND OUR REACH
2. ENHANCE OUR IMPACT
3. STRENGTHEN THE ORGANISATION.

Of course, for these, management and fundraising are essential requirements.



4. Strategic Objectives 2024-26

I. TRAIN YOUTHS AND EXPAND OUR REACH

Entering this new strategic phase, our focus on equipping youths with the skills for life and work remains strong as always. But as the youth part of the population keeps growing, the economies of the countries we work in do not grow at the same rate, youth unemployment becomes a more pressing problem than ever before.

Besides, the Young Africa model shows over and over again that it works and is a solution to improved livelihood for young people and their families. (refer to evaluations/researches between 21-23). We consider livelihood a fundamental building block for health, peace, democracy and sexual reproductive health.

Our objective is therefore to train 70,000 youth in integral vocational training between 2024 and 2026. This means the integral package of what we offer: a TVET course plus entrepreneurship training plus life skills education and the post-graduation support that leads to economic activity: a job, a paid internship, or access to micro-financing to start a business.

The integral approach in the 21st century includes for every student digital literacy, knowledge on saving- and lending schemes, as well as extensive psycho-social support services. The integral TVET programme takes between 6-18 months, depending on the level, the location and the length of the internship.

The integral vocational training is delivered through two channels: at Young Africa skills training centres (currently in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia), through mobile training (the same countries), and in consortia with other organisations (in Malawi).

We aim to reach 130,000 youths with our dissemination, e-learning, women entrepreneurship, and other community outreach programmes such as sport and art activities, themed festivals, access to our variety of services and programmes.

Expand the capacity of Young Africa Affiliates

Our aim, by the end of 2026, is to expand the capacity of our affiliated Young Africa entities in Zimbabwe, Mozambique to absorb more trainees into their centre-based and mobile training. In Zambia, we expand our work, also by establishing at least one model training centre. The team in Namibia will continue training youths in green technologies with their existing partners and independently expand through corporate alliances.

This means expanding our physical capacity with more training units, new courses and the number of locations where mobile training reaches the hardest-to-reach youths. We also aim to launch a programme to support young female small-business owners in the informal sector with a crash course in entrepreneurship and life skills.

Expand to four new countries

We also aim to grow the Young Africa Federation to new countries. Firstly to Angola, in partnership with existing TVET providers. Expansion to Nigeria is being prepared. Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa and has the largest population in Africa. The percentage of youth under 25 years stands at 60%, while youth un(der)employment is estimated at 63%. Nigeria would be Young Africa's first country outside of Southern Africa. It is a springboard to spread our youth empowerment wings to West-Africa.

Before 2026, we want to include Ghana and South Africa as well. The latter three countries offer us the scope to implement and test our unique models in large scale economies, besides contributing holistically to much-needed skills development. For this expansion we will raise funds independently, and widen our collaboration with (N)GO and UN partners in consortia.

Share our models with youth empowerment partners

In 2023, UNESCO-UNEVOC once again recognised the Young Africa approach to vocational training as a best-practice model. Sharing the YA-way of youth empowerment with other organisations will be intensified in the next three years. We will continue to grow the number of YA license holders among our networking organisations.

Launch the digital learning platform

The e-learning platform we have been building will be ready to go live in 2024. This platform will give access to, initially ten, vocational training courses, life skills education, entrepreneurship training and a postgraduate support toolbox. The digital platform will be an excellent asset to share our work widely and freely with youths and TVET providers alike.

Expand the community training facilities with local entrepreneurs

Our collaboration with local entrepreneurs for the on-the-job skills training of students has been an essential element to our successful implementation of TVET.

In the mobile training, students learn from local entrepreneurs at their workplace. At our skills centres, we franchise out equipped space to local businesses who teach the learners, hands-on, while they deliver goods or services to the community. We therefore aim to expand the number of businesses who co-implement skills training with us, and set up model workshops in the communities we have worked in.

Offer mindset-building skills to the workforce in the private sector

To our growing network of (international) private sector partners in Africa we aim to deliver short courses to create a mindset-for-productivity for their (young) workforce. This would be a tailor-made package, consisting of our existing life skills, financial literacy and work-readiness manuals. As it is a new programme for YA, it would require a pilot phase before wider roll out.

II. ENHANCE OUR IMPACT

Improve the quality and relevance of our courses

We want every one of our beneficiaries to come out of our programmes better equipped than before so that they are well-equipped to face the many challenges they encounter to live a life of dignity. For that we need to evaluate and adjust the relevance, effectiveness, and greenovation of our interventions, during and post-training.

Firstly, we will **evaluate the quality of the courses** that we offer. Where needed, we will review the existing curricula. Quality training starts with the didactic and pedagogic capacity of our teachers. We aim to standardise the performance evaluation of teachers throughout the Federation. We strive to fit our courses into national qualification frameworks for TVET. This aspect will be emphasised in the curriculum review, so that the value of certification on the job market is maximised.

Greenovate and prepare for the digital economy

We also aim to look at the relevance of the training and their strategic fit in an ever-changing context. We certainly will develop new courses in upcoming professional fields in the green and the digital economy. Much attention will be paid to our aim to 'greenovate' our operations, our training centres and our curricula. Environmental education will be mainstreamed. A study to create more resilience to climate change among our beneficiaries is underway, and its recommendations will be implemented and included in the greenovation strategy.

Increase the effectiveness of the franchise model

The effectiveness of our flagship model, the franchising out of training units, needs a refresher for franchisees and managers of the centres alike. We aim to have 75% of all training units run as franchised units, and to have at least three centres fully financially self-reliant. This means that operational core costs of each training centre are covered by income through the franchise model.

Maximum transformation: focus more on inclusion

Educating marginalised young people is part of the Young Africa DNA. However, the transformative impact of our approach on these vulnerable youths is particularly deep. **Inclusion** of youths with disabilities, out-of-school youth, single mothers, young women, internally displaced persons in conflict zones, refugees, people living with HIV, orphans, children living on the streets, or otherwise ostracised communities, will get extra attention in recruiting students. Practical guidelines for all our implementation partners will be shared and implemented.

Strengthen postgraduate support

One of the most important criteria we consider for our success is the percentage of youths that are at work within six months after graduation. 'At work' for us means earning money through economic activities. After Covid-19 restrictions, the percentage had dropped to 56% in 2022.

For the next period we aim to have **67% (two-thirds) of our TVET graduates economically active** after completion of their course. We aim for their **income to increase five times** after graduating compared to before training. Now this factor stands at four times.

Concrete activities we will undertake to perform better these results are to improve the access of our graduates to micro-financing. Besides, we will strengthen our business mentorship and job placement services and further build and roll out the digital post-graduate support toolbox.

Evidence-based programming

Another area through which we aim to enhance our impact is by designing our programmes and making decisions increasingly **based on evidence and data**. We will strengthen the application of our impact measurement tools across the Federation. We will also transparently and more widely communicate our measured results and learnings.

III. STRENGTHEN THE ORGANISATION

To support the achievement of our targets and grow in quantity and quality, Young Africa needs to strengthen the organisation internally, at international and at the level of Affiliates and external implementing partners. We aim to support our colleagues to add as much value to our beneficiaries as possible. We target to be recognised widely as a youth empowerment expert.

Strengthen Young Africa International

We aim to enhance the **efficiency and effectiveness** of the Young Africa International team, to expand our resource mobilisation for programmes and diversify our **fundraising** base for core costs. Our **communication** tools, such as the website and social media engagement, require an upgrade. We will **invest in organisational capacity** by assessing skills gaps, fill them through training and mentorship, and hiring new team members.

Strengthen the Young Africa Federation

Young Africa operates as a Federation, with local, affiliated, Young Africa entities that implement programmes and have skills centres, and YA International as the guardian of quality and driver of expansion. We aim to further streamline the collaboration between the members of the Federation, strengthen the governance, transparency and accountability of the members towards the common goals and allocated resources.

Strengthen YA's positioning as youth empowerment expert

In the 25 years of our existence, we have built up a track record in the field of youth empowerment. To enhance our visibility among partners, funders, and policy makers, we aim to build evidence of the results we achieve through our methods. We want to conduct more research in collaboration with reputable academic institutions and build a repository of impact data and stories of change. We will subsequently communicate this knowledge by speaking at conferences, publishing articles, and participating in panel discussions.

Advocate for youth empowerment

This increased visibility is aimed at sharing our services as youth empowerment experts with (I)NGOs and governments, so that together we can equip more young people with relevant skills. We will develop a deliberate **advocacy** strategy and roll this out to promote dedicating more resources towards integral youth empowerment.



5. The Process

This Strategic Plan 2024-26 was developed on the successes and lessons learnt organically from the previous strategic period, 2021-23.

The three-year plan is broken down as follows:

- strategic goals
- three strategic objectives
- aims and strategies per objective

To operationalise the strategies, for each year an annual work plan is developed, with targets, task owners, deadlines, key performance indicators, risks and risk mitigation measures. Per year the budget encompasses programmatic activities as well as organisational costs. We aim for 85% of our resources to be spent on programmes and for a maximum of 15% of our expenditure for management and fundraising costs. The development of this Strategic Plan was facilitated by PUM (Netherlands Experts Programme). Abdelkarim Harifoun (preparatory phase) and Noor van den Brink worked with the Managing Board and Team Leaders of Young Africa International.

The Directors of Young Africa Affiliates actively contributed to the process as well. All of them consulted with their respective teams for ideas, experiences and input.

The Supervisory Board of Young Africa International approved this Strategic Plan on 13 December 2023.

I sincerely appreciate the co-creation of this strategy. It is bold, as the African reality demands. It is a consistent continuation of our direction in the past, as Young Africa is committed and purpose-driven. It is optimistically realistic, as our youths deserve.

Gratitude to PUM's Noor and Abdelkarim, and to our Young Africa colleagues for dedicating time to this strategy. Courage to all of us who will be implementing. Hope to all youth who will benefit from it!

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Annex I - SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Experience and track record: Young Africa has been operating for over 25 years and has a proven track record of success in training and empowering young people in Africa.
- Unique approach: Young Africa's integral vocational training approach provides a comprehensive package of skills training, entrepreneurship training, life skills education, and support services, recognised by UNESCO-UNEVOC.
- Strong network of partners: Young Africa has a strong network of partners, including government agencies, NGOs, and businesses, which helps it to expand its reach and impact. Private Sector engagement is strong.
- Deep impact on youths: Young Africa is committed to providing high-quality training and support services to its beneficiaries. This has resulted in a higher percentage of youths at work (56% - 2023) than other organisations (40%).

Weaknesses

- Limited resources: Young Africa is a relatively small organisation with limited resources, which can make it challenging to achieve its ambitious goals.
- Dependence on funding: Young Africa is heavily dependent on external funding, with few reserves, which can make it difficult to plan for the long term.
- Dependence on funding from, currently, one source: a majority of the confirmed funding is from one donor, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Maputo.
- Limited reach: Young Africa's reach is currently limited to a few countries in Southern Africa.
- The flagship Franchise Model is currently facing implementation challenges.

Internal

External

Opportunities

- Growing demand for skills training: There is a growing demand for skills training among young people in Africa, which presents an opportunity for Young Africa to expand its reach and deepen its impact.
- Increased access to technology: The increased availability of technology, such as mobile phones and the internet, can be used to expand Young Africa's reach and provide training to a wider audience.
- Growing interest in youth empowerment: There is a growing global interest in youth empowerment, which can create opportunities for Young Africa to raise awareness of its work and attract new partners and donors.

Threats

- Economic instability: Economic instability in Africa can make it difficult for young people to find jobs and can also affect the availability of funding for Young Africa's programs.
- Competition from other organisations: There is increasing competition from other organisations that are providing skills training and other services to young people in Africa.
- Political instability: Political instability in some African countries can make it difficult for Young Africa to operate and can also affect the safety of its beneficiaries. The risks need to be managed more carefully in the new and less-known countries we aim to expand to.

SWOT Conclusion

Overall, Strategic Plan 2024-26 is an ambitious plan that has the potential to make a significant impact on youth empowerment in Africa. The organisation's strengths, such as its experience, track record, and unique approach, can help it overcome its weaknesses and capitalise on the opportunities presented by the changing landscape of youth empowerment. We will need to carefully manage the threats it faces, such as economic instability, competition, and political instability, in order to achieve the goals.

SWOT Considerations

To strengthen the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, we have taken the following actions:

- Describe the countries mentioned in the Strategic Plan and the risks involved in each country. See Annex II.
- Develop a comprehensive fundraising strategy: we have developed a comprehensive fundraising strategy to ensure that we have the financial, and human, resources to achieve the ambitious goals. See Annex III.
- Develop a stronger digital presence: we aim to increase a stronger digital presence to reach a wider audience and raise awareness of our work.
- Continue to invest in staff: we have intentionally started to invest more in staff development, to increase their capacity and deepen their motivation to be part of this ambitious plan.



Annex II - Risk Analysis

S01 - Train youths & expand our reach

Major Risks: Financial (limited funding for expansion and core costs), Compliance challenges (with new implementation and dissemination partners).

Mitigation Strategies: Intensify fundraising efforts, heighten due diligence processes before engaging new partners, tight contracts, joint fundraising with partners with strong compliance.

S02 - Enhance our impact

Major Risks: Macroeconomic (affecting employability of graduates), technical (inclusion of marginalised groups demanding high investments in infrastructure adaptations), Human resources (staff retention, burnout, slow uptake of digital tools), Operational (non-performing franchisees), attitudes (low uptake of greening concepts).

Mitigation Strategies: Expansive and regular curriculum review, improved working conditions for staff of affiliates, investment in accessibility of digital tools and capacity building of staff on the same, upgrading training equipment, awareness campaigns on greening.

S03 - Strengthen our organisation

Major Risks: Operational (team processes need improvement, slow CRM adoption), Human resources (limited time for mentorship and coaching for senior management, low budgets for core HR costs, unavailability of skills to drive consultancy activities, inability to attract staff with required skills due to low salary scales), Compliance (new boards failing to comply with new governance Policy).

Mitigation Strategies: Investing in regular team building, Invest in more HR to reduce workload, follow up on CRM adoption and use, intensify fundraising efforts for HR costs, strategic recruitment to cover skills gaps, robust supervision of teams, improve surveillance on data quality control, gradual approach to advocacy as we learn about the concept, new governance structure and board composition with much attention to follow-up and accountability.

Detailed, activity-based risk registers are linked to annual year work plans.



Annex III - Fundraising Strategy

Fundraising priorities to meet the funding requirements

Given the financial position of YA, the fundraising efforts will focus on securing opportunities related to unearmarked funding. In the following, you can find a comprehensive list of actions that Young Africa will take to improve its position:

- Conduct mapping and prospect research on Charitable and Philanthropic Foundations and Funds with prioritization to such Foundations/Funds that provide unearmarked funding or support Organisational strengthening and core Organisational cost covering type of funding.
- Substantially increase unsolicited project proposal submissions where prospect research has shown strong alignment in potential donor programs and priority areas with YA.
- Increase retention rates of donors by deepening engagement and demonstrating the value and impact of the collaboration (priority to donors with unearmarked funding or support Organisational strengthening and core Organisational cost covering)
- Implement a Comprehensive Philanthropist Engagement Strategy by conducting targeted research to identify and segment potential philanthropists with an interest in youth empowerment and solutions for Youth unemployment and related issues - leveraging existing networks for introductions- developing personalized engagement plans and a robust donor stewardship program to nurture long-term relationships.
- When applying for institutional funding, prioritize opportunities that will allow a contribution of $\geq 25\%$ of funding allocated to Organisational strengthening/core costs or when such isn't possible, build into the proposal a significant component of salaries, Organisational office costs, and core costs that otherwise need to be covered by unearmarked funding.
- Leverage strategic partnerships with larger Non-profit Organisations to leverage their strengths and networks, thereby enhancing the competitiveness and appeal of proposal submissions in highly competitive funding calls.
- Develop a Corporate Engagement Program to strategically engage Dutch and European corporations with a presence in the Sub-Saharan African region or an interest in the African market, aiming to forge potential partnerships that secure unearmarked funds through collaboration.

- Increase alternative revenue streams for Young Africa by increasing engagement in service delivery for corporates, such as, for example, capacity-building services/training of corporate staff members
- Strengthen our role as a key technical support and consultancy service provider by offering tailored, expert guidance to corporates and other NGOs. This expansion includes the development of comprehensive paid training programs for dissemination partners designed to enhance their capacities and effectiveness. Through these services, aim to raise funds through consultancy services, establish ourselves as a trusted advisor in our fields, fostering collaboration and driving growth.
- Engage in Cause-Related Marketing Partnerships and partner with businesses looking to enhance their brand image where alignments with Young Africa work are strong (Youth focus products).
- Develop and implement a dedicated partnership program for Vocational Training Institutions/Centres in the Netherlands and neighboring countries. The program has the objective to build a network of TVET education that (1) wants to support youth empowerment in SSA and (2) would be available to engage their network for fundraising for Young Africa.

Investments in the sector of Fundraising and Communication (based on available funds)

- Increase the Fundraising team with one Institutional Fundraiser and one digital Fundraiser/Marketeer.
- Improve brand awareness of Young Africa building a strong, recognizable brand for the Organisation. This includes professional branding services and campaigns designed to enhance visibility and appeal to Young Africa's targeted audience. Tailor marketing strategies to resonate with target demographics, highlighting the impact and successes of the organisation's initiatives.
- Increase the Franchise Business operations per TVET Centre operations for an increase in the rate of operational sustainability of the same.

Annual fundraising targets are integrated into the year work plans.

