YouthXcel Africa

STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan 2026–2030

Every young person. Every opportunity.

Approved by the Trustees of Youth Excel Initiative, with the counsel of the Advisory Board

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PLAN PERIOD

January 2026 to December 2030

MIDTERM REVIEW

2028

APPROVAL

Trustees of Youth Excel Initiative, with the counsel of the Advisory Board

REGISTRATION

IT 9874080, Corporate Affairs Commission of Nigeria

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Foreword from the Advisory Board

On behalf of the Advisory Board, I am pleased to present YouthXcel Africa's Strategic Plan for 2026 to 2030.

Africa's young population is one of its greatest strengths. Yet many young people still struggle to turn their skills and ambition into steady, dignified work. This plan responds to that challenge in a practical way. It works with young people directly, and it works with the employers, investors and governments whose decisions shape the opportunities open to them.

The Board has reviewed the plan closely. Its goals are clear, its targets are realistic, and it explains how results will be measured and reported. It also commits the organisation to sound governance, careful financial management and the safeguarding of every young person it serves. We regard these commitments as seriously as the targets themselves.

Over the next five years, the Board will meet every quarter to review progress and advise the leadership team. We invite foundations, development partners, governments, businesses and young people to work with us in delivering this plan.



“

The Board will meet every quarter to review progress against this plan.

Halirat Hussein

Chair, Advisory Board

YouthXcel Africa



Abdulazeez Musa

Founder and Executive Director

Foreword from the Founder

I grew up in Okene, Kogi State, at a time when political violence closed schools and drew boys I knew into the service of people who saw them as instruments. Years later, as a student in Kano, I saw opportunity stop at the university gate. On one side were career centres and research funding. A short walk away were young people who had never sat in a classroom. Both experiences taught me the same thing. A young person's prospects depend as much on what surrounds them as on what they can do.

YouthXcel Africa was built on that lesson. Since January 2025 we have worked with more than 1,500 young people, and what they told us has shaped this plan. Most are not short of ambition. What holds them back is the cost of learning, distance from the right networks, training that ends before it pays, and institutions that often treat them as a risk to be managed. So our work has two sides. We work with young people on their path into work and enterprise, and we work with the employers, investors and governments who decide what they are offered.

This plan covers 2026 to 2030, the last years of the Sustainable Development Goals and the first years of the African Union's second ten-year plan for Agenda 2063. It sets out where we are going, how we will get there and how we will measure progress. It guides our team, and it is our commitment to the young people we serve, to our partners and to the funders who work with us.

The plan at a glance

Between 2026 and 2030, YouthXcel Africa will work on both sides of the problem that keeps young Africans from dignified and fulfilling livelihoods. With young people, we will help them find opportunity, choose a direction and build skills that earn. With employers, investors and governments, we will build the evidence and partnerships that shape what young people are offered.

Four goals organise the work, two labs and the Pathfind community deliver it, and a results framework built on our Five Conditions for Opportunity measures it.

HOW THIS PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

- Our first Youth Skills Pulse
- Two International Youth Day Discourses
- Conversations in the Pathfind community
- Community engagements since January 2025

Our team, trustees, advisers and partners tested its choices, and a review of the evidence on youth livelihoods in Africa informed its targets.

Strategy on a page

Vision	**An Africa where every young person can earn a dignified and fulfilling livelihood, and where markets and governments treat their ambition as worth backing.**
Mission	To equip young Africans with the skills, agency and voice to build meaningful work and enterprise, and to partner with markets, institutions and governments on the evidence, policies, programmes and investment that widen opportunity for them.
Strategic goals	**01** Young people find their direction and the opportunities meant for them **02** Young people build skills that earn and turn them into work and enterprise **03** Employers, investors and governments value young people's ability and deliver for them **04** An institution built to last
How we deliver	Two labs and the Pathfind community, working through flagship initiatives, partner programmes, and research, convening and advice
2030 targets	**100,000** reached **10,000** given sustained support **3,000** into dignified work, enterprise or higher income **37** states and FCT in YouthDex
Resources and enablers	About US$2.3 million over five years, growing from US$30,000 in 2026 to US$1 million in 2030, supported by sound governance, a capable team, reliable systems and diversified income

Who we are

YouthXcel Africa is a youth development organisation working to put dignified and fulfilling livelihoods within reach of young Africans.

We work alongside young people as they find their direction, build skills that hold value in the economy around them, and turn those skills into meaningful work and enterprise. We work equally on what surrounds them, from the way employers, investors and governments regard young people to the delivery of the policies and budgets meant to serve them.

WHO WE SERVE

Young people aged 15 to 35, the definition used in the African Youth Charter. Our direct programmes serve young people aged 18 to 35, and any work with younger participants takes place through schools, families or partners under our safeguarding policy.

WE PRIORITISE

- **Young women**
- **Young people in rural and peri-urban communities**
- **Those outside formal education**
- **Young people with disabilities**
- **Those affected by conflict and crisis**

Vision, mission and values

OUR VISION

An Africa where every young person can earn a dignified and fulfilling livelihood, and where markets and governments treat their ambition as worth backing.

OUR MISSION

To equip young Africans with the skills, agency and voice to build meaningful work and enterprise, and to partner with markets, institutions and governments on the evidence, policies, programmes and investment that widen opportunity for them.

OUR VALUES



Equity

We design first for those the system reaches last



Agency

Young people shape what we build



Integrity

We publish only what we can stand behind



Collaboration

We build with others and share credit



Innovation

We test, learn and adapt



Impact

Every decision returns to outcomes

Dignified and fulfilling livelihoods

We use the standard developed by the Mastercard Foundation with young people across Africa. A dignified and fulfilling livelihood brings a reliable income, together with at least one of three further qualities.

Reliable income

Earnings a young person can count on, month after month

+

AT LEAST ONE OF

Respect

Fair treatment and a voice in the workplace

Reputable standing

Work that family and community value

Sense of purpose

Work that feels meaningful to the person doing it

Skills go a long way towards the first. The other three depend on how young people are seen and treated, which is why our work reaches past the training room.

A generation entering the workforce

Africa holds the world's youngest and fastest-growing workforce, but the formal economy is not creating jobs fast enough.

Most young people who work earn their living in the informal economy, where income is irregular and protections are thin.

The picture in Nigeria is especially difficult. Young Nigerians have the ambition. What they lack are clear routes to turn it into income.

10–12 million

young Africans enter the labour market every year

AfDB

3 million

formal jobs created each year across Africa

AfDB

23.6 million

young Africans unemployed, rising to 27 million by 2030

World Data Lab

1 in 4

young Africans outside employment, education and training

ILO, 2024

172nd

of 183 countries: Nigeria in the Global Youth Development Index

Commonwealth, 2023

6 in 10

young Nigerians would start a business, given the choice

Afrobarometer, 2025

What stands in the way, and what is changing

WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY

The barriers young people face sit largely in the systems around them. Opportunities circulate in networks they are not part of. Training is costly, ends before a skill becomes income and is seldom tied to what employers and customers will pay for. Employers and lenders ask for a track record nobody lets young people build. Many institutions also describe young Africans as a burden to manage or a risk to contain, and that view finds its way into hiring, lending and budget decisions. The burden falls hardest on young women, rural young people, those outside formal education and those living with conflict.



WHAT IS CHANGING

- The Sustainable Development Goals enter their final stretch
- The African Union's second ten-year plan for Agenda 2063 is under way
- The AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade was adopted in 2024
- Nigeria has opened a review of its National Youth Policy
- Digital platforms and AI are changing how work is found and paid for
- Greener economies are creating new trades in communities

This plan sets out how YouthXcel Africa will help more young people benefit from these changes.

Our theory of change

If young people can find the opportunities meant for them, choose a path that suits them and the economy around them, and complete the preparation that turns a skill into income, **and if** employers, investors and governments recognise their ability and respond with fitting policy and investment, **then** more young Africans, starting with those the system reaches last, will earn dignified and fulfilling livelihoods.

BUILT ON THE FIVE CONDITIONS FOR OPPORTUNITY



Discovery



Direction



Readiness



Recognition



Response

Reach runs through all five: we start with the young people opportunity reaches last, and report our results for them separately.

The Five Conditions for Opportunity

Condition	What must be true	Where it most often breaks
Discovery	Young people can find the opportunities meant for them, in time to act on them.	Opportunities circulate through closed networks and seldom reach young people outside cities, campuses and established circles.
Direction	Young people can choose a path that suits their strengths and what their economy rewards.	Most career choices are made without guidance, exposure or reliable information about which skills pay.
Readiness	Young people are prepared and supported through to completion, so that a skill becomes work or enterprise.	Training is often too costly, too short or too theoretical, and many young people stop halfway when support runs out.
Recognition	Employers, investors and communities see and value what young people can do.	Young people lack a verifiable record of their ability, and deficit narratives shape how they are hired, financed and described.
Response	Governments and institutions answer with fitting policy, investment and accountability.	Youth policies and budgets are hard to track, and young people have few channels to question how commitments are delivered.

Reach runs through all five. Each condition is tested first against the experience of young people the system reaches last.

Where conditions are made, and what we will test

Every condition is produced, or blocked, at one of four levels. The conditions tell us what a young person needs. The levels tell us who has to act.

Person	Practice	Perception	Policy
A young person's skills, confidence, information and networks	How training, hiring, mentoring and finance are designed and delivered	How employers, investors, media and communities see young people	The rules, budgets and programmes governments put in place

Youth Enterprise and Employability Lab | **Youth Narrative and Accountability Lab**

THE ASSUMPTIONS WE WILL TEST

Young people stay engaged when support is personal and continuous	Track Pathfind members over twelve months, with and without mentor support
Learning tied to real income improves completion	Compare completion and earnings in ScaleAbility and Worktra with typical short courses
A verified record of work changes how employers and investors respond	Follow hiring, contracting and financing outcomes for participants with verified records
Public, document-based evidence earns a hearing from government	Record how states engage with YouthDex and whether budgets or programmes change

Where we intend to be by 2030

By 2030, YouthXcel Africa will be a trusted reference on youth livelihoods in Nigeria with a growing presence across Africa. Every result will be reported against the Five Conditions, and the organisation will stand on diversified income, sound governance and systems strong enough to carry its work into a second plan period.

YouthDex will offer an annual account of youth livelihood policy in every Nigerian state.

100,000

young people reached through our community, convenings, platforms and partner programmes

10,000

given sustained support of three months or more

3,000

moved into dignified work, enterprise or higher income

37

Nigerian states and the FCT covered by YouthDex

Where we start from, and how we choose

WHERE WE START FROM

A community young people use

1,500+ young people reached, participants from nine countries, and a Pathfind community active every week

Evidence of our own

The Youth Skills Pulse, published openly, and a framework grounded in what young people tell us

Relationships that open doors

12 partners, 105+ young people connected to mentors and experts, and five policy processes supported

Experienced leadership

Years of experience delivering youth economic programmes at scale, including under Young Africa Works

A public voice

27,500+ people reached on social media, and a growing presence in youth conversations

FOUR ORIENTATIONS THAT GUIDE OUR CHOICES

1

Depth before breadth

We grow reach only as fast as we can show results. Each initiative earns its expansion through evidence.

2

Evidence as a public good

We publish what we learn, including what does not work.

3

Working with the system

We build alongside employers, investors, universities and governments.

4

A blended model

We pair grants for public-good work with earned income from services businesses value.

Four strategic goals

The first three goals follow the Five Conditions, from a young person's first contact with opportunity to the conditions that decide what they are offered. The fourth builds the institution that makes the other three possible.

GOAL 01

Young people find their direction and the opportunities meant for them

Discovery and Direction

GOAL 02

Young people build skills that earn and turn them into work and enterprise

Readiness and Recognition

GOAL 03

Employers, investors and governments value young people's ability and deliver for them

Recognition and Response, with YouthDex also strengthening Discovery

GOAL 04

An institution built to last

All five, by sustaining the work behind them

GOAL 01

Young people find their direction and the opportunities meant for them

OUTCOME BY 2030

Young people across Nigeria and beyond can reliably find opportunities that fit them, choose a direction with confidence and reach the people who can help them pursue it.

CONDITIONS SERVED

Discovery and Direction

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Grow the Pathfind into a trusted, active community in every region of Nigeria and across the continent
- Pair new members with peers and, wherever possible, a mentor or sector expert
- Extend the AI-assisted Readiness Check to the languages young people use every day
- Reach young people outside existing networks, with deliberate outreach to young women

MARKERS OF PROGRESS

- Pathfind members active in all six geopolitical zones by 2028
- Members from at least ten African countries by 2030
- An annual public count of opportunities secured by members
- Young women at least half of active members

HOW WE DELIVER

The Pathfind community, with outreach and guidance programmes designed with community partners, universities and employers

WHERE PARTNERS FIT

Co-fund outreach in particular states or groups; contribute mentors and sector experts; share opportunities through Pathfind Weekly; host Pathfind Sessions on a sector

GOAL 02

Young people build skills that earn and turn them into work and enterprise

OUTCOME BY 2030

Young people who come through our Youth Enterprise and Employability Lab leave earning, or demonstrably ready to earn, with a verified record of what they can do.

CONDITIONS SERVED

Readiness and Recognition

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Run ScaleAbility cycles in underserved and crisis-affected communities, building a self-renewing network of certified young trainers
- Launch Worktra cohorts in which young founders and job seekers deliver paid work for real businesses
- Map the roles, trades and enterprise opportunities local economies pay for, and update training to match
- Issue every participant a verified record of their work

MARKERS OF PROGRESS

- ScaleAbility running in at least five Nigerian states by 2030
- Worktra cohorts every year from 2027, with partner businesses bringing paid work
- Completion rates and earnings published for every cohort
- Young women at least half of participants

HOW WE DELIVER

ScaleAbility and Worktra, alongside skills and enterprise programmes designed with partners for particular sectors, places and groups

WHERE PARTNERS FIT

Fund cohorts in a sector or state; bring paid work, placements and supplier opportunities; co-design skills tracks; develop finance for young founders; join consortia

GOAL 03

Employers, investors and governments value young people's ability and deliver for them

OUTCOME BY 2030

Decision-makers in markets and government draw on our evidence and on young people's own voices when they hire, finance and design programmes for youth.

CONDITIONS SERVED

Recognition and Response, with YouthDex also strengthening Discovery

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Publish YouthDex every year, and share its findings with states before release
- Run the Youth Skills Pulse every year and present it at the International Youth Day Discourse
- Research how employers, lenders and investors see young talent, and work with them on practical changes
- Train young people in strategic communication and policy engagement

MARKERS OF PROGRESS

- YouthDex first edition in 2027, covering six states
- YouthDex covering all 36 states and the FCT by 2030
- A fellowship cohort every year from 2027
- Documented cases each year where our evidence informed a decision

HOW WE DELIVER

YouthDex, the Youth Skills Pulse and the International Youth Day Discourse, alongside research, dialogues and civic programmes designed with partners

WHERE PARTNERS FIT

Commission research; co-host national and state dialogues; sponsor fellowship cohorts; work with state governments on youth budget transparency and programme outreach

GOAL 04

An institution built to last

OUTCOME BY 2030

YouthXcel Africa is governed, staffed, financed and managed to a standard that partners trust and that can carry the work beyond 2030.

CONDITIONS SERVED

All five, by sustaining the work behind them

WHAT WE WILL DO

- Convene the Advisory Board every quarter
- Deepen each core function of the team as programmes grow
- Complete the adoption of our full suite of organisational policies and review them every year
- Diversify income across grants, partnerships and earned revenue

MARKERS OF PROGRESS

- Independently audited accounts published every year
- No single funder above half of annual income by 2029
- An operating reserve of three months of core costs by 2030
- An annual report published every year

HOW WE DELIVER

Our Trustees, Advisory Board and leadership team

WHERE PARTNERS FIT

Provide core and unrestricted funding; support organisational strengthening; offer pro bono expertise in finance, law, technology and evaluation

Two labs, one community

Two labs work on the two sides of the problem, and the Pathfind connects young people to both. Each lab has its own method, and both are held to the same results framework.

WORKS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth Enterprise and Employability Lab

Method: Demand, Practice, Proof

The Pathfind

WORKS ON THE CONDITIONS AROUND THEM

Youth Narrative and Accountability Lab

Method: Evidence, Capacity, Voice

THREE WAYS WE DELIVER

Flagship initiatives

Platforms and models we build and run

Partner programmes

Designed and delivered with partners

Research and advice

Evidence and dialogue for institutions

Our two labs

	Youth Enterprise and Employability Lab	Youth Narrative and Accountability Lab
Works on	Young people's own path into work and enterprise	The conditions that decide how young people are seen, financed and served
Method	Demand: we begin from what businesses and local markets pay for. Practice: young people learn by doing real work. Proof: every task is recorded and verified.	Evidence: we gather and publish data on how young people are perceived and served. Capacity: we train young people to use it. Voice: we bring their work to decision-makers.
Thematic windows	Enterprise; Employability	Economic opportunity; Governance of youth opportunity
Flagship initiatives	ScaleAbility; Worktra	YouthDex; Youth Skills Pulse; International Youth Day Discourse

Shared by both: the Pathfind community, our principles and values, and one results framework built on the Five Conditions

Our flagship initiatives

The Pathfind

Our community for opportunity: weekly curated opportunities, an AI-assisted readiness check, live sessions, and peers and mentors who stay with members until the application is in.

ScaleAbility

Skilled young people are certified to train peers in underserved communities through short cycles tied to local income, and the strongest learners go on to train the next.

Worktra

A digital workspace where young founders and job seekers deliver paid work for real businesses and leave with a verified record of what they can do.

YouthDex

An independent, state-by-state record of what Nigerian governments commit to, fund and deliver for young people's livelihoods, with every score linked to its source.

Youth Skills Pulse and Discourse

Our annual cycle: young people report on the skills economy each July, and test the findings with practitioners and policy voices each August.

Focus themes

Theme	Why it matters for young people	What we do
Digital economy and future of work	Platforms and AI are changing which skills pay and how work is found	Paid project work and digital skills through Worktra; research on digital work
Agriculture and agribusiness	Value chains offer routes into enterprise from processing to logistics	Enterprise support for young agripreneurs; skills cycles in agro-processing
Green and circular economy	Recycling and clean energy are creating new trades in communities	Skills cycles in green trades; links to green enterprise finance
Fragile and conflict-affected settings	Where livelihoods are scarce, young people are drawn into conflict	Income-linked skills with local partners; conflict-sensitive programming
Governance and public finance for youth	States decide much of what reaches young people through their budgets	YouthDex; budget tracking and policy engagement; youth dialogues
Young women's economic participation	Young women face the steepest barriers to income, finance and safe work	A lens across every theme, with dedicated programmes where partners share it

We remain open to new areas as they emerge, from the care economy to the creative industries, wherever the evidence shows they can widen opportunity for young people.

From idea to initiative

Our labs test ideas before they grow. New initiatives come from what young people and partners tell us, and they grow only when the evidence supports them. The portfolio will change over the plan period as some ideas prove themselves and others are replaced by better ones.



01

Ideas begin in what young people tell us through the Pathfind, the Pulse and our convenings, and in gaps partners bring to us.

02

A small, time-bound pilot with a partner, clear questions and an agreed measure of success.

03

Results against the Five Conditions decide whether a pilot continues, changes or closes. Lessons are published.

04

Proven initiatives grow through partners, government adoption or earned income, with quality protected.

Cross-cutting commitments

Six commitments shape how we work across both labs and every initiative.

Gender equity

We design for young women from the start, aim for at least half of participants to be young women, and report every result by gender.

Inclusion

We reach rural and peri-urban communities, young people with disabilities, those outside formal education and those affected by conflict.

Digital access

Our tools work on the phones and data young people have, in English, French, Hausa, Yorùbá, Igbo and Arabic.

Green and future-ready skills

Where local economies move towards greener trades, we connect young people to them.

Youth participation

Young people help design, test and review what we build, and have a place on our Advisory Board.

Safeguarding and conflict sensitivity

Everyone who works with young people will work under our safeguarding policy, and we plan with local partners in fragile settings.

Where we work

Nigeria is our base. Our office in Kano places us close to young people in northern Nigeria, and our convenings and the Pathfind already draw young people from across the continent. We will grow in two phases, guided by depth before breadth.

2026 to 2028	**Deepen across Nigeria** Extend the Pathfind and the labs into all six geopolitical zones through community organisations, universities and state partners, and build YouthDex state by state.
2028 to 2030	**Extend across Africa** Take proven initiatives to selected African countries through local partners, starting where the Pathfind and the Discourse already have active networks.





How we partner

No single organisation can change youth livelihoods alone, so we build our work with others. Four principles guide how we choose partners and how we work with them.



Shared purpose

We partner with organisations whose commitment to young people and fair development is clear, whatever their sector.



Mutual value

Every partnership offers something real to each side: resources, reach, expertise or learning.



Clear terms

Roles, expectations, timelines and reporting are agreed in writing at the start.



Independence

We protect the integrity of our evidence and advocacy in every partnership, including with funders and governments.

How we work with each partner group

Partner group	How we work together
Foundations and development partners	Fund a lab, an initiative or progress on a specific condition; co-design pilots; commission research through the Youth Skills Pulse and YouthDex
Governments and public agencies	Use YouthDex findings to strengthen youth policy and budget delivery; partner on the design and outreach of state youth programmes
Employers and businesses	Bring paid assignments to Worktra; offer mentors and placements; recruit young people with verified work records
Investors and financial institutions	Meet young founders with verified track records; co-design finance products suited to young enterprises
Universities and training providers	Certify ScaleAbility trainers; host community cycles; share opportunities through the Pathfind
Civil society and media	Co-deliver programmes in communities; co-produce stories that present young people's work accurately; use YouthDex in reporting

Ways to work with us on this plan

Core funding

Unrestricted support that strengthens the whole organisation

Goal or lab funding

Support for one goal, one lab or progress on a specific condition

Co-designed programmes

Programmes built together for a particular group, sector or place

Consortium partnerships

Joint bids in which we serve as lead, implementing, technical or learning partner

Research and advisory

Commissioned studies, youth consultations and practical advice

Expertise and in-kind support

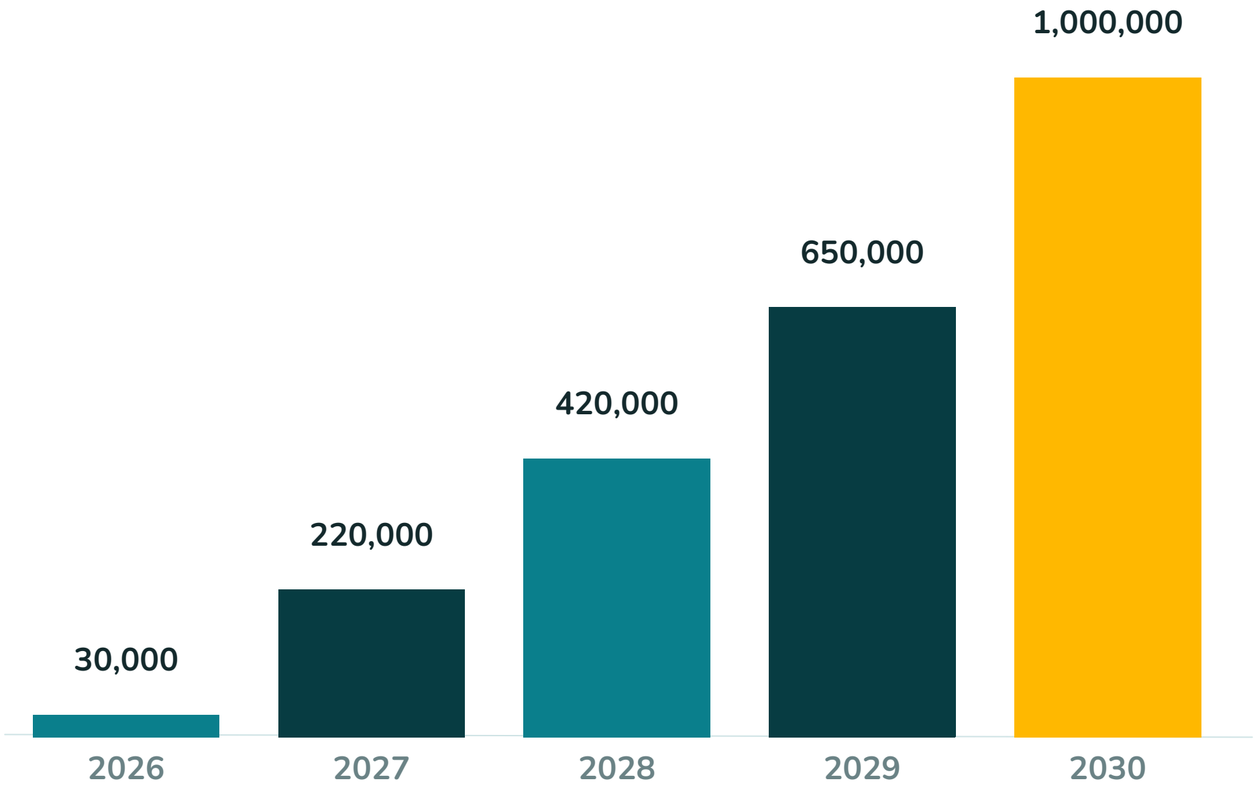
Mentors, experts, placements, technology and pro bono services

Our resource envelope

About US$2.3 million over five years.

The plan starts lean in 2026, its foundation year, and grows as our programmes prove themselves and our partnerships mature. The envelope covers YouthXcel Africa's own budget. Programmes delivered in consortia, where partners hold part of the funds, add to what the plan can achieve. Our cost per young person stays low because ScaleAbility is led by young trainers from the communities it serves, the Pathfind runs on channels young people already use, and much of our delivery is shared with partners.

ANNUAL BUDGET, US$



Total **US$2,320,000**

Where the money goes, and where it comes from

ALLOCATION BY GOAL, 2026 TO 2030

Goal 1 The Pathfind, outreach and mentoring

US$420,000 18%

Goal 2 ScaleAbility, Worktra and labour market mapping

US$900,000 39%

Goal 3 YouthDex, the Pulse, the Discourse and fellowships

US$550,000 24%

Goal 4 Core team, monitoring and learning, systems and audit

US$450,000 19%

EXPECTED FUNDING MIX



Foundations	40%	US$930,000
Bilateral and multilateral partners	25%	US$580,000
Corporate partners	15%	US$350,000
Earned income	12%	US$280,000
Individual and diaspora giving	8%	US$180,000

Earned income grows from a small share to about a fifth of annual income by 2030. All figures are indicative and reviewed each year with the Finance and Risk group.

Funding sources and stewardship

Source	What it will fund	Our approach
Foundations	The labs, their flagship initiatives and the Pathfind	Multi-year partnerships built around clear results on specific conditions
Bilateral and multilateral partners	YouthDex, governance work and larger programmes	Consortium bids in the early years, moving to direct grants as our record grows
Corporate partners	Worktra assignments, mentoring, placements and sector skills	Partnerships that meet a business need alongside social impact
Earned income	A growing share of Worktra and our research and training services	Fees for delivered work and commissioned research, priced to remain accessible
Individual and diaspora giving	Flexible funding for the Pathfind and community programmes	Simple online giving, supported by regular and honest reporting

Investment priorities

People and systems for monitoring and learning first, then the Pathfind platform, the YouthDex method and the build of Worktra.

Financial stewardship

Restricted funds tracked separately, accounts audited independently every year, and a three-month operating reserve by 2030.

Social enterprise pathway

As Worktra's earned income grows, we will assess with legal advice whether it is best held in a separate social enterprise owned by the organisation.

How we will measure progress

Our results framework follows the Five Conditions from a young person's first contact with us to the livelihood that follows. Every indicator is reported by gender, age, location and disability.

Measure	2030 target
Young people reached	100,000
Given sustained support	10,000
Moved into dignified work, enterprise or higher income	3,000
Share of young women given sustained support	At least half
States and FCT covered by YouthDex	All 37
Pulse and Discourse	Every year

HOW WE COUNT

Reached

Young people who take part in at least one activity with us. Social media followers and impressions are reported separately and never counted as reach.

Given sustained support

Young people who receive structured support from us for three months or more.

Moved into dignified work, enterprise or higher income

Young people who, within twelve months of support, secure a job or contract, start or grow an enterprise, or raise their income, confirmed through follow-up.

Headline indicators and how we learn

Level	Headline indicators
Discovery	Young people reached; members who find an eligible opportunity within six months
Direction	Members who report a clear next step; members matched with a mentor
Readiness	Completion rates for ScaleAbility and Worktra; applications made with support
Recognition	Verified records issued; opportunities, jobs, contracts and finance secured
Response	States covered by YouthDex; decisions informed by our evidence
Livelihood	Participants earning a reliable income at six and twelve months, with respect, standing and purpose

OUR LEARNING RHYTHM

Every quarter

Each lab reviews its data and feedback

Every year

Pulse in July, Discourse in August, annual report and audited accounts

2028

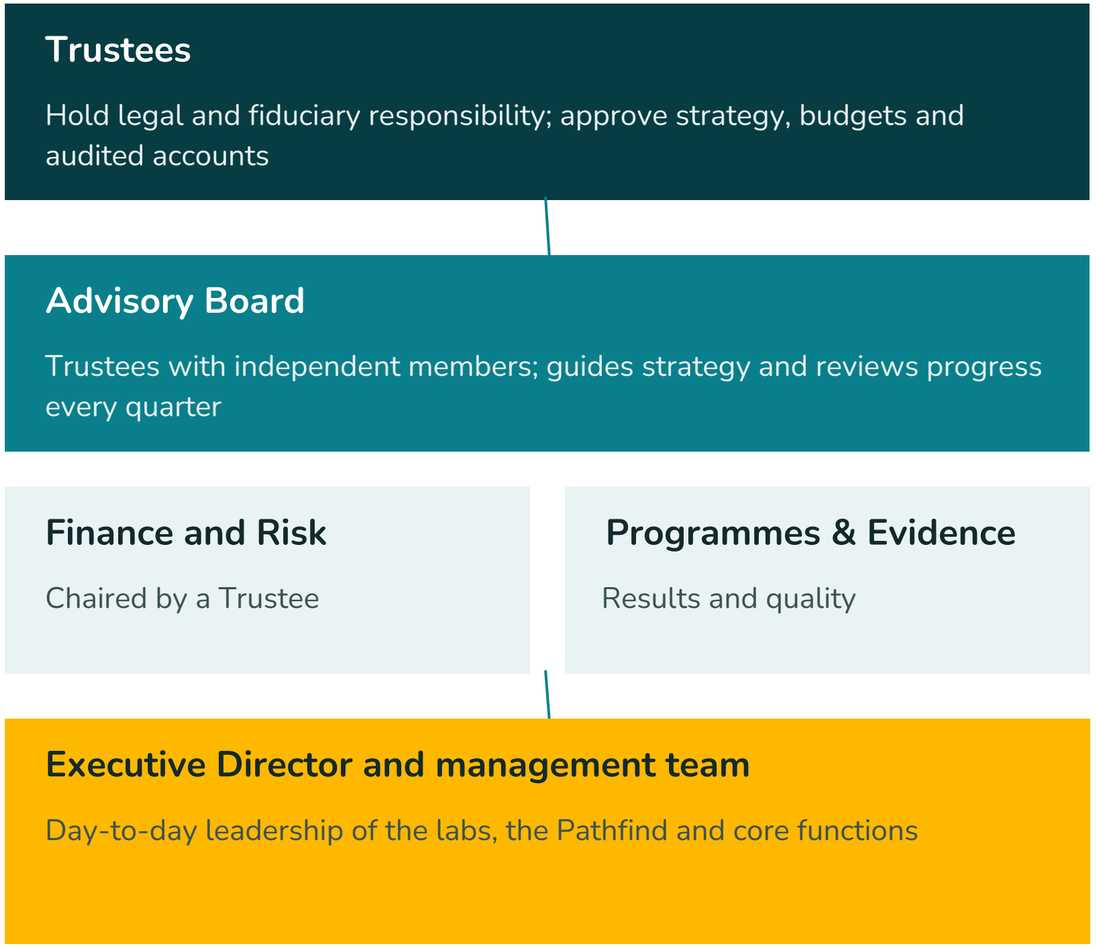
Independent midterm evaluation

2030

Final evaluation, shared publicly

Young people give informed consent, data is kept to what we need, stored securely and handled in line with the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023.

How we are governed



YouthXcel Africa is incorporated in Nigeria as Youth Excel Initiative (IT 9874080) under Part F of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020.

Its Trustees hold the organisation's legal and fiduciary responsibilities, approve its strategy, budgets and audited accounts, and approved this plan.

Together with independent members drawn from development practice, enterprise, public policy and youth leadership, the Trustees form an Advisory Board that guides strategy and reviews progress against results.

Our team and systems

Executive leadership
Strategy, senior partnerships and accountability

Programmes and partnerships
Programme design, delivery and partners

Lab leadership
A lead for each lab and its results

Monitoring, evaluation and learning
Results, the Pulse and YouthDex research

Youth engagement and community
The Pathfind, mentors and outreach

Communications
Public voice, stories and publications

Technology and platforms
Pathfind tools, Worktra and data systems

Finance and administration
Finance, compliance and donor reporting

Safeguarding
A focal point reporting to the Trustees

People. A network of mentors, sector experts and volunteers extends the team. We will deepen each function as programmes grow, add partnership coordination for work outside Nigeria from 2028, and invest in our staff.

Systems and policies. Financial controls with clear separation of duties, a participant data system and secure platforms. We are have and adopting a full suite of policies, including safeguarding, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, data protection, anti-fraud, whistleblowing and conflict of interest.

Risks and how we manage them

We review these risks every quarter with the Finance and Risk group of the Advisory Board. Ratings show likelihood and impact before mitigation.

Risk	What could happen	Likelihood	Impact	How we manage it
Funding	Delays, unsuccessful bids or shifts in funder priorities leave work underfunded	Medium	High	Diversify income, commit spending against confirmed funds, and build an operating reserve
Political sensitivity	Governance work, including YouthDex, is read as partisan or hostile	Medium	High	Use only public documents and a published method, share findings with states first, show progress as well as gaps, stay non-partisan
Economic volatility	Inflation, currency swings and data costs raise costs and squeeze participants	High	Medium	Budget with contingency, design for low-bandwidth access, and favour income-linked programmes
Delivery	Programmes reach fewer underserved young people than intended or lose them midway	Medium	Medium	Work through trusted local partners, track completion closely, and adjust formats quickly
Safeguarding and data	Harm to a participant or misuse of personal data	Low	High	Apply safeguarding and data protection policies, train everyone, and collect only what we need

Risks and how we manage them (continued)

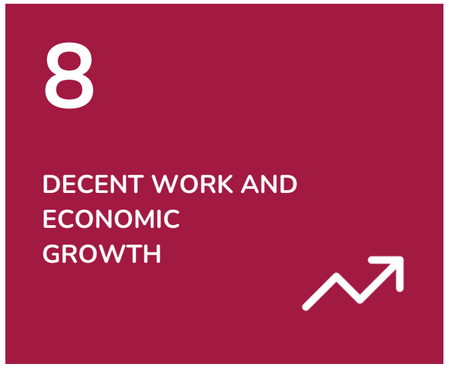
Risk	What could happen	Likelihood	Impact	How we manage it
Fraud and misuse of funds	Loss of funds through fraud, error or weak controls	Low	High	Separate financial duties, apply anti-fraud and whistleblowing policies, and audit every year
Technology	AI-assisted tools give poor or biased guidance	Medium	Medium	Test tools with young users, keep human review, and check results across groups
Insecurity	Conflict or unrest disrupts work in affected communities	Medium	Medium	Plan with local partners, keep remote options ready, and put safety first
Capacity	Growth outpaces the team and systems, or depends on a few people	Medium	Medium	Grow in phases, document systems, and build leadership depth

Global and continental alignment

This plan contributes directly to five Sustainable Development Goals and to Africa's own commitments on youth, skills and enterprise.



Target 4.4: skills for decent jobs and entrepreneurship



Target 8.6: fewer young people outside work, education and training



Target 10.2: economic inclusion, starting with those reached last



Targets 16.6 and 16.7: accountable, participatory decisions on youth



Partnerships across government, business and civil society

African Union Agenda 2063

Aspiration 6, carried forward in the second ten-year plan

African Youth Charter

Article 11 on participation; Article 15 on livelihoods and employment

AfCFTA Women and Youth in Trade Protocol

Young founders' access to finance, training and markets

UN Youth Strategy, Youth2030

Economic empowerment through decent work; youth participation

Nigeria's National Youth Policy

Employment, enterprise and participation, with YouthDex tracking delivery

Milestones 2026–2030

2026

FOUNDATION

- Plan approved and Advisory Board convened
- Both labs established; Pathfind open across Nigeria
- First Pulse and second Discourse held
- YouthDex method designed and reviewed

2027

PROOF

- First ScaleAbility cycles and Worktra cohort
- First YouthDex edition, six states
- First fellowship cohort
- First annual report and audited accounts

2028

MIDTERM AND GROWTH

- Independent midterm evaluation
- Pathfind active in all six zones
- ScaleAbility in further states
- First partner-led delivery outside Nigeria

2029

DEEPENING

- YouthDex in a majority of states
- No funder above half of income
- Worktra income covering more of its costs

2030

CONSOLIDATION

- 100,000 reached, 10,000 supported, 3,000 into livelihoods
- YouthDex in all 36 states and the FCT
- Final evaluation and next plan

Young people across Africa are already working hard to build their futures. This plan sets out how YouthXcel Africa will help them turn that effort into dignified and fulfilling livelihoods over the next five years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the young people who shaped this plan through the Youth Skills Pulse, our convenings and the Pathfind community; the speakers, mentors and sector experts who give their time to them; our Trustees, Advisory Board members and team; and the partners who have worked alongside us since 2025.

NOTES

1 Mastercard Foundation, Young Africa Works: Lessons Learned 2018 to 2025

2 Mastercard Foundation and World Data Lab, Africa Youth Employment Outlook 2026

3 ILO, Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024: Africa

4 African Development Bank, Jobs for Youth in Africa Strategy 2016 to 2025

5 World Data Lab and Mastercard Foundation, Africa Youth Employment Clock, 2024

6 Afrobarometer Dispatch AD998, citing the Global Youth Development Index 2023

7 African Union, Agenda 2063 Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan 2024 to 2033

8 Protocol to the AfCFTA Agreement on Women and Youth in Trade, adopted February 2024

YouthXcel Africa

Every young person.
Every opportunity.

Let's widen opportunity for young Africans together.

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