

YES: Building our capacity to lead a global Coalition for Youth Employment

Introduction

The 5th YES Summit was attended by 1700 people from over 100 countries. The YES (Youth Entrepreneurship and Sustainability) Campaign has networks of leaders, projects and entrepreneurs creating youth employment in over 80 countries. Since its launch in 2002, the YES Campaign has validated the concept that young people, if given access to the right resources, can effectively craft their own advancement opportunities. This represents a simple, radical and empowering approach to development which builds the capacity of the new generation to meet current challenges faced by countries, governments and global institutions.

YES' goals are to:

1. Develop capacity of youth to lead in-country youth employment initiatives
2. Promote youth employment to address key development challenges
3. Build in-country coalitions to develop national strategies addressing youth unemployment

Globally YES is supporting this process through leaders in each country.

At the 5th YES Summit, 55 key YES leaders from 30 countries participated in a facilitated process. One output of the process was a framework for YES online communities of practice, knowledge sharing and learning. Participants were also learning to develop a "meshwork" an effective approach for coalition building and collaborative governance. A meshwork is a structured collaboration across people, groups and locations where stakeholders bring together their strengths and resources to achieve a common purpose. Meshworking is particularly appropriate to complex cross-sector challenges. The meshwork approach described combines the dynamism of a grassroots network and the rigor of a structured program.

A global Coalition for Youth Employment

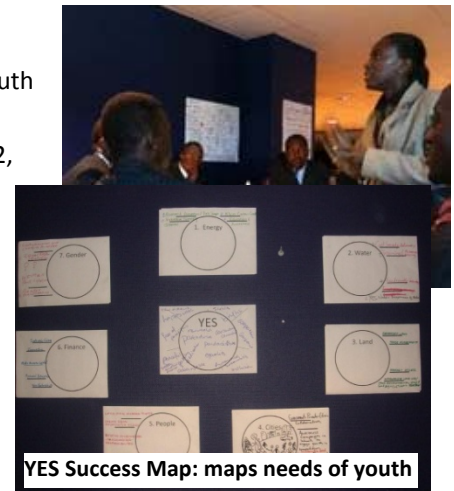
YES is driven and shaped by our vision of young people empowered through opportunity, entrepreneurship and employment. Young people must play a leadership role in the global recovery and in greening the economy of each country. For democratic processes to sustain peaceful, productive societies, young people must be engaged and allowed to lead. YES is privileged to partner with global institutions including the ILO and Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Program. Our shared vision is to create a global Coalition for Youth Employment to mobilise and align global and country resources for maximum leverage and effect.

A shared YES Success Map

For YES to play its role in this global coalition, we must have a common map for success and provide clear feedback to national governments and international partners. The process in this case study developed:

- A shared YES Success Map
- A framework for mapping groups and projects
- A country-level scorecard of youth needs in 30 countries

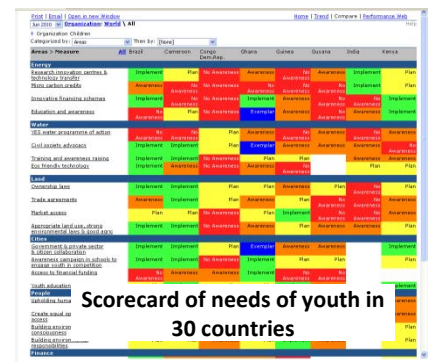
A summary that could have taken months to compile was developed in 5 hours intensive group work by 55 YES Leaders from 30 countries.



YES Success Map: maps needs of youth



Mapping groups and projects



Scorecard of needs of youth in 30 countries



Latin American YES Leaders

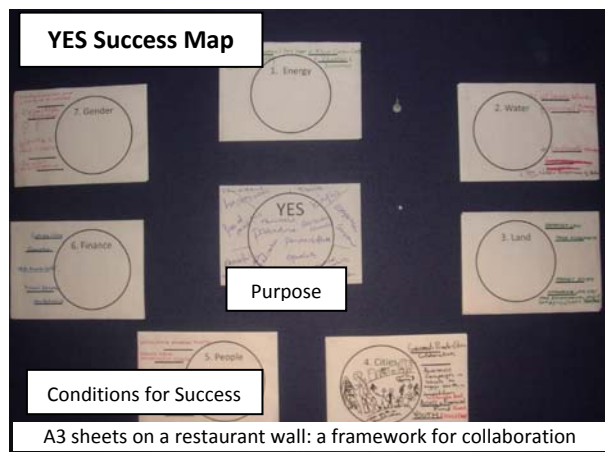
Meshworking: a mini case study

This mini case study describes the steps to develop a “meshwork” that connects people, projects and partners for collaboration. The steps are based on Gaiasoft’s Meshwork Definition Process and experience of YES, The Hague Center and Gaiasoft. They can be implemented in half a day or a over several days. YES leaders were both using the process to collaborate and learning a new tool for coalition building and collaborative governance.

A quick summary of the process

The Meshwork process was facilitated in a restaurant, rapidly reconfigured into large tables with flipchart paper for shared writing, worksheets and pens for group work. A3 sheets of paper were printed in advance one to represent the unified purpose of YES and one to represent each of the 7 project Areas of YES. Wall paintings were removed and the 8 sheets were posted on the restaurant wall. The YES Success Map was built by the participants filling in this map.

The facilitated “meshwork process” identifies a common purpose, and develops a framework - a YES Success Map showing the conditions that young leaders need to create jobs in their country. The Success Map is then used to map people, projects, groups and resources – so everyone can see where they fit. The framework is also used for assessing needs and to produce a scorecard for priority setting and collaborative governance.



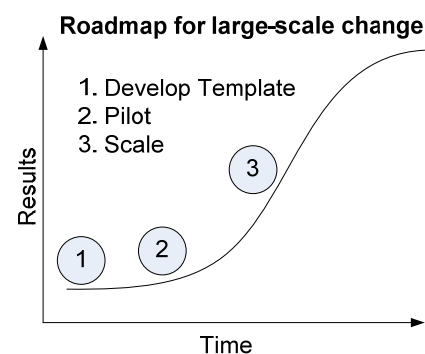
YES leaders used the meshwork process to address critical barriers to effectiveness and scale:

- How can we share and learn from our experience in over 80 countries?
- How can successful projects, models and ideas be replicated and scaled?
- How can we build global and in-country coalitions?
- How can we access the funds for youth projects in each country and globally?

After the initial training, YES leaders and stakeholders in youth employment met informally in the “Meshwork Space” throughout the YES Summit. Numerous opportunities were identified to improve the flow of collaboration in countries and globally for youth employment and the idea of a global Coalition for Youth Employment was developed.

The need for structure and templates to scale

To play our part in this global coalition, YES must combine youth and dynamism with structure and consistency. Through curriculum and capacity building YES leaders are developing as professional and collaborative partners for national ministries, development and financial partners and other stakeholders in country success. By combining our knowledge, YES is developing templates to share and scale what we know so that YES leaders in each country can progress rapidly to success.



Conclusions

During the 5th YES Summit, the idea of a global Coalition for Youth Employment became a firm intention. YES networks have experience, projects, solutions and energy. They understand how to unblock youth enterprise, employment and development. YES is a natural partner for global and national institutions working for youth employment – providing evidence of needs and solutions and networks for implementation. YES is developing a framework and curriculum for developing effective coalitions in countries. YES is committed to strategic collaboration with governments and global institutions to catalyse a global shift in youth employment and development. The YES network offers exceptional leverage for investment in youth employment and sustainability listening globally and acting locally. YES is committed to enhancing the collaboration between youth and governments to build resilient and peaceful societies and to achieve sustainable development.

