



SNV Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (YEE)

Global strategy 2030



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List of acronyms

AMGE	Access, Match, Grow, Enable
B2B	Business-to-Business
BDS	Business Development Services
DGIS	Directorate-General for International Cooperation of the Netherlands
DFCD	Development Facility for Climate Change
EU	EU: European Union
GESI	GESI: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GHI	Global Harmonised Indicators
IAP	Innovations Against Poverty Challenge Fund
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
LSPs	Local Service Providers
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFIs	Microfinance Institutions
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
ODA	Official Development Assistance
P&BD	Partnership and Business Development
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Value Chain
YEE	Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
YSLA	Youth Savings and Loans Associations

Introduction and executive summary

SNV's [2030 Strategy](#) highlights the importance of young women and men¹ to a more equitable and sustainable future. With its focus on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (YEE), SNV works to align market demand and more coordinated support and services to meet the needs and aspirations of young people. Across its work in 13 countries over the last decade, SNV's portfolio of YEE projects have reached over 600,000 young people resulting in 440,000 entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.² These jobs have proven to have long term impact in young people's lives through *individual, familial, and community-levels*.³ Learning from SNV's youth employment and entrepreneurship projects have resulted in an evidence-informed foundation that will serve as a base for future expansion.

Aligned to its 2030 Strategy, SNV has committed to scaling its dedicated youth employment and entrepreneurship projects as well as mainstream it into sector projects, with the ambitious goal of reaching 4 million young people and creating 2.5 million jobs in 15 countries⁴. To create these jobs, SNV will contribute - in partnership with public and private sector actors - to addressing the systematic barriers that young people face accessing opportunities in the agri-food, energy, water systems and, increasingly, in the nexus between these sectors and in emerging sectors. Interventions will contribute to its core themes as well as be sensitive to conflict, to the role of informal markets, and to the increasing influence of digital technologies.

Building off its experience, the updated Access, Match, Grow, and Enable (AMGE) youth engagement approach has been updated to be more outcome oriented and better positioned to address the global changes and trends that are affecting young people. Trends include a growing and increasingly engaged youth population in emerging economies, the influence of digitisation, mobility, and fragility, as well as emerging opportunities for young women and men to contribute to a more sustainable future. The updated youth engagement strategy addresses these challenges and trends, aligning with SNV's approach to systems transformation. Combined with

a new Theory of Change, YEE is positioned to catalyse public and private sector actors to co-create inclusive solutions that results in increases in income, resilience and wellbeing for young people in Africa and Asia.

Over the strategy period, SNV will have a coordinated approach to ensure maximal impact. This will include the development of a cross-project learning agenda and shared portfolio indicators, greater internal alignment with different functional teams within SNV, and a diversified fundraising strategy with a target to leverage € 250 million. This increased emphasis on consolidating learning, on process improvement, and on scaling impact will support the systems transformation necessary to ensure young women and men access decent work and increased wellbeing.

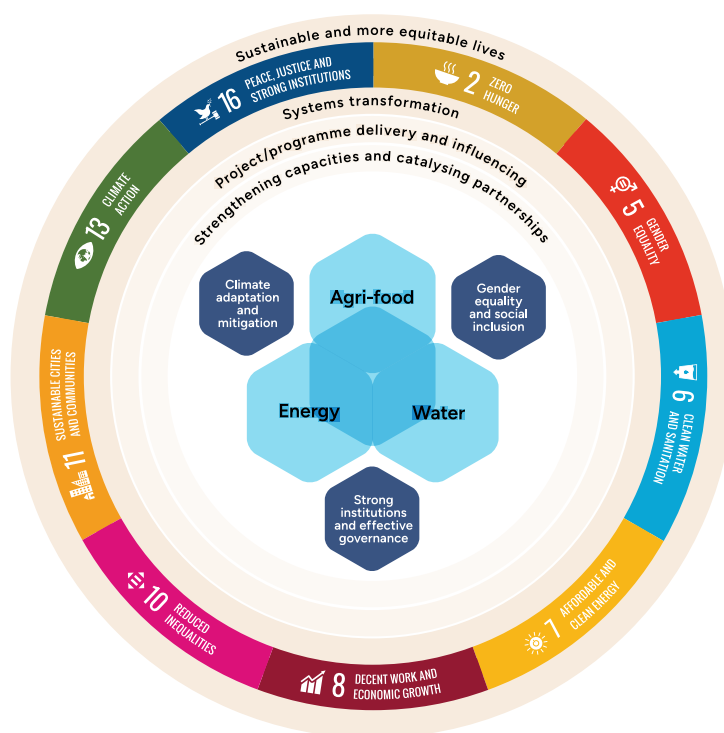


Figure 1: SNV's 2030 Strategy Circle

¹ As there is no universal definition of the age range that characterises youth, SNV most often considers the national definitions of youth. SNV chooses not to work with young people under the age of 18 to avoid risks of child labour. In the African countries where SNV works with young people, the age range is often 18-35.

² SNV. [Youth driving change: Unlocking youth employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to build resilient communities](#). 2024

³ SNV. *Catalysing change: Initial qualitative findings on the SNV youth employment regional programme funded by Mastercard Foundation*. 2024

⁴ Dedicated YEE projects have youth employment as primary impact, whereas mainstreamed projects have youth employment as one of several outcomes or as a cross-cutting theme.

Responding to youth challenges and opportunities

Youth is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood marked by increased engagement in community, by new relationships and families, and by decisions about school and work. For some young people, barriers to success are more pronounced due to lack of household and community support, negative and

pernicious social norms, and systematic exclusion from skill and career development opportunities. Young people are not just passively experiencing outside influence; they can be drivers of the trends that benefit and create opportunity for themselves and others.

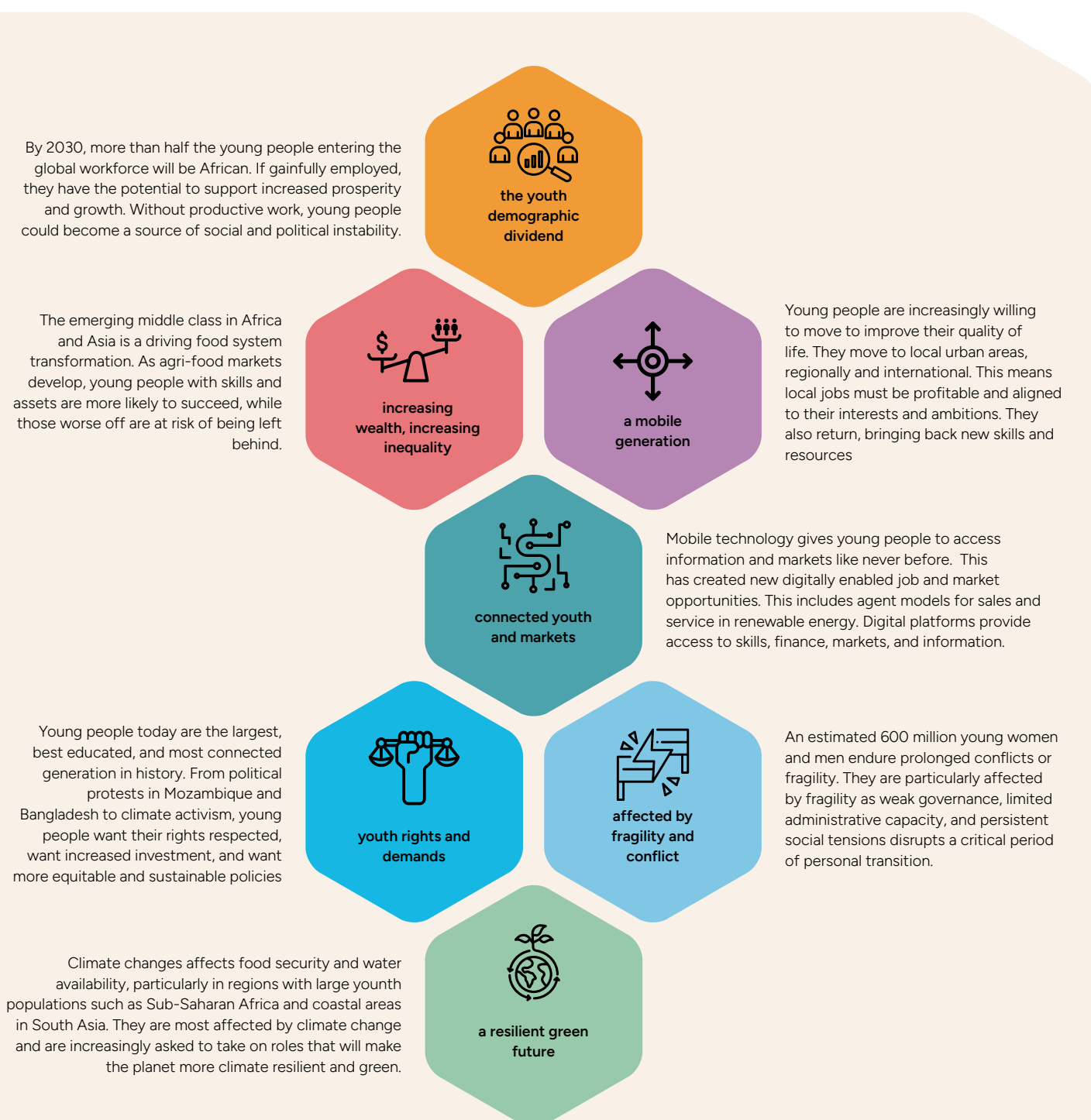


Figure 2: Youth Trends and Challenges



Where we work / will work

SNV's approach to Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship is designed to be adaptable to country contexts, target groups, and market conditions. Different country projects will be developed that match youth aspirations with market opportunities. Points of

differentiation between projects may include greater focus on resilience and food security, adaptations to address conflict sensitivity, responses to the needs of different marginalised groups, and varied models for business and industry partnerships.



Figure 3: SNV Country Map



SNV's commitment to youth employment and entrepreneurship

In the countries where SNV works, limited economic transformation has previously meant that job creation has lagged growth in the working-age population. Where there is growth, young people - as new market entrants - are not the first to benefit. Young people lack the skills, network, and assets to be competitive in jobs and markets. Businesses and financial institutions do not engage them due to negative perceptions and households and communities are not supportive enough of young people's ambitions. As a result, disadvantaged young women and men are left behind even as where growth is occurring. Supporting SDG 8.5, greater coordinated and scaled action is necessary from educational institutions, from government, and from the private sector to create decent work for all young people. Building off past success with a diverse portfolio of youth employment and entrepreneurship projects in over 10 [countries](#), SNV has set ambitious 2030 targets focused on increasing its impact on young women and men, unlocking additional resources, and engaging stakeholders to create a more enabled environment.

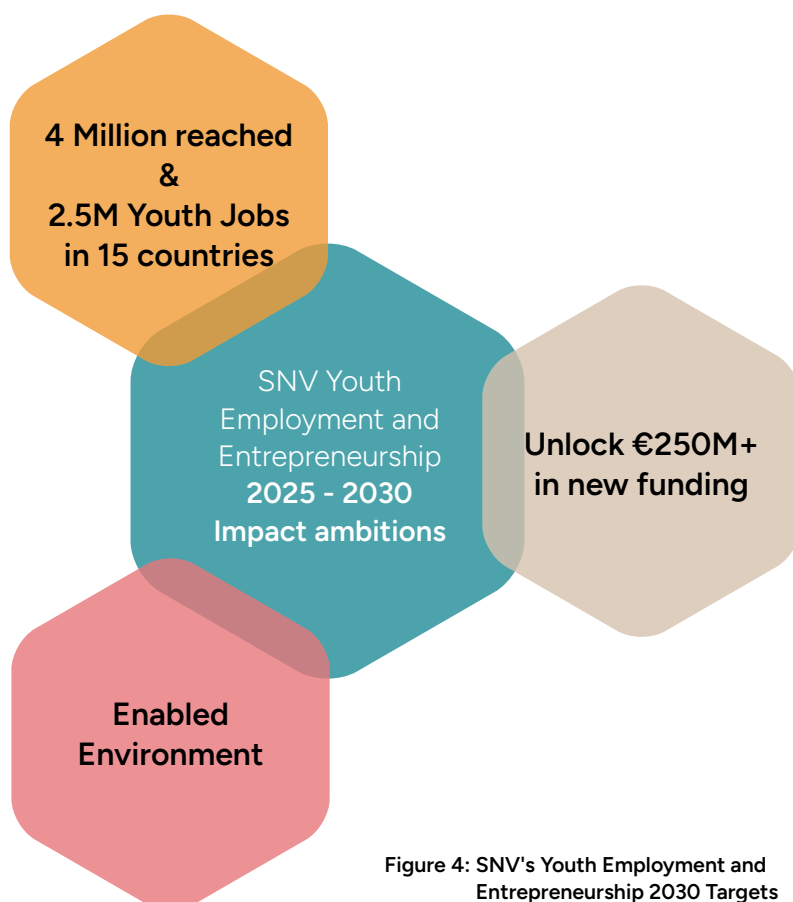


Figure 4: SNV's Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship 2030 Targets

Drivers of systems transformation

SNV will partner with community, market, and government actors, blending their capacities, knowledge, and innovations with our own, to make markets more inclusive of young people and enable them to contribute as leaders and entrepreneurs. This will result in young people with greater standing in the community, increased access to opportunity, and more consideration in the market and policy discussions that most affect them. SNV has identified [six dimensions of systems change](#) need to be addressed, articulating its strategies for each of these dimensions, and will track how our projects and influence contribute to change. To contribute to systems transformation, SNV's work with young people will be guided by 3 critical success factors that will guide its implementation, its project interventions, and its partnerships.

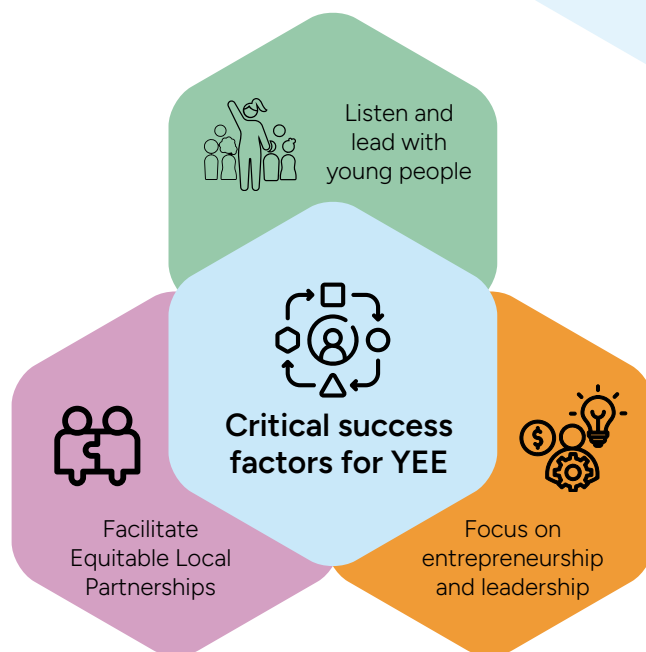


Figure 5: YEE Critical Success Factors

Driver 1: Listening and leading with young people

SNV's 2030 organisational strategy commits to supporting and valuing youth voices and actions in working for a better future.⁵ SNV will build off its experiences meaningfully engaging young people. Youth voice and leadership must be incorporated across the project cycle: from proposal development; to value chain and job selection to adaptive management and in governance roles; to advocacy for systems transformation. Partners will be selected based on their willingness and ability to include young people and marginalised groups, and to work with them to meet their interests and fulfil their ambitions. Young people will provide critical leadership in projects, providing peer-to-peer support and advocates as 'youth champions'.



⁵ SNV. 2030 STRATEGY: Our contribution to accelerating and scaling SDG-aligned impact. 2023



Driver 2: Focusing on entrepreneurship and leadership

One in five working-age Africans have started a business and more than three-quarters of the young people are planning to start one within five years⁶. In SNV's Southeast Asian countries, up to a third of young people aspire to work for themselves.⁷ SNV works to ensure that entrepreneurship is within reach for entrepreneurial young people - regardless of their starting point. For livelihood-oriented entrepreneurs and workforce, this work will strengthen systems around them: improving access to tailored business development services, unlocking diverse financing pathways, and engaging

policy and market actors to reduce barriers and redesign support structures. For more ambitious youth-led enterprises, SNV will position these entrepreneurs as lead entrepreneurs, value chain integrators, or youth employment generators in business-to-business partnerships with larger value chain actors. This is done via targeted acceleration and financial support, supporting profitable business to business partnerships, as well as engaging in advocacy for a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Figure 6: Youth Incubation and Acceleration Model

⁶ Brookings Institute. Entrepreneurship and structural transformation. Foresight Africa 2024

⁷ World Economic Forum. Indonesia's young people embrace the entrepreneurial spirit. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2019/08/indonesia-young-people-entrepreneur>. Accessed 03/03/2025

Driver 3: Facilitating equitable partnerships for change

SNV affirms that lasting systemic change must be locally led. Grounded in SNV's systems transformation approach, the YEE Strategy integrates the **4C model**—**Convene, Catalyse, Co-create, and Capacitate**—within the **Enable** pillar to drive inclusive and equitable partnerships. Projects are designed to convene key

actors, strengthen the capacities of local service providers, youth-led enterprises, and institutions, and enable them to actively shape systemic solutions. With the right public and private stakeholders engaged, projects leverage evidence to catalyse action and co-create inclusive policies and market practices that advance youth employment and entrepreneurship at scale.



Figure 7: The 4Cs approach



Leveraging Sector Integration to Create Jobs

SNV YEE project portfolio focus on opportunities within the agri-food, energy, and water sectors as well as the nexus between them. While agri-food system transformation has the potential to create the most jobs for young people, SNV's integrated approach recognises other supportive inputs- via energy and water for productive use- necessary to drive this change. Critical to sustainable growth will be regenerative and circular business models as well as digitally enabled, climate-smart and green roles for young women and men.

Agri-food

The agri-food sector employs most rural youth people in Asia and Africa and over a quarter of employment in urban areas.⁸ Agri-food systems development, driven by population growth and urbanisation, will continue to be the primary driver of job creation (estimated 70-80%). Young people will be supported in on-farm/off-farm roles as producers, most often in horticulture and other cash crops, as well as agro-inputs and service providers that bring in new technologies, and in processing/ value addition, marketing and distribution of agri-food products.

Energy

An estimated 14 million renewable energy jobs that will emerge by 2030.⁹ Energy sources include biodigesters for both power and fertiliser, and solar array and clean cooking distribution networks that support personal, business, and agricultural use. To develop and capitalise on increased demand for energy, companies are increasingly relying on a younger, digitally enabled workforce that can amplify behaviour change and has new technical competencies.¹⁰

Water

While the water sector itself employs a smaller percentage of the workforce (1%), an estimated three out of four jobs globally are dependent on water.¹¹ Critical jobs in the water sector will focus on highly skilled roles that support water and sanitation services, create more robust markets (often supported by digital payments), and foster emerging nexus technologies like solar-powered irrigation.

Nexus/ Secondary

Young people are drawn to growing markets. Many of these new jobs will develop at the nexus or intersection of the SNV sectors or in supporting industries like finance, communications, tourism industry, education and skills, construction and health care, amongst others. Young people are increasingly using their transferable skills and profits into these new roles and sectors to increase their income through growth and diversification.¹²

⁸ Dolislager, Michael, et al. "Youth and adult agrifood system employment in developing regions: Rural (peri-urban to hinterland) vs. urban." *The Journal of Development Studies*. 2021

⁹ World Economic Forum. How clean energy jobs are powering growth. 2022. <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2022/09/iea-clean-energy-jobs/>. Accessed March 25, 2025

¹⁰ Difference in the Africa and Asia market means that the focus in Africa will be on company partnerships, whereas Asia may need more refined focus on necessary industry specific skills.

¹¹ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/three-four-jobs-global-workforce-depend-water-says-un-world-water>

¹² SNV. Catalysing change: Initial qualitative findings on the SNV youth employment regional programme funded by Mastercard Foundation. 2024



Core themes and cross cutting topics

Young people have a unique potential to support equitable transformation due to their willingness to work, their skills, and their interest in equity. They are increasingly willing to challenge the status quo and often the first to embrace new ideas and technology. This makes them well-suited to driving change around GESI norms, climate adaptation, and governance reform, and adaptable to the changes and challenges brought on by digitisation, informality, and fragility.

SNV core themes

Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI): A deliberate strategy is necessary to address the underlying norms negatively affecting women, PWD, refugees and IDP groups, the risks of gender-based violence, and to increase the capacity of partners to engage in gender responsive and transformative change.

Climate adaptation and mitigation: Young people can support the application of new technologies, services, and practices, via their role as the next generation of climate-resilient agri-food producers, as partners in more sustainable water and energy systems, or entrepreneurs that are bringing new nature-based or renewable technologies to market.

Strong institutions and effective governance: Young people are rightfully seeking voice in decisions that affect them. SNV will support those Institutions that are most relevant and responsive to the needs of young people, ranging from local organisations and local governments who can provide access to assets and services through to national business associations, government, and market institutions who influence policy and resource decisions.



Figure 8: YEE Core and Cross Cutting Themes

Ethiopia's Realising Aspiration Youth in Ethiopia through Employment (RAYEE): Progress on GESI and jobs in the formal and informal sector

RAYEE's goal was to match young women and men to jobs and markets in rural Ethiopia. To reach its ambitious aims of 70% young women, SNV identified, selected, and supported gender-responsive partners who could work together to systemically reduce barriers for young women. Project adaptations reoriented activities to address the specific barriers and constraints that young women faced, resulting in 172,000 young women accessing dignified work, mainly in the informal economy.

The Boosting Green Employment and Enterprise Opportunities (GrEEen) project in Ghana: Entrepreneurship support for climate impact

Through a Green Innovation Challenge, 27 entrepreneurs received over € 25,000 (\$ 30,000 USD) in matching grants to scale up their green or circular businesses. Targeted incubation and acceleration services and entrepreneurship ecosystem development supported these environmentally focused youth-led businesses to deploy new green business models in the Ashanti and Western regions. The project specifically focused on youth returning migrants.



Cross cutting topics

Digital: Young people will find new digital jobs (like agent, agri-tech, and gig work), access digital financial products, and markets via social, product, and marketing platforms.

Informality: SNV is committed to working to improve the quality of work in the informal sector, provide pathways to formalisation where appropriate, and support more resilient and fulfilling livelihoods for these young people. This includes engaging more with informal market actors and account for informality in SNV's own partnership and compliance policies.

Fragility: SNV's approach to youth employment and entrepreneurship in fragile contexts involves making gender and fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) sensitive adaptations. The goal is to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive, social cohesion via contextualised training methods, developing appropriate mechanisms for supporting finance and market access, and strengthening mechanisms for safety and conflict prevention.

Ethiopia's Liway: driving digitised job matching with government

The Livelihoods Improvement for Women and Youth (LIWAY) worked with local actors to address youth specific market constraints in Addis Ababa. The project's Digital Job Matching (DJM) platform successfully linked job seekers with the national Ethiopian Labor Market Information System, identifying roles both in domestic and international markets. This innovation attracted new competitors which 'crowded in' private sector-led job matching services. Across all interventions, Liway has helped create almost 130,000 new jobs.

What we have learned

SNV has proven that it can create jobs **for** and **with** young people. This impact has occurred in fragile and development contexts, with entrepreneurial young women and men, refugees and other disadvantaged groups, and working across sectors and value chains.

Experience has shown that facilitating comprehensive, context-specific, ecosystem-wide support for young people is critical. Market, finance, skill, and policy development for young people cannot be done in isolation. Young women and men need trusted actors, like SNV and partners, mediating from the middle. SNV's innovation has been linking young people's entrepreneurial ambitions to access to the market, and to supportive services and networks. SNV has realised the critical role that aligned development partners can play; from local communities and organisations to mission-driven private sector companies, and to mandated government institutions. Entrepreneurial young women and men have taken these opportunities and exceeded expectations, starting businesses that support their families, hired others, and contributed to economic growth.

Learning has occurred via practical experience, by accentuating successful initiatives and learning from activities that did achieve the expected results. Insights have come from projects that are specifically targeting entrepreneurial young women and men as well as wider value chain and sector projects that have worked to include young people as secondary objectives. Over more than a decade, SNV's youth engagement strategy has evolved over time, from earlier iterations that places greater emphasis on the process of youth engagement



and job matching (2013-2018), to iterations that better emphasized the role of market systems, to the current outcome and impact focused AMGE youth engagement approach that is more flexible and is better able to meet the diverse needs of young people.

The consolidated learnings have resulted in the AMGE youth engagement approach and is the collective effort of SNV's project teams; starting with their willingness to listen to diverse needs of young people, to work constructively with a range of partners, and to work to adapt and develop innovative context specific interventions that meet young people and market needs.

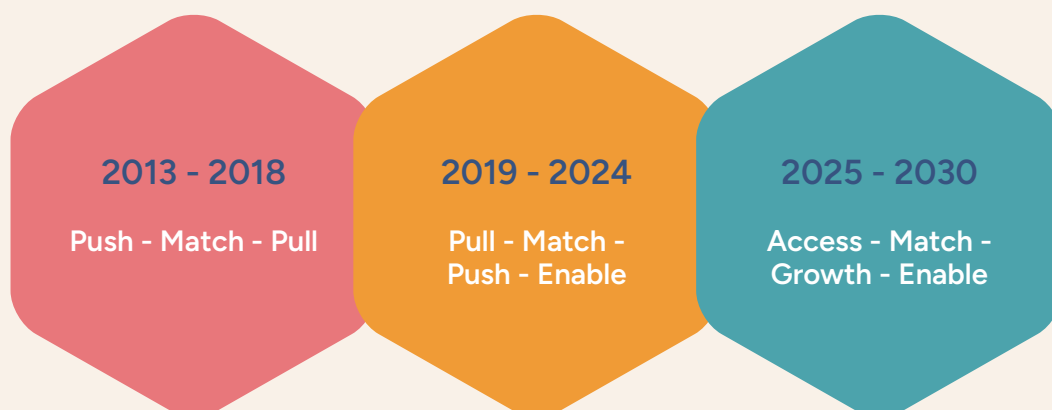


Figure 9: Evolution of the SNV's Youth Engagement Strategy over time

How It Works: Access, Match, Grow, Enable (AMGE) youth engagement approach

SNV's updated AMGE youth engagement approach aims to address the four critical outcomes required for ambitious and entrepreneurial young people – 18-30/35-year-olds depending on country context - to find decent work and to increase their wellbeing. Access, Match, Grow, Enable youth engagement approach serves as both the long-term outcome and impact pathways that structure the activities and interventions necessary to create change.¹³ Using this strategy, SNV youth employment and entrepreneurship projects -focused on value chains, market systems, and the enabling environment- have greater flexibility and can identify the most appropriate interventions to achieve their outcomes based on their context and goals.

The shift from a more linear, process-oriented approaches to outcome and impact-oriented approach has resulted in a more targeted emphasis of change. Key shifts include:

1. Access to sustainable **markets** as entry point to SNV's YEE programming
2. Youth **leadership** as an outcome, on the same level as employment and entrepreneurship
3. Match pathway focused on the access to appropriate **finance** and required assets
4. Addition of youth **agency** and skills as a critical outcome for youth individual development in Grow
5. **Systems transformation** (Enable) aimed at kick-starting markets and contributing to changing negative policies and norms. This requires working with young women and men and local organisations to identify, address, and contribute to more inclusive policy formulation, coordination, and implementation.

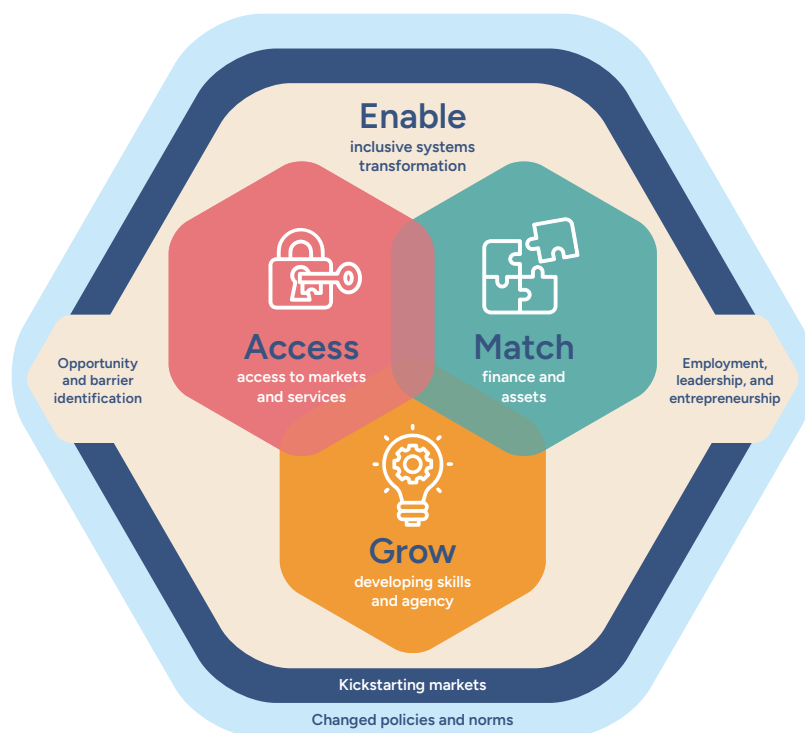


Figure 10: Access, Match, Grow, Enable (AMGE) Contextual Framework

The new and updated youth engagement approach works across SNV sectors and is organised to allow the design of new targeted YEE projects; mainstreaming YEE across sector projects; to facilitate portfolio-level measurement & learning, and better integration of cross-cutting issues like GESI, fragility, climate, informality, governance and strong institutions, and digitisation into project activities.



¹³ A more visual, comprehensive version of the AMGE framework is presented in Annex 1.

Access (markets and investments)

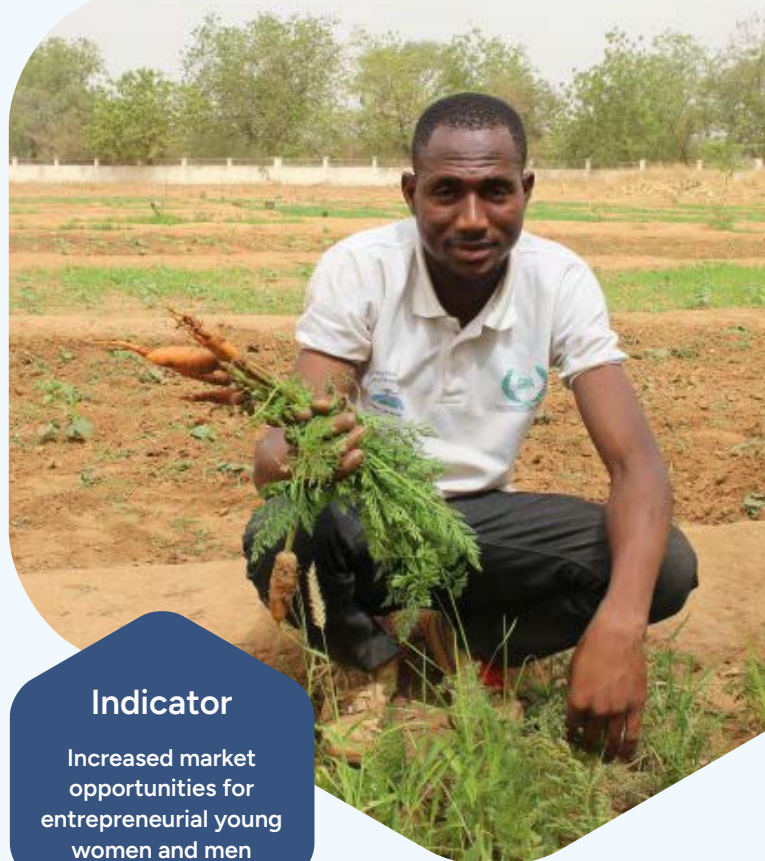
Young women and men have access to markets and services

Strategy 1: Innovative and inclusive business models:

Young people lack market access. Business partnerships can provide young women and men with access to information, customers, skills and mentorship, and assets like inputs and value chain finance. These partnerships will be driven by demand for greater value chain coordination from domestic and multinational businesses and by the desire for increased market share by local SMEs, lead farmers, and cooperatives. SNV will prioritise those businesses willing to co-invest and who are committed to youth economic empowerment and inclusion. Emphasis will be placed on companies in value chains that have national and international markets, that have jobs that can be made available for young women, and that link young entrepreneurs to pockets of economic growth (i.e. special economic zones and large public and private sector investments).

Strategy 2: Incubate and accelerate growing youth led enterprises:

Due to the diversity of enterprises and barriers they face, entrepreneurial young people lack the flexible, targeted business development services they need. For those young people looking for a foothold in the informal economy, SNV will incubate household and local micro businesses. An emphasis will be placed on providing clusters of these young people with local extensive services and facilitating informal trade via connections to lead farmers, cooperatives, and aggregators. For those youth-led businesses that have graduated and found market fit or are promoting disruptive technologies, SNV will work to incubate and accelerate growth and support additional job creation via



Indicator

Increased market opportunities for entrepreneurial young women and men

more advanced business development services, facilitate investments and market linkages. Additional focus will be placed on access to new technology, on digitally enabled jobs like renewable energy sales/service, to information, and to markets. Young people will be supported to incorporate mechanical and digital innovation into their work, as well as access new clients and markets.



2SCALE youth inclusion as good business

Growing agri-businesses need more productive producers and more specialised non-farm service providers. 2SCALE facilitated the engagement of young people by working through business champions, who co-invested in more integrated, inclusive, and nutritious value chains. Roles for young people were identified via value chain mapping and business cases. Young people were provided with the right support from both the company and 2SCALE to take access to these opportunities. In total, almost 30,000 non-farm jobs were created across nine African countries.



Indicator

of young people
with increased
finances or asset

self-financing of their own companies, via Youth Savings and Loans (YSLAs) and reinvestment of business income. It will also work to develop sources of finance, via a focus on de-risking (insurance/group lending/loan guarantee funds), introduction of innovative digital services & green financial products, and partnerships with governments, cooperatives and friendly financial institutions to access additional resources.

Match (assets and finance)

Young women and men have access to tailored financial products and assets

Strategy 1: Youth-Friendly Financial Services & Products:

Financial service providers rarely provide appropriate and accessible financial products and services. That said, nearly all young people who enter self-employment in YEE require some level of financing. The AMGE approach focuses on developing 'Pathways to Finance' for young people over the course of their evolving business. While formal finance is not always accessible, particularly for the most vulnerable, other assets, inputs, and finance can be leveraged to meet business demands and provide a pathway to a successful business start-up. SNV will work to facilitate young people's awareness of available financial products and

Strategy 2: Access to Land, Machinery, and Inputs:

Young people lack access to a range of assets like land, machinery and productive spaces. Accessing these assets requires engaging families, communities, and local governments to work together to support young people. In agri-food, the most critical asset remains land, often in short supply. YEE projects work with households, communities, local governments and local duty bearers to identify available or under-utilised land to support youth producers. Other community assets include start-up equipment, productive spaces, work tools, and extension services.



Gerasol Mozambique: Paying for results

Renewable, decentralised energy is powering Africa. Sales and service for solar home systems will create jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for up to 14 million skilled young people in Africa. Gerasol has partnered with three Mozambique companies and a TVET institution to create a technical workforce that can support market development. These companies commit their own resources to pay for training and financing product purchase, with GERASOL only contributing when young people are employed. These results-based financing mechanisms ensures businesses were committed and invested in young people for the long term.

Grow (skills, agency & social capital)

Young women and men ready to access (self) employment

Strategy 1: Market-relevant skills training:

Disadvantaged young people do not have access to quality, market relevant skill development in communities where they live. They need access to short, certified technical training focused on immediate roles and markets as well as long term and more resource intensive vocational training, mentorship, coaching, networking interventions at critical value chain nodes. Special emphasis will be placed on entrepreneurship as a transferable skill supporting business growth and income diversification activities. This will be mainstreamed into both non-formal skills development, extension services, and TVET partnerships. TVET and extension service partnerships will increase depth and sustainability of interventions. Digital delivery methods will be identified to support the scale and comprehensiveness of skills development.

Strategy 2: Market exposure and mentorship: Young people lack the mentors and work experience to be competitive in many markets. They will be provided with practical experience via work-based learning, via learning plots, internships, and apprenticeships. Emphasis is placed on learning while doing. Partnerships will bring training closer to market activity, via engagements with youth and women-led and disabled people's organisations (DPO). Projects will work with government TVETs and youth development centres to ensure market relevance and the balance of technical and practical skills. Company partnerships that will aim to bundle market information and skill development with access to markets and finance support. YEE will also promote peer-to-peer learning, mentoring and networking via its 'youth champions' approach.



Indicator

of young people reporting improvements in (their) empowerment



Opportunities for Youth Employment Tanzania: Peer learning and clustering makes good business

Young people struggle to meet quality and quality requirements in agricultural markets. OYE Tanzania grouped producers in the same value chain, as 'clusters', to help young farmers meet market demand. This allowed almost 5,000 young people to start their own enterprise, access more specialised services and support, and to be more competitive with established competitors. These peer groups learned, developed, and transformed together and translated their economic success into more effective engagement and advocacy in inclusive markets.

Enable (4Cs approach)

Policy and market decisions are more inclusive

Strategy 1: Convened and catalysed public & private sector: Public and private sector actors are not aligned around supporting the needs of young women and men. SNV **convenes** key stakeholder to identify systemic youth-specific constraints in businesses and market associations, in legal and in governance frameworks, and in Technical and Vocational Training providers (TVETs), and amongst Business Development Services (BDS) and skill training providers.

Once identified, evidence is generated with young people to **catalyse** change around strengthened policies and regulations. Specific focus is on operationalisation and coordination challenges at the local and regional level, working primarily through government coordination mechanisms and existing training and extension service systems. At the national level, focus is placed on collaborative, intergenerational dialogues grounded in data and research to tackle systemic challenges in youth employment and entrepreneurship.

Strategy 2: Co-create inclusive solutions and capacitate local actors: Public and private sector actors are not sufficiently incentivized to work together and solve the problems faced by young women and men. Stakeholders will **co-create** profitable win-win solutions with business and supporting government to fulfil their duties to young women and men. Critical partnerships might include business member associations, trade bodies, NGO initiatives, working groups, Chambers of Commerce, and Associations who can partner to make productive changes at the policy, strategy, and implementation levels.

Focused on more equitable partnerships, SNV will **capacitate** local organisations to share knowledge and experience with community leaders, local government, and businesses in the community. Capacity strengthening in business partnerships will emphasize knowledge sharing, shift business norms, and facilitate co-investment in inclusive change process. At the national level, emerging youth-led organisations and youth champions will be provided the (digital) leadership training as well as opportunities to engage in evidence and youth-informed national and market dialogues to co-create inclusive solutions.

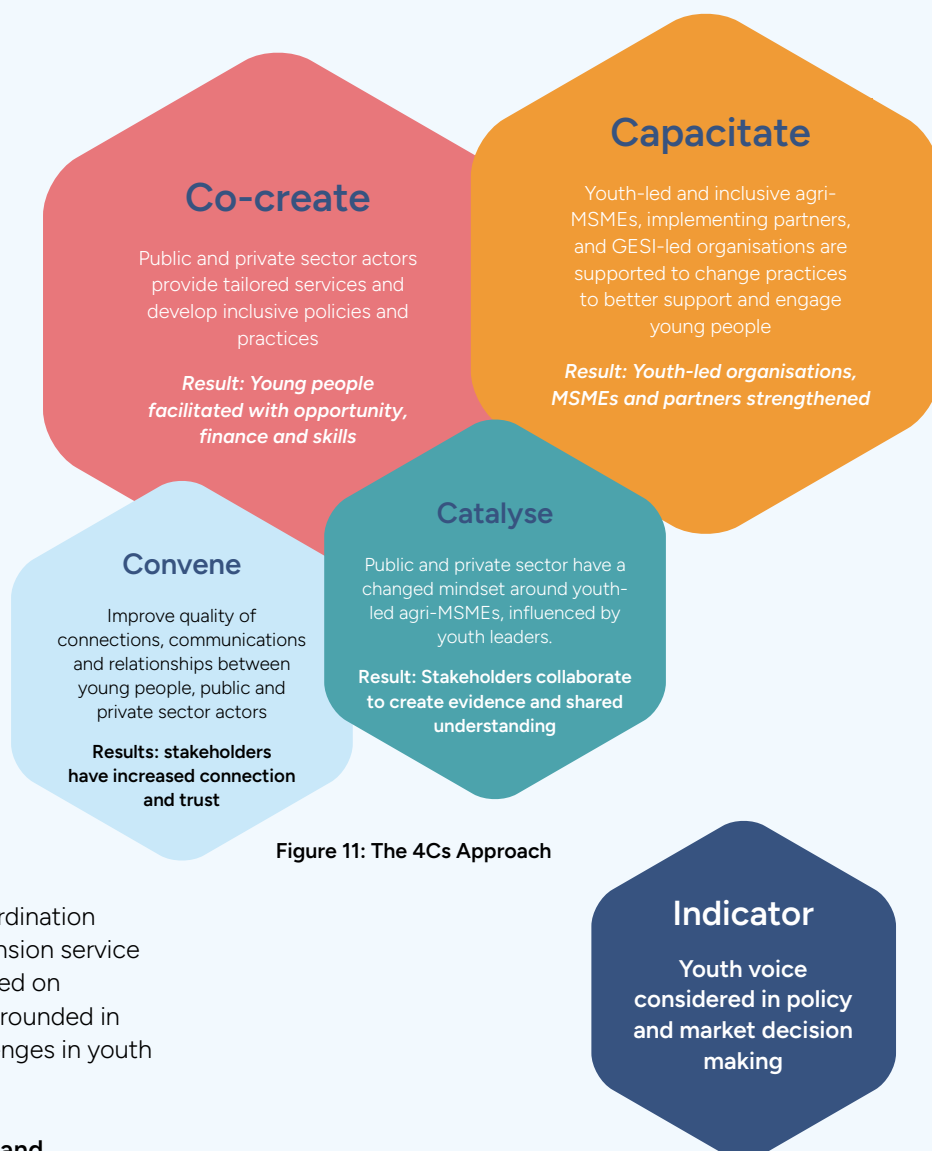


Figure 11: The 4Cs Approach

IYBA-SEED: Building out inclusive regional entrepreneurship ecosystems

SNV leads the Investing in Young Businesses in Africa - Supporting Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development (IYBA-SEED) project in Kenya and Benin. Focused on regional entrepreneurship ecosystems, both projects have identified critical barriers to more inclusive markets. Interventions include strengthening the capacity of local business development in Benin and partnerships with the Micro and Small Enterprises Authority (MSEA) in Kenya.

Facilitating systems transformation: The YEE theory of change (ToC)

The YEE theory of change visualises the changes necessary to address the systematic barriers and root causes of young women's and men's exclusion from jobs and entrepreneurship. The theory of change demonstrates how decent work can be created **with** and **for** young people, from inputs to impact. The ToC presents a holistic and integrated approach that balances the responsibilities of duty holders, represented by the **systems transformation pathway**, with the agency and ambitions of young people, represented by the **youth leadership pathway**.

The **systems transformation pathway** aspires to support duty bearers to change policies, practices, and business models to better include young people.

By increasing their understanding of the needs and aspirations of young people, government, market, and financial sector actors' mindsets and negative perceptions are changed. Key inputs include stakeholder meetings and advocacy events that include youth voice as well as new action research and evidence that substantiates new ways of thinking and working. The result of these interventions is business, government, and financial institutions catalysed to develop partnerships and test new business models that might better engage and include young people. The impact of the learning and experience from these partnerships/business models is sustainable and scalable market-led solutions that systematically create opportunities for skilled and ready young women and men.

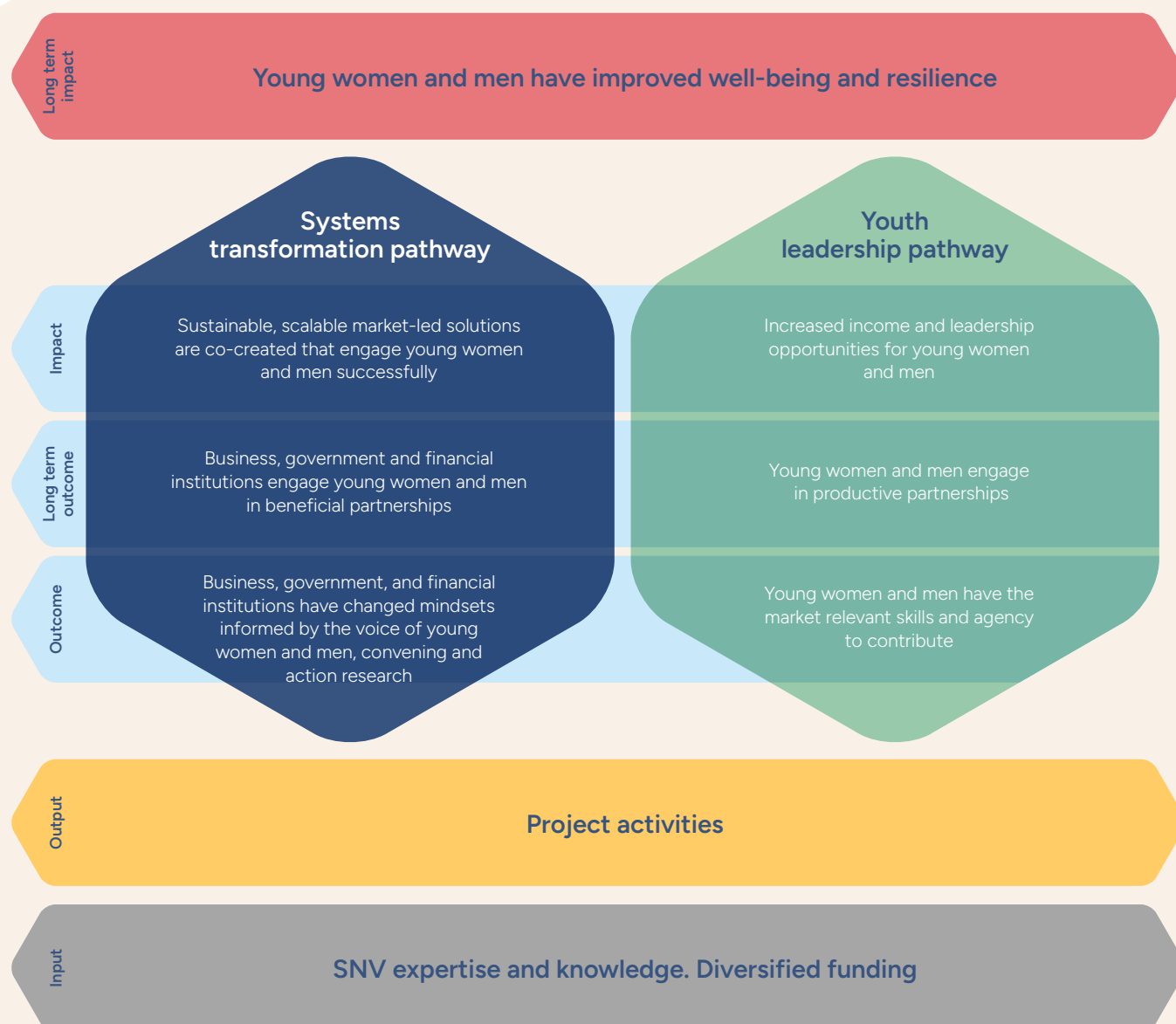


Figure 12: YEE Theory of Change



The **youth leadership pathway**

focuses on facilitating information, support, services, and finance to young people so that they might be able access decent work opportunities. Foundational to this pathway is young people gaining access to the right mix of technical, entrepreneurial, business development, social capital and soft skills and experience necessary for the market. When skilled young people are presented with opportunities via business partnerships and exposure, they are thereafter in a better position to be able to be competitive and to succeed. The impact in this pathway is increased income and leadership opportunities for young women and men.

The long-term impact of YEE is increased well-being and resilience.

This theory of change based approach allows for better aligned learning, monitoring and evaluation as well as varied current and future project design across SNV's sectors (see Annex 1). Depending on the goal, projects can place greater emphasize on the different pathways; with increased focus on either facilitation in the enabling environment or on direct youth-focused interventions. For projects with social or climate goals, project designers are better able to leverage the entrepreneurial and leadership potential of young women and men. For projects focused on advocacy and enabling environment, the greater emphasis on catalysing change and co-creation allows for more focused and impactful market and government engagement. The updated ToC is also more explicit about the role of SNV as an expert and as a partner able to leverage resources to increase opportunities for young people.



Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL): Focused on impact and improvement

SNV will focus on demonstrating impact at both project and portfolio levels. This begins with the agreed output, outcome, and impact indicators defined in the theory of change. These indicators need to be measurable, attainable, and are meaningful for young people. Comparable results and common definitions, defined with support of the Global PME Unit, will therefore be across projects. This will ensure data availability and allow more sophisticated analysis across the portfolio of projects.

A portfolio wide learning agenda will be critical to achieve programme goals, to understand programme successes and failures, to improving adaptive management, and to facilitating sustainability via evidence-based partnerships, advocacy, positioning and influencing. Based on past project experience and aligning with the updated YEE youth engagement approach, three learning questions have been identified to support shared understanding and drive new and improved strategies to better engage and support the ambitions of young women and men:

- What types of interventions and support structures enable meaningful youth engagement in community, market, and policy decision making processes?
- What strategies have proven to be most effective in connecting youth-led MSMEs to markets in the formal and informal sector, and under what conditions do they work best?
- Which entry points in the entrepreneurship ecosystems offer the most leverage for YEE projects and programmes to strengthen coordinated support for youth employment and entrepreneurship?

During the strategy period, implementation experiences and innovations, as well as project and portfolio level evaluation and research will be shared by SNV teams via the youth employment and entrepreneurship community of practice, SNV conferences and events, and project team exchanges. This will result in a better consolidation and application of new learnings, leading to more effective knowledge transfer and adaptive management in existing projects and more impactful interventions in new ones.

SNV will ensure leadership within its teams in learning, while also seeking support by expert researchers in academia and think tanks who will bring in new ideas and additional rigour to these learning processes.

Diversifying finance for the next growth curve

To achieve its intended impact, SNV will need to secure an additional € 250 million in financing. This will need to be raised in a period of flux, given changes in donor plans and priorities. SNV will work to diversify its current portfolio of grant-based projects towards new project financing models.¹⁴ Partnership and business development supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship will have a dual focus. It will work to maintain, grow, and extend existing projects while also seeking to unlock new sources of funds for promising financing modalities. Accessing these new types of finance requires experimentation and the development of new competencies around business partnerships, results-based financing, and technical assistance for youth-led businesses. Key changes will include:

1. **Business-led approaches:** Private sector buy-in and co-funding will increasingly be required to access donor funds. 2SCALE partnered with business champions who coinvested for sustainability and youth inclusion at an agri-business cluster level. Building off market and industry analysis, the YEE team will create offers to domestic and international businesses that support business goals while providing young people jobs.
2. **Focus on Costs and Resulting Impact:** While impact bonds in youth employment are nascent, there will be increased focus on payment for results. GERASOL in Northern Mozambique, for example, brought three solar companies together to co-finance youth inclusion in the solar home system market. Critical to leveraging this funding will be more effective and consistent measurement of costs per outcome and per job based. The YEE team will work on standardising those indicators used in results-based and impact finance like cost per job and increase the focus on improving project efficiency.
3. **Platform for Youth Inclusive Finance and Technical Assistance:** Leveraging its multi-country footprint and learning from SNV's experiences around climate (DFCD) and inclusive business finance (IAP), challenge fund projects will be designed that provide a mix of financial and non-financial support to youth-led businesses. Non-financial support can also be a separate service offering to Challenge/Investment Funds. SNV will also focus on direct technical assistance models, supporting governments or sector initiatives on youth-inclusive market systems or entrepreneurship ecosystem development like in IYBA-SEED.
4. **Address green jobs and climate resilience:** SNV will define project models that primarily focus on climate resilience and adaptation as drivers of employment, working to match ambitious young people with emerging green jobs. GrEEen in Ghana and GoGreen in Mali focused on incubating and accelerating promising youth-led climate businesses and private sector partnerships. This may unlock new resources focused on climate mitigation and adaptation.

SNV should work to scale and expand existing projects with its portfolio of committed funders. It should also focus on new financing flows, facilitated by experimentation with new forms of partnerships, by process and efficiency improvements, and by an increased willingness to leverage SNV's technical expertise.

¹⁴ In 2024, there was an overall drop in ODA of 34.61 billion dollars. Looking forward, major cuts have been announced from France (-10%), Germany (-20%), the US (-83%), the Netherlands (37%) and the UK (40%). Ireland, a new YEE donor in 2024, has announced a 30% increase in 2025.

Organising to achieve results

Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship projects are implemented across SNV's three sectors and constitute one of the largest project portfolios within the organisation. As a result, YEE requires resourcing, continuous coordination with management, sector, theme, and country leadership to ensure growth, alignment and strategy execution. The Global Portfolio Lead for YEE working closely with the GSH Agrifood (and other GSHs) will be the product owner, responsible for setting strategic direction, ensure linkages to Sectors/ Core Themes, and the coordination of other technical experts, project leads, and YEE 'focal points' within Partnerships and Business Development team, Marketing and Communications, Global MEL, and Technical Expertise teams. New suggested roles include a YEE learning advisor to support learning, research agenda, and strategic communications as well as a YEE projects liaison officer to coordinate, align, and support synergies between project teams.

Moving forward *with* and for young people

SNV's Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Global Strategy 2025-2030 aims to create 2.5 million decent jobs for young people across 15 countries. The strategy focuses on transforming systems by harnessing youth capacity and engaging with various stakeholders to facilitate systems transformation. SNV takes youth voice and agency as a guiding principle, supported by more targeted engagement with diverse young entrepreneurs and market actors, and local partnerships that will help facilitate youth economic empowerment and inclusion. Through its updated Access, Match, Grow, and Enable youth engagement approach, SNV will work to ensure jobs for young women and men that are sustainable and meet their needs and ambitions. This will occur via replication of existing projects, the development of new approaches that include emphasis on youth leadership and entrepreneurship, as well as work within SNV to mainstream youth economic inclusion across all future project designs. To do so, SNV will require greater alignment, resourcing and coordination to ensure quality and cost-effectiveness, scale and sustainability, and innovations in project design and delivery. The result will be market-ready young people who can lead, foster more sustainable markets and champion inclusive development



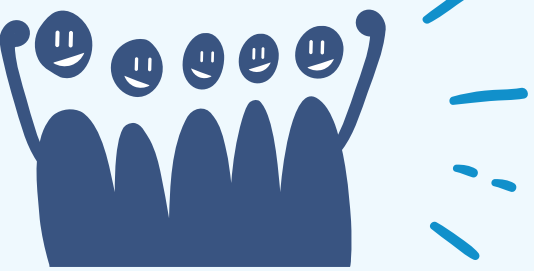
Annex 1: The Access, Match, Grow, and Enable youth engagement strategy

Youth Engagement Strategy

Increased market opportunities for entrepreneurial young women and men.

Young women and men have access to financial products and assets.





Increased income,
leadership, and
well-being

Young women and
men ready to access
(self)employment.

Policy and market
decisions are more
youth inclusive.



Market
exposure and
mentorship



Certified,
market-relevant
training

3 Grow



Co-created
inclusive
solutions



Convened and
catalyzed public
& private sector

4 Enable

Annex 2: Project designs using the SNV YEE theory of change

Intervention Approach	Example Projects	Key Results	Innovation
Dedicated Youth Employment Projects	Realising Aspiration Youth in Ethiopia through Employment (RAYEE)	260,000 rural young people with jobs (71% young women) per 2024, 800,000 by 2030	Supporting services and support in youth and gender responsive value chains
Mainstreaming Youth Employment	2SCALE, Africa's largest agribusiness accelerator, in thirteen African countries	336,138 young smallholder farmers ed and 26,521 new off-farming jobs	Focus on youth inclusion as part of the development of agribusiness clusters
Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development	Investing in Young Businesses in Africa - Supporting Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development (IYBA-SEED) project	Focus on sub-regional entrepreneurship ecosystem development in 8 countries	Long-term, holistic approach to enable countries to build thriving ecosystems of entrepreneurship support organisations
Innovative/Result Based Financing	GERASOL in Mozambique, with 3 private energy companies	2,000 young people employed in renewable energy sector	Aligning co-financing in company partnerships for a skilled youth workforce
Youth and Climate	Boosting Green Employment and Enterprise Opportunities in Ghana	5,000 young entrepreneurs supported and partnerships with MSMEs	Incubating and accelerating youth-led green and sustainable business models
Leadership and Governance	Académie pour le leadership Féminin dans la gouvernance locale (Mali)	19,000 young leaders	Creating greater alignment and partnership between young women and men, government, and local leadership
Youth Employment and Trade	Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship- Amplifying Enterprises and Trade (YEE-AET) project (Zambia and Zimbabwe)	23,000 young people (projected)	Focus on opportunities for young people to participate in and benefit from international trade
Youth Employment and Resilience	Youth Employment for Food Security Improvement (EJASA) in Benin	12,500 young women and men	Linking youth employment and entrepreneurship to youth voice and increases in resilience/food security







Impact
that matters



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