

PROJECT PROFILE

# Cross-Sector Partnerships for Youth Employment in Kenya



**PROJECT NAME**

Kenya Youth Employment and Skills (K-YES)

**CLIENT**

USAID/Kenya

**PRIME CONTRACTOR**

Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International

**PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

Resonance, International Rescue Committee, Land O'Lakes International Development, Geopoll

**COUNTRY**

Kenya

**TIME PERIOD**

Nov. 2015 – Jul. 2019

**MECHANISM**

IDIQ Task Order

## Challenge

Kenya, like other African nations, has a rapidly growing youth population. More than 60 percent of its citizens are under the age of 24. This phenomenon offers both great economic opportunity and a significant challenge to create the jobs needed to absorb the one million young people who join the workforce annually. Recent statistics estimate that 18.5 percent of Kenyans aged 15-24 are unemployed, and more than 26 percent are underemployed – meaning that they do not have enough paid work or that they are overqualified for the work they do have. As we have seen in countries around the world, high levels of youth unemployment and underemployment pose serious threats to a country's economic and social prosperity.

## Solution

USAID/Kenya's Kenya Youth Employment and Skills (K-YES) program provided motivated but disenfranchised youth in nine counties across Kenya the needed skills and support to be competitive and successful in gaining employment. Through the program,

young people were connected to labor market information, financial institutions, and 21st-century employability skills, enabling them to make informed decisions about their careers. K-YES designed skills and vocational training in coordination with local industry and government. The program also focused on facilitating local partnerships and building the capacity of industry, civil society, and government to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of education and employment outcomes in Kenya.

As a sub-implementer to RTI, Resonance led private sector engagement (PSE) and development of strategic public-private partnerships (PPPs) to connect youth to jobs, apprenticeships, and internships; to cultivate youth entrepreneurs and link them with opportunities for financing, business development, and market access; and to foster multi-stakeholder, community-led platforms to strengthen youth employability at the county level.

## Key Results

Under K-YES, Resonance directly designed and launched over 100 public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms to create new economic opportunities for Kenyan youth.

- **County Youth Employment Compacts (CYECs).** Resonance helped assemble CYECs in each of the nine K-YES project counties. CYECs are innovative, multi-stakeholder platforms comprised of local government, the private sector, youth representatives, and local civil society organizations. Together, CYEC members collaborate to collectively address youth unemployment in their counties. Many of the CYECs were chaired by the county governor or another senior member of local government. Resonance identified mutual priorities and opportunities for shared-value collaboration between CYEC members to increase employability for local youth.
- **Coca Cola Youth Distributors Partnership.** Resonance designed and facilitated a partnership between K-YES and Coca Cola Ltd. to engage youth as local distributors of Coca Cola products in nine counties within Kenya. Through this collaboration, K-YES and Coca Cola provided business skills training, linkages to asset financing for Coca Cola products, and point-of-sale inputs such as cooler boxes, refrigerators, and kiosks. By increasing business and professional skills and engaging youth in its value chain, Coca Cola can effectively penetrate new markets and increase distribution of its products within Kenya.

- **IBM Digital Literacy and Upskilling Partnership.** Resonance launched a partnership between K-YES and IBM to integrate IBM's Digital Nation Africa (DNA) digital literacy curriculum into the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) curricula offered through vocational training centers in Kenya. IBM benefitted from the opportunity to roll out its DNA platform to new markets, and K-YES beneficiaries used the platform to gain digital literacy skills, access labor and market information, and explore the DNA platform's online jobs portal.
- **Kenya Commercial Bank Foundation (KCBF) Agribusiness & Finance Partnership.** We designed a partnership between K-YES and KCBF to train Kenyan youth in agribusiness and soft skills and provide low-interest loans to support youth-led start-up ventures. Under this collaboration, K-YES also cultivated a pipeline of enrollees in KCBF's flagship 2Jijiri program, which links youth to jobs and income-generating activities by developing their technical skills in sectors such as agribusiness, automotive engineering, beauty and personal care, building and construction, and domestic services.
- **Syngenta & Twiga Foods Agricultural Value Chains for Youth Partnerships.** Resonance and K-YES supported youth engagement throughout the agricultural value chain through partnerships with Syngenta Ltd./Syngenta Foundation and Twiga Foods. In the Syngenta-KYES partnership, Syngenta supplied agricultural inputs at a subsidized rate, supported field extension services, provided agronomic support, and facilitated linkages to off-takers for young farmers who received agribusiness training through K-YES. Meanwhile, Twiga Foods worked directly with K-YES farming groups as an off-taker of food products. This provided KYES-supported farmers a reliable buyer, while Twiga benefited from a steady pipeline of produce for Twiga Foods distribution sites.
- **Orkistudio Supporting Women in Construction Partnership.** Resonance brought together K-YES and Orkistudio—a design/build and construction social enterprise—to develop a new curriculum for Competency-Based Education Training construction courses offered through Kenyan training centers. K-YES also helped to mobilize youth, with a particular focus on young women, to undergo training, and Orkistudio linked trainees with job market opportunities. In particular, this partnership supported Orkistudio's Build Her initiative, which aims to increase employment opportunities for young women in the construction sector.
- **PSE Training of Trainers.** Resonance experts designed and facilitated a two-day Training of Trainers for K-YES project staff and county-based staff tasked with leading technical programming and coordinating the CYECs. The Training of Trainers sought to improve the capacity of participants to strategically and effectively engage with local and national private sector companies. We also trained participants on how to design and implement win-win public-private partnerships on behalf of CYECs and in support of K-YES's development objectives and sustainability strategy.