



THE  
CoELIB  
PROJECT  
REPORT

2022/23

FISCAL YEAR



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AAP	Alliance for African Partnerships
AASD	African Academy of Skills Development
AGPO	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities
AGYW	Adolescent Girls and Young Women
ANDY	Action Network for the Disabled
BCC	Behavioural Change Communication
CBF	County Bunge Forum
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CLA	Collaboration, Learning, and Adapting
CLT	County Liaison Teams
EGU	Egerton University
EMMP	Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FY	Fiscal Year
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GPS	Global Positioning System
HCD	Human-Centred Design
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HTC	High-Touch County
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IR	Intermediate Result
KeNHA	Kenya National Highways Authority
KIST	Kiambu Institute of Science and Technology
KYEOP	Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunities Project
KSBDC	Kenya Small Business Development Centre
LOTW	Light for the World
LMA	Labor Market Assessment
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MFIs	Microfinance Institutions
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
MSU	Michigan State University
NCBA CLUSA	National Cooperative Business Association Cooperative League of the United States of America
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	National Polytechnic
NYBA	National Youth Bunge Association
OCS	Office of Career Services
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
REDCap	Research Electronic Data Capture
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization
TOT	Trainer of Trainers
TTI	Technical Training Institute
TVC	Technical Vocational College
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIU-A	United States International University - Africa
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
YDF	Youth Development Fund
YSO	Youth-Serving Organization

# ABBREVIATIONS

# INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes key CoELIB activities and accomplishments during the 2022/23 FY ending June 2023. During the reporting period, CoELIB (the project) continued to strengthen the capacity of individuals and institutions in agricultural innovation, youth leadership and development, and business in Eastern, Southern and Western Africa. CoELIB has expanded its scope and redefined itself as a centre with a growing mandate to support all sectors of the economy. With partners across Africa, Europe, the USA, and Asia, the project provides a platform for young leaders in agriculture, innovation, and business to enhance their skills and contribute to sustainable development in the region and beyond.

CoELIB recognizes the importance of youth engagement in development to foster innovation and drive business-oriented actions for inclusive socio-economic development. This realization continues shaping CoELIB's interventions and collaboration with other partners to promote inclusive youth development. Over the 2022/23 Fiscal Year, CoELIB's interventions were shaped by three main objectives, which were implemented in collaboration with partners with a specif-

ic interest in youth development within the framework of USAID Empowered Youth. The objectives were:

1. Increase Youth Economic Prospects
2. Build Kenyan Higher Education Institution's Capacity
3. Strengthen Youth-Serving Systems
4. Promote Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) (crosscutting)
5. Develop Private Sector Engagement (crosscutting)

Activities targeting youths aged 18-24 years old and adolescent girls ages 15-19 years were implemented by EGU (CoELIB), MSU, USIU-A, NCBA CLUSA, and the NYBA, among other local private sector public organizations and agencies. The cluster of high- and low-touch counties that the activities reached include:

- Isiolo (Garissa, Marsabit, Samburu, Mandera)
- Kakamega (Bungoma, Turkana, West Pokot)
- Kisumu (Homabay, Kisii, Busia)
- Nakuru (Uasin Gishu, Nyeri)
- Kiambu (Nairobi, Kitui, Kajiado, Meru)
- Mombasa (Kwale, Makueni, Taita Taveta, Machakos)

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**CoELIB conducted co-creation meetings with county government representatives, private sector actors, higher education stakeholders, and young community members in the HTC of Nakuru, Kakamega, Isiolo, Kisumu and Kiambu. The objectives of these meetings were: 1) to introduce the programmatic activities to new county leadership, 2) to share programmatic objectives, achievements, present work, and aspirations for the future, 3) to reaffirm areas of convergence for co-ownership, co-management, and joint contributions as per the results of the county-specific labour market and landscape assessments, and 4) to develop shared work plans and agree on cost-sharing and offerings of other resources, including facilities needed to implement programmatic activities.**

In these workshops, CoELIB designed collective strategies and budgets for the FY to encourage co-implementation and commitment by core stakeholders to uptake programming as part of county activities. The exercise started in Kisumu County in the first week of November and concluded in Mombasa County on the 15th of December, 2022. A core difference that emerged from co-creation workshops held in Year 2, from the previous year, was the extensive participation and input from senior-level county officials, leadership of TVETs, private sector representatives, and youth groups. More notable was the private sector's high level of engagement and contribution compared to the first co-creation workshops held in 2021. County governments recognized the private sector's role and regulatory leverage at their disposal to harness youth skilling and employment. Strengthening linkages among key actors in USAID Empowered Youth's quadruple helix model (comprised of national and county government representatives, higher education institutions, the private sector, and youth-serving systems), from planning to budgeting and execution, is a valuable asset to the team and one of the project's success factors.

The Isiolo County Government, National Government, TVETs, youth, and civil society actors

involved in co-creation committed to working closely with the project to ensure that at least 70% of jobs needed to construct a key road in the county are set aside for local youth. Following these discussions, TVETs in the county committed to responding to skill needs and preparing local youth for these anticipated opportunities. The KeNHA and the China Road Engineering Construction Company were engaged to explore collaborations that will ensure youth inclusion during road construction.

Over the period, CoELIB continued to provide entrepreneurship and soft skills training to youth in the HTCs while implementing the AGYW case management pilot in Kisumu County. CoELIB also shifted attitudes and perceptions towards TVETs by creating behaviour change messages and offering guidance to TVET staff, highlighting the beneficial qualities of vocational education while reducing negative stigma. Additionally, CoELIB identified eligible youth for practical skills development in various sectors needed to pursue economic opportunities. 6,162 youth (3,364 females, 2,798 males) were trained in entrepreneurship, life skills, leadership, and governance across the six high-touch counties.

Contextualized career centres were operationalized in TVETs to increase youth employability and ease graduates' transition into the job market. Over the reporting period, activities at the career centres were vibrant, with career preparedness training taking place across the HTC. Moreover, most of the career centres moved forward in adopting the creation of career committees to cultivate greater knowledge sharing. Results from creating these centres included the upskilling of 13 committee members at Shamberere TTI on the operationalization of career services. Sigalagala NP also selected Student Career Ambassadors to assist in cascading career services to the vast student population. Work readiness training and follow-up for beneficiaries and employers continued to ensure that youth were adequately equipped with skills and linked to opportunities for growth. As a result, 1,817 youth (955 females, 862 males) were reached through employment preparedness training.

Additionally, CoELIB supported TVETs to develop short courses and content for different delivery mechanisms while building their capacity to network and create partnerships with the private sector and industry players. For instance, Miramar TVET (Kiambu County) developed a four-week skilling program for painters, tillers, and finishers/stucco/plasterers aligned to the construction sector, which was identified as a high-growth area in the county. Further, other institutions have been able to develop short courses informed by the results from an LMA conducted in June 2022. YMCA (Kisumu County) developed short courses in plumbing and baking and intends to extend training to AGYWs in the case management pilot and link them to the job market.

CoELIB continued facilitating partnerships between HEIs and the private sector. Collaboration between Crown Paints and Buxton Point with select TVETs in Nakuru and Mombasa County offered new pathways for employment and targeted skills training. The partnership is expected to continue to leverage job opportunities in construction, promoting painting as a skill with a particular focus on women and promoting innovations by young people through TVETs.

The project also leveraged co-creation meetings to launch its Quadruple Helix Stakeholder Information Dissemination and Sharing Expo, which brought together academia, communities (including the youth), the private sector, and governments to share programming success

and intervention design for collaborative implementation. These engagements resulted in the job placement of 190 youth (89 females, 101 males).

The LMA identified high-potential sectors for employment-guided partnership and engagement activities. CoELIB facilitated the signing of six partnership MOUs. Kiambu, Kisumu, and Kakamega County Governments supported private sector mobilization in attending stakeholder roundtable events, with over 50 employers participating and committing approximately 10,000 potential direct and indirect job opportunities for youths.

CoELIB also encouraged county administrations in all HTCs to assume leadership in contacting the private sector for youth skilling and employment. For example, in Kisumu County, the Director of Tourism was asked, along with his team, to conduct private sector outreach for greater engagement. In turn, the private sector was able to attend critical conversations and voice their concerns regarding the quality of graduates emerging from TVETs and the necessary policy and investment interventions needed to address identified gaps. These important multi-stakeholder conversations are projected to continue beyond the project's life.

CoELIB continued implementing other key activities, including offering leadership and governance training for youth-serving organizations, providing capacity assessments, and developing action plans for the year. The project also mapped and engaged private sector players, donor-funded programs, civil society organizations, and national and county governments to direct resources to support youth involvement.

- **6,162 youth (3,364 females, 2,798 males) trained**
- **10,000 potential direct and indirect job opportunities for youths identified**
- **190 youth (89 females, 101 males) placed in jobs**

## Progress (Qualitative Impact)

### Objective 1: Increase Youth Economic Prospects

CoELIB continued to provide entrepreneurship and soft skills training to youth in all six high-touch counties and AGYWs in Kisumu. The project mobilized young people for these purposes and developed a concept note for an agribusiness training program. Additionally, the project worked to change mindsets and perceptions towards TVETs by training staff and creating behaviour-change messages. These messages were disseminated through various communication mediums, including radio, reaching a broad audience.

The project also identified young people across the HTC for practical agriculture, electrical, and woodworking internships. It also provided entrepreneurship, life skills, and well-being-talent sports training with county youth forums for enhanced welfare. CoELIB also sensitized youth on AGPO to enable them to capitalize on government funding opportunities for start-up and business expansion.

### Objective 2: Build Kenyan Higher Education Institution's Capacity

HEIs continued providing career advisory services aligned with high-potential employment pathways. All collaborating HEIs have dedicated career centres and appointed advisors to lead centre functions. Mabati TTI employed a full-time career advisor in Mombasa County, working closely with the career advisory committee to organize career readiness activities. Further, employment preparedness training has been conducted for youth across HEIs in all HTCs through the career centres. For instance, in Kakamega County, the career centre established by Sigalagala NP identified volunteer student career ambassadors to support outreach and engage a more significant proportion of the student population. In addition, the project worked with Joy Farm and Gilani's Supermarket in Nakuru County to give career talks to students during a career training at the Rift Valley Institute of Science and Technology, organized by their career centre.

The project also supported TVETs to develop short courses and content for different delivery mechanisms while building their capacity to network and create partnerships with local industry players. For instance, Miramar TVET (Kiambu County) developed a four-week con-

struction skilling program for painters, fillers, and finishers/stucco/plasterers. Nyaga and Mangu VTCs developed six short courses in baking, closed circuit television installation, wiring, hairdressing, mechanics, and plumbing. Other institutions continue to develop short courses informed by the LMA and knowledge gained from the Evidence-Informed Youth Employability Programming training offered at USIU-A in July 2022. YMCA (Kisumu County) has developed two courses in plumbing and baking and will extend the training to AGYWs with a connection to the job market.

During the reporting period, CoELIB continued to fortify partnerships between HEIs and the private sector. Partnership meetings were conducted in Kiambu County with Tatu City-Unity Homes, the Elysian Hotel, the Bracken Hurst Resort, Mums' Hotel, Franky's Foundation, and the Sasini Tea Factory to establish available employment opportunities for the youth. Specifically, Unity Homes upskilled youth in skimming/painting and tiling. These youths will later be onboarded for employment. Finsco Africa also partnered with KIST for jobs to youth in sales and marketing. The outcome of this partnership yielded 55 youths (30 females, 25 males) being placed in employment. Franky's Foundation also offered 15 skilling and employment opportunities in ICT.

In Kakamega County, the CoELIB co-facilitated partnership discussions among HEIs and five private sector players (i.e., CIC Insurance, the One Acre Fund, Express Plumbers, Labedcash Marine Enterprises, and Shees and Dees Salon and Barber Shop) to align training with youth employment in economic sectors identified by the LMA. The capacity of 13 trainers at Shamberere TTI was also built to operationalize career services and enhance career development. 44 youths at Sigalagala NP were selected as student career ambassadors and trained to support career centre activities and catalyse fellow trainees' activities.

### Objective 3: Strengthen Youth-Serving Systems

Strengthening youth-serving systems remained a critical area of focus throughout the fiscal year. Key initiatives carried out during this period include (I) The mapping and engagement of the private sector and donor-funded programs to identify opportunities for youth empowerment and enhance synergy and resource leveraging to enable youth access to employment and

other support services; (2) Hosting reflection and learning workshops with the youth, the private sector, and national and county governments to engage stakeholders in prioritizing youth-focused activities; (3) Convening multi-stakeholders forums to share existing youth skilling and employment opportunities, and; (4) conducting YSO capacity building activities by carrying out capacity assessment and leadership and governance training. Finally, the project supported the formation of the Isiolo County Youth Network by constituting youth from ten wards of Isiolo County to appoint delegates. The delegates registered the network with the county government and now operate as a legal entity.

## Progress (Quantitative Impact)

During the reporting period, the project achieved the following quantitative outcomes:

- 6,162 youth (3,364 females, 2,798 males) trained in entrepreneurship, life skills, and leadership and governance across the HTC
- 234 youth (167 females, 67 males) trained in leadership and governance in Kisumu, Nakuru, and Mombasa Counties
- 32 youth groups trained in leadership and governance across the HTC
- 44 TOTs trained in entrepreneurship and financial literacy skills in the HTC
- 1,469 youth (717 females, 752 males) trained in career preparedness in Nakuru, Kakamega, Kiambu, Mombasa, and Isiolo Counties
- 79 youths (34 females, 45 males) placed into employment opportunities at Unity Homes Developers and Finsco Consulting in Kiambu County
- 190 youth (89 females, 101 males) placed into internships and attachments across the HTC



Youth Entrepreneur at her Business in Nakuru



# 2. PROGRESS AND KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## Activity Progress (Qualitative Impact)

### OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASE YOUTH ECONOMIC PROSPECTS

#### 1.1 Assessment of Youth Dynamics and Economic Opportunities

During the FY 2022/23, CoELIB conducted co-creation meetings with county government representatives, private sector stakeholders, higher education staff, and youth actors in the HTC within the framework of USAID Empowered Youth. These meetings aimed to inform the counties of the program's mission and purpose, progress to date, vision for the future, and potential areas of convergence to advance youth empowerment. The meetings also allowed for validating findings from the LMA conducted in July 2022. CoELIB and participants developed joint work plans to implement activities that would ensure the sustainability and long-term impact of the project.

#### 1.2 Train and Place Youth in Youth-Friendly Sectors with Economic Opportunities

##### *Mobilize and Recruit Trainers*

ToT Training - Selection of Trainers at the Ward Level in Six High-Touch Counties  
CoELIB used multiple entry points to recruit participants as trainers to ensure adequate representation and participation of vulnerable youth while ensuring equity and inclusion. Selecting trainers that resided in each ward allowed for greater opportunity to capacitate and involve youth who may otherwise be unreachable or overlooked, enhanced leadership and mentorship skills for youth, and allowed for heightened sustainability and cascaded knowledge sharing following standard training periods. The project recruited and trained 44 TOTs in entrepreneur-

ship and financial literacy during the reporting period. The TOTs also undertook a refresher course to ensure they delivered high-quality training to the youth.

##### *Entrepreneurship Training-Youth Training (Community and TVETs)*

Entrepreneurship training continued in the HTCs using a hybrid and community model at local and accessible venues and TVETs. The training program encompassed nine modules, including an introduction to entrepreneurship, product development, business model development, market development and strategies, finance and business sustainability, business administration, best practices for building a team, AGPO, and pitching to investors. Participants were also informed about group formation and how to access funding from various sources, such as Uwezo, YEF, WEF, and NGAAF, for business start-ups, expansion, and other available government opportunities. Training was also provided through CoELIB Radio (<http://radio.coelib.org/>). 4,459 youth (2,480 females, 1,979 males) were reached.

##### *Connect Youth to Skill Training through Internship, Apprenticeship, and Mentorship*

The project upscaled youth internship and apprenticeship placement in identified high-potential sectors across the HTCs. This intervention was successfully conducted with higher education institutions and the private sector. CoELIB identified 28 youth in Nakuru County for internship in the agriculture, electrical, and woodwork sectors for placement for hands-on training in the agriculture sector at Lishe Demo Farm, Happy Cow Company, Riva Agrovet, and Career Directions Limited. Some have also been prepared to join Plotus Technology in Njoro for electrical and woodworking apprenticeships.

AASD continued to target youth enrolled in TVETs, those outside the formal education system, and those considered vulnerable. Over the reporting period, AASD identified and trained 25 youth for work readiness training in Nakuru County from Nakuru Town West, Nakuru Town East, Rongai, and Njoro Sub-counties.

#### ***Well-Being Talent Sports Program with County Youth Forums and County Youth Support***

Over the FY, youth were identified to participate in the Well-Being Talent Sports Program in Nakuru, Mombasa, and Kisumu Counties. In Nakuru County, CoELIB held discussions with Nakuru City Stars. The project also engaged with Midrift Hurinet under the purview of the GAME program, which focuses on using street sports, arts, and culture as tools for conflict mediation and social cohesion.

#### ***Provide Life Skills, Leadership, and Livelihoods Training***

The project trained 1,469 youth (717 females, 752 males) in life skills to support the integration of youth as economic contributors in society and help them develop the necessary life skills to thrive in their communities and at work.

### **1.3 Increase Access to Entrepreneurial and Business Start-up or Expansion Training Incubating and Accelerating Youth-led Start-ups**

Three youths in Nakuru County who had benefited from entrepreneurship training developed feasible business ideas suitable for incubation and further mentorship. These ideas included "A Plus Achievers" - a mobile app for disseminating practical curriculum; "G-Connect" - a mobile app for improving service delivery within the hotel industry; and "Muhogo Premium" - a value addition approach to cassava as an alternative to maize and wheat flour. CoELIB Incubar assisted these youth in writing proposals and built their capacities in resource mobilization by helping them apply for the Association of Countrywide Innovation Hubs (ACIH) South Rift Valley Innovation Week Hackathon, which offered a grand prize of \$3,000.

Additionally, the project continued to support the incubation of Avodeli Daily Limited - a budding enterprise specializing in avocado value addition for products such as "avo mayonnaise", "avo extra virgin oil", "avo smoothies", "avo spread", "avo face scrub", and "avo organic tea bags". These products use every part of the avocado, including the pit, to create a sustainable and unique product line. Building

on activities reported earlier, the project continued to support Avodeli Daily Limited's growth by providing training and support to its young members to help the company succeed.

### **1.4 Enhance Financial Institutions' Provision of Youth-serving Products and Services**

**Strengthen Strategic Partnerships and Linkages**  
The project continued supporting the systematic connection of youth to financial services through strategic partnerships with formal and non-bank financial institutions that provided financial literacy education to facilitate access to capital. As a result, 102 youth (59 female, 43 male) were trained in financial literacy in Kiambu and Nakuru Counties. Emphasis was placed on the outreach of girls, young women, and those with disabilities for greater inclusion in these trainings.

#### ***Integrate AGPO Sensitization Information into Relevant Training***

In addition to various training programs and incubation initiatives, the project continued sensitizing youth about AGPO by collaborating with government representatives from AGPO, the Uwezo Fund, WEF, and YDF to ensure that youth are aware and apply for government funding opportunities.

### **1.5 Establish and Expand Youth-Run Businesses**

#### ***Expand Youth Employment through Agribusiness Development Support***

During the reporting period, the project developed a concept for an agribusiness program that would enable youth to access opportunities in agricultural value chains identified by the landscape analysis and labour market assessments; this will strengthen and expand training for specific agricultural value chains developed under current and previous youth empowerment activities by tailoring them to the current market and employer needs. The program participated in the launch of the Kisumu County Agribusiness Strategy. County teams committed to collaborating to train youth in agribusiness to enable greater access to opportunities in agricultural value chains and tailor and expand training for specific agricultural value chains developed under current and previous youth empowerment activities.



Case Managers During Case Management Training in Kisumu County

### **Case Management Support Services**

The project continued implementing the Empowered Girls Case Management pilot, bringing together AGYWs to overcome vulnerabilities and reduce societal barriers often hindering female advancement. The pilot involved developing case plans with young participants and their families, which identified both household and individual needs. The case plans guided referral pathways for strengthened support and were updated routinely to adapt to arising needs for AGYWs and their households. Case Managers also offered monitoring and service check-ins, including through household visits.

### **AGYW Enrollment to TVETs**

83 AGYWs were enrolled in local TVETs for various courses, including ICT and hospitality management. From preliminary reports, the household heads and AGYWs who joined TVETs concurred that a household member joining a TVET gave them hope. The girls cited enrollment as a dream come true. Household interviews, AGYW focus group discussions, and surveys positively rate programmatic efforts due to the resul-

tant transformation experienced and shared by the girls.

### **Curriculum Delivery to Adolescent Girls and Young Women**

The pilot participants gained comprehensive, age-specific training on various topics differing slightly from that provided to other beneficiaries. Topics include life skills, well-being, agency, and positive affirmation. The training was conducted weekly at the ward level. Upon completion, each participant was issued a certificate.

### **Case Managers Capacity Enhancement**

Case Managers have undergone periodic capacity building during the reporting period to strengthen AGYW mentorship adequately. Capacity-building efforts were targeted at sharpening case management skills in case plan development, referral pathways, and general case management support services. As a result of these activities, Case Managers have developed enhanced skills in sensitivity to gender equity and social inclusion.

## Referral Services

The Empowered Girls program participants continued to receive individualized referral services per the needs identified in their case plans. Common services include psychosocial, sexual reproductive health, and mental health support. Some referral services have been offered to participants collectively, if appropriate, such as training on sexual reproductive health and economic empowerment.

To enhance greater economic participation for those who have expressed interest, case managers, working closely with county bunge forums and, with support from the Kisumu County Government, have connected participants to existing opportunities that can be leveraged to bolster income generation. For example, AGYWs whose needs were identified as wage employment are awaiting placement within the private sector. Equally, those whose needs were determined based on training and skills acquisition have been identified and are awaiting placement in HEIs to undertake specialized short courses. Given the high rates of gender-based violence in the area, safe houses that can offer refuge when the need arises have also been identified.

Identifying referral services and organizations is an ongoing exercise to ensure all participants are comprehensively supported. CoELIB will continue to strengthen the capacity of Case Managers to this end. The table below summarizes the organizations participants have engaged with and the services they offer.

### Referral Organizations

Organization	Services Offered
TINADA	Psychosocial support for teen mothers
Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW)	Sexual reproductive health
Homeless of Kisumu	Psychosocial support, soft skills, and sports for development
Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)	Access to Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
Make Me Smile	VSLA training
Nyalunya Health Centre	Program for young women (breastfeeding mothers and mentor mothers' groups)
Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS)	Referrals for in-school girls
Postbank	Opening of group and individual bank accounts
KSBDC	Financial literacy and linkages to financial institutions for participants and households
Akado VTC	Career counselling, guidance, and short courses
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)	Career counselling, guidance, and short courses
Rotary Vocational Training Centre	Career counselling, guidance, and short courses
The Kisumu National Polytechnic	Career counselling, guidance, and short courses

### Safe Houses

Safe House	Location
Women Concern Centre	Nyalenda
Kisumu Medical and Education Trust (KMET)	Kisumu Central
Nyanza Initiative for Girls Education and Empowerment (NIGEE)	Ogango
Champions of Peace	Seme

## OBJECTIVE 2: BUILD KENYAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIs) CAPACITY

### 2.1 Strengthen the Capacity of HEIs to Innovate, Test, and Build Evidence to Inform Decision-making, Adapt to Shifting Contexts, and Scale Youth Programs

#### *Co-create Approaches and Solutions: Define Scope and Develop an Implementation Framework for an HEI Steering and Coordinating Committee (SACC)*

During the reporting period, CoELIB convened a private sector roundtable to identify opportunities for innovation and improvement in training to enhance youth employability in Kakamega, Kisumu and Kiambu County.ies

#### *Build the Capacity of Training Institutions to Develop Campaign Messages/Videos Aimed at Changing the Societal Perception of Vocational Education (Reducing the Stigma of Vocational Education and Blue-Collar Vocations)*

The project continued to upscale the dissemination of behavioural change communication within TVETs through career centres and with the support of the career advisors stationed across these institutions. Such messaging addressed the importance of technical vocations in creating employment. Career guidance services also informed youth of the lucrative employment opportunities within blue-collar vocations in LMA-informed industries.

BCC messaging on the benefits of blue-collar career opportunities was also disseminated to youths within various TVETs through CoELIB Radio. More campaign approaches continue to be implemented per CoELIB's BCC Strategy. This strategy follows the Pathways Framework, which states that for an individual (the youth) to take action, communication must address barriers in the socio-political, service-delivery, community, and individual domains. Once these are addressed, and the right environment is created, the desired attitude and behaviour change will likely follow. The strategy uses multimedia approaches to ensure youth and communities develop and maintain positive perceptions. Although radio was found to be an essential medium through this process, TVETs engaged were also encouraged to use other methodologies to trigger behaviour change based on available resources.

#### *Identification of TVETs that Offer Courses and*

#### *Skills Development in High Potential Sectors, as per the LMA*

CoELIB examined partnerships and areas for further expansion within HEIs. The project mapped which institutions may be fit or have the potential to offer short, demand-driven courses aligned to the LMA. Capacitating institutions to provide market-driven training for soon-to-be graduates is a key intervention the project emphasized. This model strategically works with two public TVETs in each county to ensure such interventions yield impact.

#### *Career Development Training in HEIs*

Significant progress in career development training emerged from a workshop held in September 2022, guiding HEIs to establish contextualized career centres to increase youth employability and transition into the job market. Notably, all HEIs the project partners with have functional career centres with career development advisors. Over the period, CoELIB branded these career centres in Kisumu, Isiolo, and Kiambu Counties for visibility of the advisory services offered.

Over the period, Mabati TTI, Mtongwe VTC, and the Christian Industrial Training Centre (CITC) conducted career readiness and life skills training sessions. Monthly reviews with career advisors revealed a need for career centres to develop standard operating procedures for the sustainability of these facilities. One major success can be found with Mabati TTI, which employed a full-time career advisor to support activities in the institution's career centre.



**Students Branding a Career Centre in Kisumu**



Trainees at Mabatiti TTI during a Goal-Setting Session

In Mombasa County, 422 youth were trained in career preparedness (career advisory and counselling and soft skills training) through the career centres at the TVETs. Such training offered an introduction to career counselling, tools and methods for developing individual profiles and vocational paths, strategies for career planning, job search practices and application techniques, and job interviewing skills—the training equipped youth in self-awareness, communication, and decision-making in their respective fields.

Career ambassadors were identified at Sigalagala National Polytechnic to cascade career services to over 6,000 students. These career ambassadors are drawn from nine departments aligned with the county's high-potential sectors and provided training to enable them to disseminate the knowledge. The career ambassador model is projected to encourage youth to work closely with departmental heads, who constitute the career centre committee.

CoELIB also supported facilitating a two-day training of 13 committee members in operationalizing the career centre at Shamberere TTI. This training included the dissemination of LMA findings for Kakamega County, its relevance to the career centre, principles that guide career services, gender dynamics in career choice, and ways to effectuate a career office (i.e., in-bound and out-bound services and tools, and methods for developing a student profile). The training ended with discussions on the next steps and an action plan to incorporate a calendar of activities for the career centre in the next term.

*"I am glad we have been facilitated to provide this training to the students. It has given them a chance to understand better the perspective of recruiters, which was lacking. Before, we would release the graduates into the job market without such training on career preparedness. This led to missing jobs in the first place or easily losing the ones they managed to get. I have trained 40 students so far and will be preparing to train many more in preparation to link them with the opportunities in the job market"*  
**Sarah Muchiri, Career Instructor, Njoro VTC**

## 2.2 Train Select HEI Staff on How to Identify Opportunities for Curricula Enhancement, Review, Design, and Delivery of Competence-Based Curricula for Identified High-Growth Sectors, and Train Select TVET Staff on How to Develop Content for Blended Learning

CoELIB co-developed a “Competency-based Curriculum Development Manual” to support curricula enhancement, review, design, and delivery. The manual will take instructors through practical-based, sector-specific training on developing and implementing these resources. They will then apply this knowledge to train their students and place them within high-yielding identified industry sectors.

### *Support TVETs to Develop Workforce Development Short Courses in High Potential Sectors Identified during the LMA*

During the FY, CoELIB supported TVETs to develop short courses and content for different delivery mechanisms while building their capacity to network and create a partnership with the private sector.

#### Short Courses Offered by County TVETs

#	Entity	Institution	Short Course Developed
1	TVET	Miramar	Painting, tiling, finishing/stucco/plastering
2	NTI	YMCA	Plumbing and baking
3	VTC	Nyagah	Installation, wiring, hairdressing, mechanics, plumbing, baking
4	VTC	Merti	Beauty and cosmetology

#### 2.2.1 Build Capacity in HCD across HEIs

County Liaison Officers across the high-touch counties were trained as TOTs on the principles of HCD. Acquired skills were incorporated at the county level through project activities, including training sessions at various partner HEI locations.

#### 2.2.2 Establish Self-Sustaining Partnerships between and among Kenyan HEIs and MSU to Strengthen the Capacity of Kenyan HEIs to Provide Relevant Workforce Development and Training

The project continued to develop new program partnerships with African HEI partners and MSU, aligned with priority areas while building upon existing EGU, USIU-A, and MSU high-impact outreach programs to strengthen outreach and the engagement capacity of polytechnics, TVETs, and VTCs. This long-term collaboration leverages existing relationships within the Alliance for African Partnership (AAP), which will continue to support partnerships among these institutions into the future and utilize networks across the 12-member consortium to scale innovations.

MSU continued to share resources, knowledge, and expertise on youth empowerment, evidence-based programming, research, and higher education capacity building gleaned from MSU’s extensive global programs. Several initiatives, such as faculty mentorship, joint research, and public dialogues, are already taking place through AAP. Recently, AAP held the

‘Youth Entrepreneurship: Universities and Youth in Conversations’ public dialogue where discussions around ‘Exploring Africa’s Entrepreneurship Ecosystem’ were shared among stakeholders from EGU (Kenya), MSU, and Botswana.

Furthermore, two faculty from Egerton University received “Transforming Institutions Strategic Funding,” which will seed institutional transformation projects supporting AAP members and partners to participate in sustainable, equitable, and research-driven collaborations that transform lives.

#### 2.3 Establish Partnerships between HEIs and the Private Sector to Increase Training Relevance and Quality and Improve Practical Training: Internships, Apprenticeships, and Workplace Programs

Capacity development of TVETs in networking with the private sector was an ongoing process over the reporting period. This form of upskilling increased training relevance and quality through workplace programs for TVET instructors. In this model, trainers were attached to the industry for refresher training on the current trends and technologies used within high-growth sectors. Trainers then returned to the TVETs to disseminate this information to their students, who would later join the industry for practice and placement.

Over Quarters One and Two, CoELIB strengthened partnerships between HEIs and the private sector (e.g., Crown Paints and Buxton Point with select TVETs in Nakuru and Mombasa Counties). Such alliances were encouraged to leverage job opportunities in the industry, promote male-dominated roles, such as painting, as a skill focusing on women, and inspire innovations by young people through TVETs. Leveraging various partnership efforts, 25 youth were attached at Tatu City for upskilling in skimming and tiling, translating to jobs after the training. In addition, ten youths at Mum's Hotel (Kiambu County) were placed into internships. The project also attached four youths with skills in automotive repair to the Kiambu Garage and negotiated for stipends based on daily provided services. CoELIB also managed to link six youths to attachment opportunities at Waffles Suites in Nakuru County.

Through a partnership with the Export Processing Zone Authority (**EPZA**) in Mombasa County, the project could also hold meetings with different EPZs to explore opportunities for youth and potential partnerships. The EPZs visited included Ashton Apparel, Mainland EPZ, Afriwear, Soko EPZ, and Simba Apparel. Ashton Apparel, Mainland EPZ, and Afriwear expressed interest in accommodating institutional field visits and establishing MOUs with local TVETs. Afriwear additionally indicated they anticipate expanding their facility in April to create opportunities for 3,000 employees. To further this idea, preliminary meetings were held with the head of the Department of Tailoring and Textiles at the Kenya Coast National Polytechnic. The meeting aimed to develop a plan for field visits at Ashton Apparel and Afriwear to mobilize youth to pursue opportunities. Apart from these efforts, the project managed to link four attachés in the engineering department with Umoja Rubber.

## **2.4 Establish Partnerships between HEIs and Public Sector Actors such as National and County Governments to Better Connect Youth to Essential Services and Opportunities**

### *Build Bridges with HEIs and the Public Sector: Convenings for Knowledge Sharing*

During the reporting period, CoELIB leveraged co-creation meetings to launch its Quadruple Helix Stakeholder Information Dissemination and Sharing Expo, which brought together academia, communities (including the youth), the private sector, and governments to share programming success and intervention design for collaborative implementation. These discussions resulted from the willingness of the Kenya Coast

National Polytechnic (Mombasa County) to partner with local TVETs to certify short courses.

## **OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHEN YOUTH-SERVING SYSTEMS**

### **3.1 Public and Private Sector Partnerships Established and Institutionalized Youth Networks in Counties and Regions to Enhance Opportunities for Youth**

#### *Development of Public-Private Sector Partnerships*

The project engaged private sector partners in the HTC to solicit support and opportunities that promote youth skill development and employability. In Kisumu County, the project supported discussions with Pamoja CBO. It brought together civil society, national and county government, and other development partners to discuss the inclusion of youth issues in the third-generation County CIDP. Other activities included launching the County Agribusiness Strategy facilitated by the county government in collaboration with GIZ Agri Jobs 4 Youth, USAID KSBDC, the Food and Agriculture Organization, and Youth Alive Kenya. In Mombasa County, CoELIB supported a partnership consultative meeting and site visits with Mainland Manufacturers EPZ, Simba Apparel, Acepak Plastics, and Afriwear EPZ to identify existing youth employment opportunities and challenges to be addressed in the sector. Other meetings were held with the USAID KSBDC, and CAPYEI Go Blue Skill Development Program to support youth access to technical skills through TVET and entrepreneurship training via small and medium enterprise labs. In Kiambu County, the project team engaged Tatu City's Unity Homes Developers, held a roundtable meeting with employers in the construction sector, and deliberated on youth employment gaps, challenges, and opportunities in the area. From these efforts, the project successfully linked nine youths (4 males 5 females) to 'Brighter Monday' for potential employment opportunities in the automotive and hospitality industry.

#### **3.1.1 Co-creating Solutions**

##### *Hold County Youth Co-Creation Meetings with NYBA, County Bunge Forums, County and National Governments, and Other Stakeholders*

CoELIB co-facilitated co-creation workshops in the HTCs, involving government representatives across the county government Departments of Education, Trade, Agriculture and Livestock, Planning, and Youth. Private sector players,





**Group Discussion Session during the Co-creation Workshop in Mombasa County**

including those in the manufacturing, service, construction, agriculture, and informal sectors, also attended these workshops. Learning and knowledge-sharing sessions followed, engaging government departments, business representatives, TVETs, and the youth to discuss LMA findings and how this might form tangible next steps for the future. Through these sessions, participants identified priority areas for youth economic engagement and how the private sector, education, and national and county government can work together for youth and benefit from existing employment prospects. The workshops resulted in the development of integrated county work plans.

### **3.1.2 Ensuring Sustainability**

#### ***Facilitate the Formation and Strengthening of County Multi-Stakeholder Forums***

Multi-stakeholder forums have been integral to the project's objectives to engage with partners across the public, private, and youth space. Field-based teams in each HTC continue to successfully bring together key local stakeholders for fruitful discussions on youth development, socio-political challenges, and meaningful areas for collaboration. Multi-stakeholder forums held in Nakuru, Isiolo, and Mombasa Counties successfully engaged over 50 national and county government organizations, youth-serving institutions, private sector companies, financial institutions, and government and non-governmental organizations in youth programming. Participants highlighted policy issues and overlaps regarding youth skilling mandates, the high cost of training limiting young people's access to opportunities, the mismatch of skills of young graduates compared to industry needs, and the current labour market demand. Core takeaways indicated a need for more coordinated engagement between providers of training and employers, furthered access to information on available opportunities, improved compensation for young people, recognition of prior learning, a need to retain youth in attachment opportunities, and improved attitudes/adaptive mindsets by young people.



**Nakuru Deputy Governor Exhibition during the Multi-Stakeholder's Forum**

## **3.2 Youth Networks Established and Strengthened to Increase Youth Ownership, Engagement, and Peer-to-Peer Support in Economic and Social Service Interventions**

### **3.2.1 County Youth-Led or Youth-Serving Organization Strengthening**

CoELIB continued to support the identification and recruitment of active youth groups and CBOs to participate in project activities. In Kisumu County, AGYWs were trained in group formation and registration. Those interested in forming groups then conducted elections and, with close supervision from the Department of Social Services, applied for registration. Many of these groups have started income-generating activities using the VSLA model to improve their socioeconomic status.

Organizational capacity needs assessments took place for various youth-serving organizations to understand potential areas of support. The assessments also highlighted capacity-building needs, insights, tools that may assist with operations, and milestones with local group entities to encourage agency among leaders in the community. In Kisumu County, for example, the CBF assessed the capacity of two groups in Nyakach Sub-County to help them identify gaps in their leadership and governance structures and areas for improvement for developing new action plans. The Nakuru County CBF was trained to assess the organisational capacity of other bungenes and youth-serving organizations. The same training was conducted in Kakamega County, where 60 CBF members participated.

### **3.2.2 Strengthening National Youth Networks**

The NYBA was supported to review and improve its financial systems through a review and update of QuickBooks, allowing for the provision of revised financial reports. A review of NYBA's governance structure was also undertaken, and an ad hoc committee was formed to deliberate and oversee the implementation of identified gaps.



**Participants during the Mombasa Multi-Stakeholder's Forum**

## Activity Progress (Qualitative Impact)

### Youth Trained in Entrepreneurship

#	County	Female	Male	Total
1	Nakuru	59	69	128
2	Isiolo	552	309	861
3	Mombasa	500	395	895
4	Kakamega	478	541	1,019
5	Kiambu	236	215	451
6	Kisumu	664	457	1,121
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,489</b>	<b>1,986</b>	<b>4,475</b>

### Youth Trained in Life Skills (Career Advisory and Counselling and General Life Skills Training)

#	County	Female	Male	Total
1	Nakuru	204	299	503
2	Isiolo	273	116	389
3	Mombasa	194	228	422
4	Kakamega	-	-	-
5	Kiambu	170	175	345
6	Kisumu	114	44	158
<b>Total</b>		<b>955</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>1,817</b>

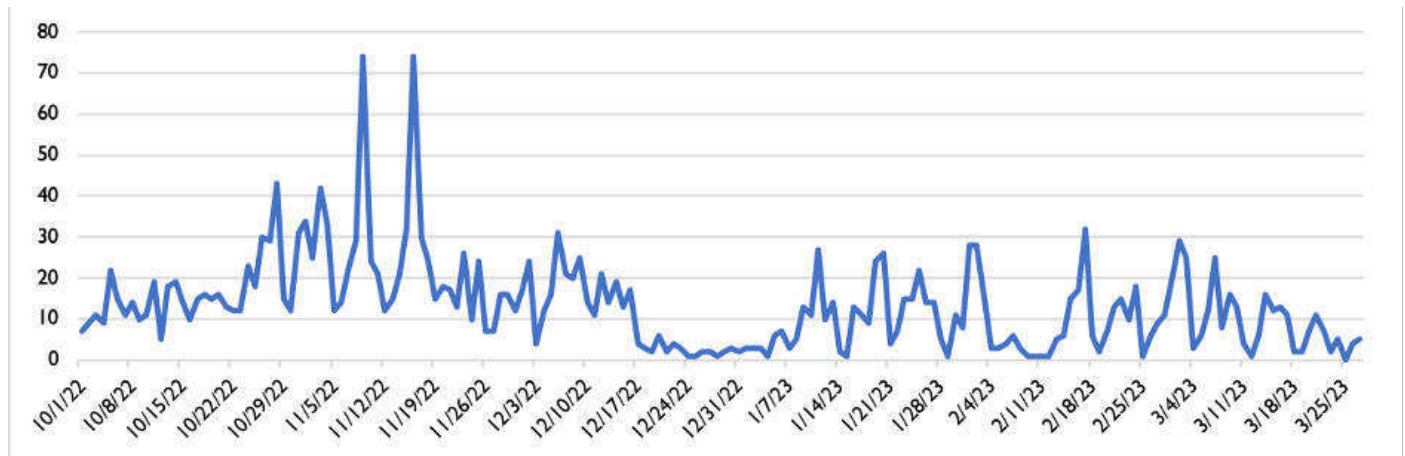
### Youth Trained in Soft Skills

#	County	Female	Male	Total
1	Nakuru	59	69	128
2	Isiolo	552	309	861
3	Mombasa	500	395	895
4	Kakamega	478	541	1,019
5	Kiambu	236	215	451
6	Kisumu	664	457	1,121
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,489</b>	<b>1,986</b>	<b>4,475</b>

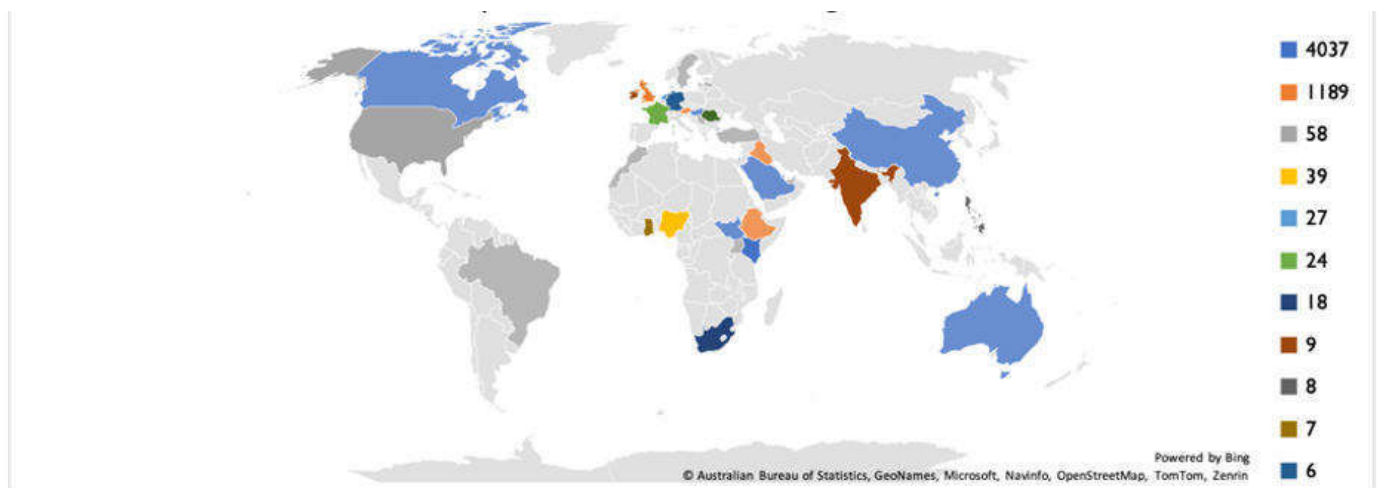
# 3. COMMUNICATIONS

CoELIB continued to support initiatives to implement the behaviour change strategy outlined by the project's work plan. Such material (including information to change the perception about vocational training and blue-collar jobs) was progressively deployed through branding resources in career service offices at local TVETs and through CoELIB Radio's programs.

The program also engaged youth during forums like Egerton University's Run for the Mau to build their capacity for environmental conservation and engagement in talent and sports to increase economic productivity. Two-thousand, three hundred and eighty unique IP streams on the CoELIB Radio were attained during the reporting period. Specifically for Kenya, 4,037 unique listeners generated 5,503 listening sessions where several youth-centric matters were discussed.



Sum of Unique IPs per Stream on the CoELIB Radio



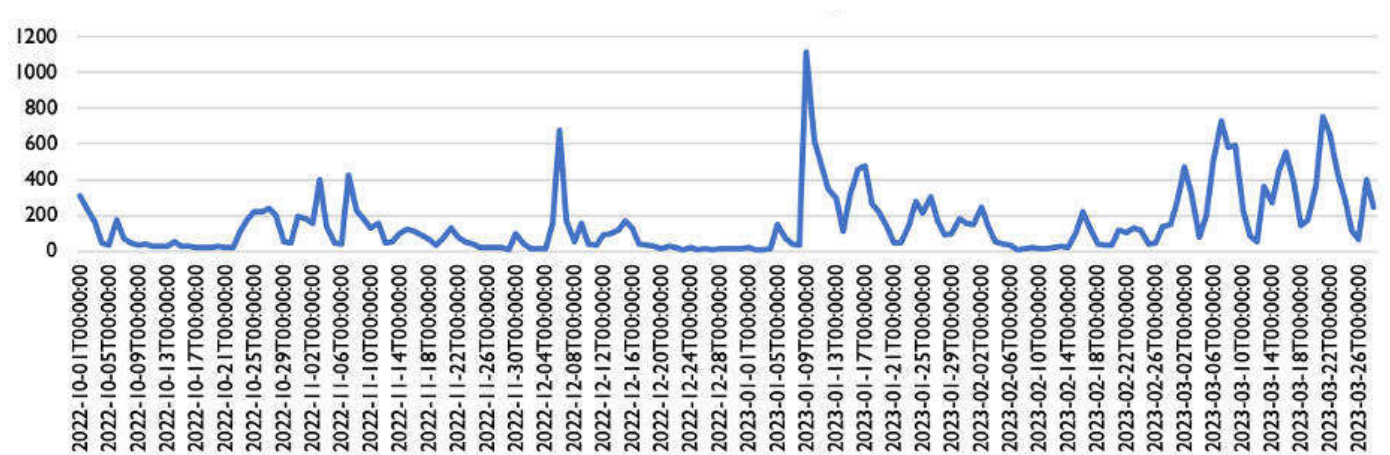
Unique CoELIB Radio Listening Hours

Programs that fall under CoELIB Radio include:

- Caleb Koyo's Protégé: Mentors creatives around the three primary sources of news (i.e., print, radio, and TV)
- CoELIB Breakfast: Promotes positive youth development by highlighting social issues such as the role of youth in governance, campaigning against substance abuse, and crusading for youth empowerment
- Ujuzi na Kazi: Focuses on the importance of vocational skills in employment government
- CoELIB Drive: Channels youth towards non-conventional ways of making a living
- TVET Stories: Changes the narrative surrounding TVET education and encourages youth out of school to enrol in TVETs around them
- Tales of Art: Tells stories about how the youth are using their talents and skills to better their lives

### Visibility

Youth regularly listen to programming on CoELIB Radio and engage on social media channels. Over the FY, youth-centred programming disseminated through the radio's social pages generated a cumulative reach of 27,378 individuals on CoELIB Radio's Facebook page.



### BCC Messaging Reach Statistics on CoELIB Radio's Facebook Page

#### Participation in Events

Visibility was also enhanced through the involvement of the project in various events. Activity venues were branded, and information about project offerings was disseminated to the public.

Some of the events include:

- Co-creation in the six high-touch counties
- Life Skills and Entrepreneurship master training of the Medical Students Association of Kenya (MSAKE) local chapters at Tafari Castle, Nyahururu
- Kakamega Business Breakfast KCB/KNCCI MoU Launch
- Nakuru County Multistakeholder's Forum for Youth-serving Organizations
- The Kenya Film Commission Capacity Building and Award Ceremony (Isiolo County)
- USAID PREG partners and County Government Joint Work Planning (Nakuru County)
- Agri-Jobs 4 Youth Job Fair at Bukura Agricultural College (Kakamega County)
- The Run for the Mau (Nakuru County)

#### Documentation of Program Activities

Program activities were documented throughout the year through reports, editorials, success stories, and graphics. Additional communicational resources, including calendars, flyers, TVET information materials, radio programs, brochures, photo montages, and more, continued to be developed. Samples and additional resources are available for reference.



# 4. CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND LESSONS LEARNED

## Challenges

- The Kenyan economy's opportunities do not match the number of youth entering the job market. This is a significant challenge that the project had to contend with throughout the implementation period. In addition, CoELIB found itself competing with other youth skilling and employment programs by different donors that were offering monetary incentives to employers for the existing opportunities available. KEYOP, for example, pays a stipend to master craftsmen who provide apprenticeship opportunities to youth. At the same time, GIZ offers grants to business member organizations like the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce (KNCCI). These member associations that CoELIB had hoped to reference for outreach became gatekeepers due to their vested interests.
- Given the project's non-monetary approach to partnerships, demonstrating value to the private sector for skilling and employment partnerships was challenging. However, compared to other donor programs, the programmatic uniqueness of linking youth skilling to employment immensely helped mitigate this challenge.
- There was a heavy reliance on the county government's structures and systems to achieve project objectives. Although the project's entry point is often referenced as the youth department, youth empowerment cuts across all county divisions, specifically the Departments of Education and Vocational Training, Agriculture, and Trade and Industry. However, the project found it difficult to coordinate with these departments and convene them due to internal competing priorities. To help address this challenge, county governments chaired multi-stakeholder forums, with all departments serving as one entity. As a starting point, the project successfully convened roundtable meetings that brought together the County Executive Committee (CEC) for Youth, Trade, Education, Finance, and Agriculture, which appreciated the need to coordinate differing mandates when addressing youth employment.
- The project's 18-24 target age proved challenging, with employers considering them immature and risky employees to hire. CoELIB strengthened soft skilling and work readiness training in their programming to combat these challenges.
- The reporting timeframe followed a period of intense political activities. Most county governments were in the process of settling down after the election period and were unable to hold meetings or generate shared agreements or commitments. Together with the October and December festivities, these elements slowed the implementation of activities. Despite these setbacks, the project was able to allocate time to meeting with many county-level representatives to account for postponed discussions.
- The case management pilot in Kisumu County faced some challenges common with community-based research. These included recruitment, attrition, and distance of participants' place of residence from training venues and case managers assigned to them. The pilot shifted from the original randomized controlled trial to a quasi-experimental design to address these challenges.
- Employers prefer to place youth into internship opportunities, which would later transition into full-time employment. However, some youth were found to be unwilling to

repeat internships/attachments since this requirement is often accomplished during their study.

- CoELIB co-identified opportunities for youth employment, but the uptake was constrained because of different expectations by youth and employers. Some potential employers highlighted a challenge working with youth within the 18-24-year-old cohort due to high dropout rates and, therefore, preferred youth above 25 years of age.

## Opportunities

- Youth unemployment is a prominent issue at national and county levels, and the government supports initiatives towards alleviating it. The current government was elected on the precedence of youth empowerment and is developing policies and programs to deliver on this principle. This has allowed CoELIB to seek the government's support in convening the private sector.
- The government's regulatory role of inspiring private sector engagement is an opportunity for CoELIB to build momentum (e.g., under the planned construction of affordable housing). Some government organizations that have been useful in this regard include EPZA, NCA, KeNHA, and County Governments' Departments of Trade and Physical Planning.
- There is an opportunity for the expectations of stakeholders and beneficiaries to be efficiently managed. Some private sector players held higher expectations from

the project, including financial and other resource support, which the program was not facilitating. Similarly, HEIs expected the program to offer support through scholarships, acquiring training materials, and other physical infrastructure. This expectation was also true for youth reached through USAID Empowered Youth, who were interested in pursuing technical courses with the project's partner institutions.

- Career service office capacities should be enhanced by implementing committees to support trained career advisors. Similarly, members must be trained and acquainted with the operations of the career office before beginning their outreach work.

## Lessons Learned

- An important lesson was drawn from the efficiency of bringing relevant stakeholders together in one room instead of bilateral approaches to reach more partners.
- Government departments and regulatory agencies are 'respected' by the private sector and frequently respond when called upon. During the FY, CoELIB was able to leverage the convening power of county governments to bring together over 100 companies and other stakeholders in Kiambu, Kisumu, and Kakamega Counties who pledged to provide skilling, jobs, and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth. The collaboration with counties in engaging the private sector laid the groundwork for forming multi-stakeholder forums as county governments realized the leverage they possessed.



Youths Participating in a Practical Hair-dressing Session



# 5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Data Management and MEL team continued with performance monitoring activities for the project throughout the FY. The team trained Kiambu, Nakuru, Kisumu, and Kakamega Counties staff. The training comprised a review of gaps and actions taken since the last internal DQA exercise, a review of the MEL Plan, Indicators and Indicator Reference Sheets, Revised Data Tools, and county-specific data audits. The county teams also received training on report writing. The respective county DQA report inclusive findings and recommendations were finalized and circulated to the county teams for review and requisite action. Digital Technology

Entrepreneurship Training at CoELIB



# 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

## Digital Technology

The project continued applying technology-based approaches to improve the socio-economic opportunities for the youth across the HTC. The following tools were utilized:

### 1. Two-way Short Messaging Service (SMS)

CoELIB leveraged two-way SMS to efficiently collect and analyze data on the education level of program beneficiaries. This method proved effective due to its high response rate and ability to function without internet access. The collected data was aggregated in the project's database, allowing for easy analysis and insightful results. Additionally, this approach facilitated timely data collection.

### 2. Online Surveys

It also leveraged online data survey tools like REDCap to manage online surveys and databases. The surveys were designed to assess the impact of the Case Management pilot in Kisumu County. This highly efficient method enabled seamless data collection, storage, and analysis with real-time access to results. REDCap also eliminated the need for manual data entry, reducing potential errors.

### 3. CoELIB TV

The project also incorporated CoELIB TV's YouTube channel as part of its initiative to empower the youth. Specifically, the channel's "The Empowered Series" program showcased personal stories that transcend education, age, gender, physical abilities, and asset accumulation among the youth. By sharing the personal stories of the youth, the program achieved its objective of empowering the youth and fostering a supportive community that transcends various societal barriers.

## Progress on GESI

CoELIB continues to embed GESI throughout its work. During the FY, the project followed up with HEIs on inclusion strategies and sensitization on access and control for vulnerable youth and adolescent girls in their institutions, particularly student mothers. The goal was to enable institutions to recognize the differential impact on varying youth categories. As a result, HEIs have become keen on ensuring that young mothers effectively participate in learning with their peers by setting up daycare facilities (e.g., at Akado VTC [Kisumu County]) or reviving redundant ones, such as Rotary Polytechnic (Kisumu County). Others, such as Kisumu National Polytechnic, are in the process of establishing a daycare centre.

The project also conducted TOT training on GESI to CBF leadership in Nakuru, Kakamega, and Isiolo to strengthen the capacity of youth-serving systems in gender and social inclusion. 96 participants were trained through these efforts. The training took participants through the basic concepts of gender and social inclusion and the need to apply GESI principles in all activities to foster greater awareness of the impact of planned activities on male and female youth, marginalized groups, and PWDs. Continued staff capacity building on GESI has been ongoing across the HTCs.

Co-creation activities highlighted vulnerabilities among youth, particularly adolescent girls and young women, spanning school dropout, teenage pregnancy, alcohol, drugs, and substance abuse. These vulnerabilities persist. Consequently, CoELIB brokered partnerships and linkages with youth and women-led institutions in Nakuru County during the reporting period for learning purposes and referral services for adolescent

girls and other project beneficiaries. Of note is the partnership brokered with the Love and Hope Centre - a non-governmental organization based in Nakuru whose mission is to provide food, education, give refuge, and counsel those who are destitute, hungry, and illiterate, and offer psycho-social support, mentorship, and rehabilitation from alcohol, drugs, and substance abuse. This partnership provides referral opportunities for beneficiaries across age and gender.

The project has ensured that it maintains gender and socially inclusive disaggregated data that captures various categories of beneficiaries and their level of participation in project activities. Consequently, all registration forms, data collection, and monitoring tools are gender and social-inclusion-responsive.

### Disability Inclusive Development: Participation of Persons With Disabilities

CoELIB ensures that youth with disabilities access opportunities and participate effectively in all activities. The project has partnered with county disability mainstreaming departments and other county disability networks, including ANDY, for referrals and collaboration for disability mainstreaming. In Mombasa County, for example, a sign language interpreter was made available for participants with hearing disabilities during the co-creation activity in December. CoELIB envisions the availability of such services in all its activities across targeted counties.

Sensitization of higher education stakeholders on disability mainstreaming in their learning institutions was also conducted through the Evidence-Informed Youth Employability Programs workshop for HEIs. This workshop aimed to draw attention to the differential impact of the learning environment, facilities, approach, and infrastructure on varying demographics of students, particularly those with disabilities. The training emphasized the need for institutions to develop or modify existing infrastructure to ensure they are easily accessible for students needing support. The training also encompassed disability-friendly language usage in communications. As a result of the sensitization provided, participating institutions have expressed keen interest in ensuring that youth with disabilities effectively participate in learning by establishing facilities that accommodate their needs. The training also offered a platform for institutions to exchange ideas and learn from one another, thereby catalyzing adaptability and knowledge

sharing.

County teams are informed of the procedures for referrals and enrollment of beneficiaries into disability-friendly organizations and networks. CBF teams have also been sensitized on disability mainstreaming in their leadership structures and across all activities. Sensitization, training, and capacity building of all staff and stakeholders is ongoing.

### Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring

CoELIB continues to comply with environmental protection laws, regulations, policies, and other requirements of the Government of Kenya to ensure no environmental harm is caused during interventions. To prioritize environmental protection, the project disseminated environmental mitigation and monitoring messages to all beneficiaries by embedding environmental mitigation and monitoring sections in all training manuals.

CoELIB also engaged with youth and the general Egerton University community on a sensitization campaign on environmental conservation through athletics while informing them of the importance of vocational training and blue-collar jobs. The annual event raises funds and awareness about the conservation of the Mau ecosystem that has, for an extended period, fallen victim to encroachment and pollution. The event attracted a total of 657 participants from the Egerton University community. A total of 253 youth aged 18-24 years participated across different categories, as shown below:

#### Number of Youth who Participated in the Annual Sensitization Sporting Event

Category	Males	Female	Total
4 km under 16	62	50	112
6 km under 20	63	78	141
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>253</b>

# 7. COORDINATION WITH DONOR AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS

Following new county administrations taking office after the last elections, USAID County Liaison Teams introduced CoELIB-affiliated county teams to county governors and other key leadership. They also played an instrumental role in bringing on board county commissioners in line with the government's directive of coordinating all donor-funded programs through the Office of the Deputy President. The national government structures at the grassroots level proved instrumental in the project's outreach and mobilization efforts.

During the co-creation exercise, USAID County Liaison Officers for each county ensured that governors could interact with the USAID Empowered Youth project. This was an opportunity to deepen the relationship between the project and the counties where activities are implemented.

CoELIB emphasised strengthening linkages with other donor-funded programs and implementing partners across its counties of interest. In Kisumu County, CoELIB partnered with USAID4theChild to refer in-school girls interested in participating in the Empowered Girls pilot. In Isiolo, the USAID-funded Nawiri project worked closely with CoELIB on shared objectives. Initial discussions with this project evolved to forming a coordination platform for all USAID-funded Isiolo County programs. The establishment of the Isiolo Youth Bunge Forum was welcomed by other USAID partners, particularly Nawiri, who already utilize the youth network to reach out to young people in the county. Further, KSBDC has been participating in project activities, including co-creation in Kisumu, Kakamega, and Nakuru Counties. During the co-creation exercises, all USAID-funded partners working on common areas were invited to share their expertise and actively participate in identifying areas of synergy and how to move forward jointly with common goals. Each county actor played instrumental roles in the exercise, resulting in joint work plans and substantial resource commitments by relevant entities.



Engagement forums including development agencies in Kisumu County

# 8. PROGRESS ON LINKS WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

During the FY, CoELIB sought to strengthen synergies with government agencies to support its interventions at the national level. National government administrative and security agencies, including chiefs, district officers, and sub-chiefs, were instrumental in helping with activity outreach while serving as resource experts as the team planned for programmatic expansion. National government stakeholders at the county level also worked closely with CoELIB to achieve results. Regulatory agencies like the EPZA also played a significant role in convening the private sector.

In Mombasa and Athi River, apparel companies within EPZs were engaged, thanks to the introduction of the EPZA. Additionally, relevant government entities in trade, industrial development, private sector development, labour and employment, micro-enterprise development, etc., were invited during private sector roundtables. Some government agencies the project worked closely with included the Kenya Industrial Estates, Kenya Wildlife Service, Micro and Small Enterprises Authority, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Authority, Kenya Investments Authority, the Tourism Regulatory Fund, and the Ministry of Housing.



Kisumu County Government Representative during County Co-creation

# 9. PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Guided by the results of the LMA, CoELIB was strategic and intentional in engaging the private sector and other stakeholders with a focus on jobs for youth and strengthening the capacity of TVETs to respond to labour demands for priority sectors identified in each county. CoELIB co-facilitated signing partnership MOUs with Unity Homes, Finsco, Mum's Hotel, Homeless of Kisumu, Franky's Foundation, and the Mombasa County Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Discussions involved collaboration across:

- Youth skilling through TVETs
- Work readiness, soft skilling, and livelihoods training for youth
- Career guidance and counselling
- Community mobilization and outreach
- Labor market information sharing to help local youth make informed choices
- Entrepreneurship training
- Potential placement in internships and attachments; exposure to employment opportunities
- Gender inclusion
- Partnership with local stakeholders

Partnership discussions with the China Road Construction Company involved collaborating with Bishop Locati VTC in Isiolo to train and up-skill youth in different sectors required by China Roads, spanning plant operations, mechanics, and truck driving. The project was examining 700-1,000 job placements for Isiolo County.

One of the recommendations was for KeNHA to ensure local youth are given priority when hiring labour and supporting those without the required skills for acquirement at vocational training institutions. A civil society organization reference group led by the Catholic Diocese of Isiolo had been formed to advise the government and the company on mitigating evolving youth unemployment risks. KeNHA was requested to include the CBF in this reference group. KeNHA held various engagements with stakeholders regarding youth skill gaps that could hinder their access to specific opportunities. Through these means, youth could identify their

needs, including project-related and non-project-related skills. Capacity-building scholarships for local youth to pursue courses specified by the community were planned. Career guidance support offered by the project to the youth was a welcome value addition to these conversations. KeNHA was ready to collaborate on youth employment to develop LAPSET.

The partnership with Unity Homes, in particular, had a dual aim of strengthening TVET construction training capacity and providing jobs for youth who have moved through TVET institutions. Two partner institutions, i.e., Nyaga VTC (Kiambu County) and Makongeni VTC (Kiambu County), worked closely with Unity Homes to strengthen TVET instructors' capacity. Unity Homes also formalised public-private partnerships with Nyaga and Makongeni VTCs in Kiambu County as a sustainability mechanism.



**A private sector player and youth engaging in co-creation in Kiambu County**

The LMA identified building and construction as one of the high-growth sectors with employment opportunities in Kiambu County. As a follow-up mechanism and from the experience in collaboration with Unity Homes, CoELIB and stakeholders, with the support of the County Government of Kiambu, convened a contractor's roundtable that brought together employers in this realm. A total of 18 contractors participated and pledged over 1,000 direct and indirect job opportunities. The consortium immediately started following up on the opportunities in close collaboration with TVETs. One of the breakfast meeting attendees, Finsco Africa, signed an MOU with the project and, jointly with KIST, committed to train and place the first cohort of 60 youth to work on real estate projects.

Drawing on the success of roundtable discussions in Kiambu County, CoELIB supported the organization of two such meetings of similar structure, with the support of Kisumu and Kakamega Counties. The meeting in Kisumu was convened by the Department of Trade, Tourism, and Industry and brought together over 50 companies in the manufacturing and tourism sectors from the county. The companies pledged over 8,000 direct and indirect jobs for beneficiaries

from this meeting. In addition, more than 20 government departments that support trade, micro-enterprise development, labour and employment, the blue economy, and industrial development were in attendance.

Agribusiness was identified as the sector with the highest potential for growth and opportunities for target cohorts. Building upon these findings, CoELIB, with the support of the County Government of Kakamega, co-organized a private sector roundtable targeting business actors along varying agricultural value chains. All actors involved in the agricultural value chains of chicken, traditional vegetables, and aquaculture attended. All affiliated TVETs were invited to the discussion and participated in the meeting, allowing them to hear and plan how to respond to the skills identified to enable youth. A rough estimate of over 10,000 direct and indirect jobs were identified during the meeting. One corporate representative selling chicken mentioned a struggle to meet supply orders of 200,000 birds annually and was ready to offer production contracts. After the meeting, an action plan was developed to urgently follow up on the employment prospects identified from these discussions.

# 10. PARTNERSHIPS AND SUSTAINABILITY/EXIT STRATEGY

CoELIB strives to ensure that the benefits and effectiveness of project outcomes, impacts, strategies, and interventions are sustained after post-interventions. This strategy ensures that the following factors are observed throughout implementation: (1) Ownership of interventions among the youth, HEIs, youth support systems, and all other interest groups; (2) Sustained motivation of beneficiaries; (3) Sustained technical and managerial capacity of staff; (4) Sustained linkages to governmental organizations or other entities that support youth empowerment programs; (5) and HEIs and YSOs are guided on best practices to institutionalize interventions. A gradual, thoughtful exit process in handing over best practices, tools, and knowledge-based resources contributes to sustainability as local ownership increases.

During the FY, CoELIB worked closely with county governments in all HTC to enhance policy dialogue with the private sector, TVETs, youth, and other stakeholders within QHIP. In addition to multi-stakeholder forums being co-driven by the county government and the private sector, CoELIB strategically leveraged the former's convening power to build sustainability mechanisms.

Building the capacity of training institutions to establish academic partnerships with industry

was another strategy that CoELIB utilized to ensure the sustainability of the project's objectives. Moving beyond partnerships to deepen policy conversations around how TVETs can respond to labour market demands and how the private sector can provide the necessary signals and incentives was also a key priority put into practice.

The LMA process and outcome of results enhanced the understanding of key stakeholders on the importance of using evidence to inform youth skilling and employment. The capacity-building element of the LMA, especially for TVETs and county government players, was aimed at sustaining objective interventions.

The co-creation process by CoELIB is a sustainability mechanism and model for ensuring inclusive participation and decision-making. The private sector and other stakeholders could jointly develop a work plan in these spaces and commit to their contributions/roles. The number of private sector organizations that participated in the 2022 co-creation workshops and committed their support was a remarkable increase compared to the previous year. This signalled the team an increased understanding by the private sector of their role in youth skilling and employment.



# 11. COLLABORATION, LEARNING, AND ADAPTING (CLA)

CoELIB is constantly improving its programmatic effectiveness through a robust CLA approach by ensuring that progress toward development objectives is guided by continuous learning. During the reporting period, the project participated in the quarterly Multi-Stakeholder Platform for Youth (MSPY) forum in Isiolo County. MSPY seeks to bring together all organizations working in the youth space in Isiolo County and identify opportunities for the youth through collaboration and learning from counterparts, and developing joint activities that create opportunities for the youth. Key participants who attended the event in October 2022 include Nawiri – Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the UN World Food Program (WFP), Cooperative Bank, the Isiolo Youth Innovation Centre, Bishop Locati TTI, Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), the Kenya Small Business Development Centre, and the County Government of Isiolo, among others. MSPY has provided visibility and partnership opportunities and supported more significant connections with other development partners to create employment for the youth in the county.

Additionally, CoLEIB participated in the Partnership for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG) meeting held in October 2022. The purpose of this conference was to strengthen the collaborative framework for joint designing, planning, monitoring, and learning. The event examined key sectors where PREG partners can co-create and use the opportunity to review the budgetary allocations of FY 2022/23 to support priority sectors of the economy. This work planning workshop leveraged the existing relationships of the County Government of Isiolo with the private sector and other development partners to cement activities through documentation, monitoring, and learning.

## CLA in Case Management

During the reporting period, the Case Management team experienced changes in the operating environment that impacted planned activities, including participants' unavailability due to changes in phone numbers or relocation, some safe spaces being less available or deemed not conducive for discussing sensitive topics, and certain referral agencies that were understood to provide one-on-one services, to be more geared to group training. The most significant challenge involved validating pre-screen data with enrollment numbers, as the target population exhibited low literacy levels and did not often have their phone numbers when queried.

In November, CoELIB, in conjunction with USAID and consortium staff, conducted site visits to observe the Case Management pilot implementation. During these visits, it was determined that some processes needed to be refined, strengthened, and reevaluated to ensure pilot activities aligned with the project's Theory of Change. The team took this opportunity to document all processes, double-check data security, conduct informal listening sessions with staff and select participants and their households. Through various learning and reflection opportunities embedded in the pilot evaluation design, such as participant, trainer, and case manager monthly feedback forms, the team was able to analyze emerging data regarding the services provided and gaps between expectations and service delivery.

Qualitative data collection informed a pause-and-reflect approach that included strengthening an open line of communication, building trust, and jointly reassessing what is or is not working during implementation in light of the structure of the research study.



The team met to determine appropriate activities for course correction, which included shifting the pilot from a randomized controlled trial to a quasi-experimental research design. Course correction also included streamlining processes for compensating case managers and reimbursing participants for transportation costs; shifting meeting locations in venues that were identified as not safe; and developing crisis assistance handouts with information on safe houses, gender-based violence (GBV) and child-abuse resources, and area chief contact information for dissemination to all participants in both control and treatment groups.

# 12. SUCCESS STORIES

## HARNESSING THE CREATIVE ECONOMY TO EMPOWER LIVES

The creative industry constitutes one of the fastest-growing sectors globally. However, the global upswing in the creative economy is yet to gain momentum in Kenya. Gaps within the innovative and talent ecosystem limit the ability of Kenyan youth to harness opportunities in the arts into income-generating activities. This has been the case for Royalty Entertainment Youth Group, a collective of creatives from Mombasa County.

Creative groups face limited market access due to little consumer appreciation, insufficient understanding of intellectual property rights, insufficient infrastructure and institutional support for new creative ventures, weak or non-existent engagement platforms between government agencies and the creative industry, and weak associations for collective bargaining. Such groups also face insufficient entrepreneurial skills among creatives.

Founded by Charlene Maraga, the Royalty Entertainment Youth Group aims to support and promote youth talent in the coastal region in a sustainable fashion. The group envisions becoming a centre for talent development while fostering positive change in the community.

Despite being a small group of 15 members, the group has achieved several successes, taking steps towards financial sustainability by applying the concepts from entrepreneurship training provided by CoELIB. The skills acquired from this training will mitigate issues surrounding a lack of capital to enable proper investments in the creative sector. Despite its small size, the Royalty Entertainment Youth Group was able to apply the knowledge gleaned through these



trainings to start a profitable venture effectively. They now distribute groundnuts and fresh water, which has helped them generate income to support their activities.

The group continues to successfully reform drug-abusing youth by providing a safe and supportive space for them to pursue their talents. The group also implements programs and hosts workshops that support the arts, which have helped them build sound relationships within the community.

Looking towards the future, the Royalty Entertainment Youth Group dreams of becoming the most outstanding supporting art agency and a safe space for artists. Even though they continue to face challenges such as a lack of equipment and financial instability, they remain resilient and determined to achieve their goals.

*"I am enthusiastic about what my creativity has in store for me. I believe that I have the potential to reach greater heights as a creative with a background in entrepreneurship"- Charlene Maraga*

## BUILDING A CREATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL GENERATION

Examining the value derived from empowering youth participation in the sector is essential to appreciate what the creative economy offers fully. If youth are not intentionally capacitated and engaged, their economic prospects will remain dormant.

Social and economic vulnerabilities have not deterred young people like Amos Kariuki from pursuing a career in the creative industry; however, challenges mobilizing his passion for economic gain proved difficult for some time, leading to prolonged entrance into the market. Yet, since receiving entrepreneurship training, Amos has achieved great success with his business - AKN Arts.

After undergoing entrepreneurship training, Amos transformed his talents into a sustainable business. Although he possessed several artwork pieces, he was unaware of the economic opportunities present through product monetization. However, after completing entrepreneurship training in November 2022, he launched AKN Arts and has since commercialized over 250 artwork of different sizes. His primary market is based in Njoro, Egerton, and Nakuru Town. His first clients were his parents.

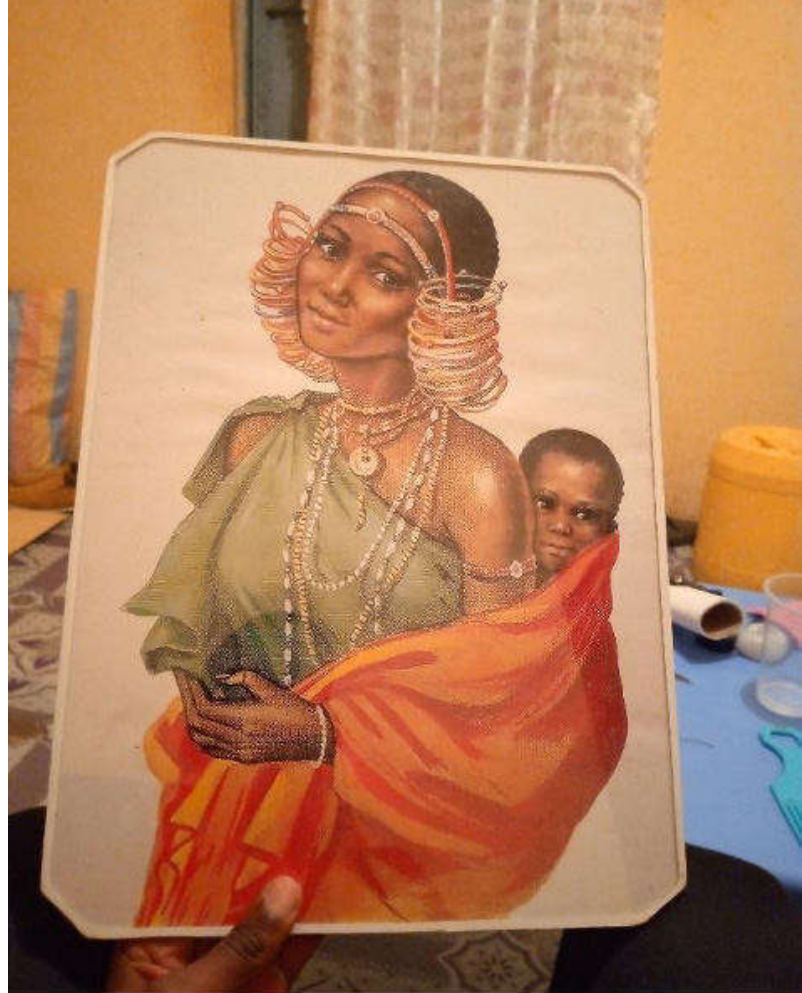
*"I started my business in early November, and so far, the business has taken large strides. I measure the progress with the income I get from it, which is sparingly satisfying and promising." - Amos Kariuki*

Amos' passion for the arts shines through in every piece he creates. His customers have also recognized and appreciated the quality of his work. His dedication to his craft and entrepreneurial spirit has helped him establish a thriving business in a competitive market.

*"The training helped me develop my product, develop a business model, and be creative to attract more clients." - Amos Kariuki*

Amos balances the demands of his studies with his business, thanks to the capacitation of soft skills acquired as part of his training. His success is a testament to his hard work and determination, serving as an inspiration to others. He appreciates the training that helped him gain important technical skills to broaden his perspective on business opportunities.

Human capabilities far surpass any other driv-



er of economic development, thus making it challenging to ignore creatives' role in building economies. With the right skill development to refine and execute innovative ideas, creatives will have ample opportunity to thrive in the local economy. This idea, coupled with appropriate institutional, regulatory, and private sector-related reforms, enables the creative industry in Kenya to be poised as a pivotal catalyst for economic development.



# 13. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

Throughout CoELIB's work, it is clear that youth are eager to be engaged in civil society and economic empowerment spaces. One of the core barriers faced by youth was a lack of confidence in the 18–24-year-old cohort held by employers and slight resistance to providing the initial opportunities needed for youth to grow professionally and personally as young adults. Given the acknowledgement of the youth's desire and need to receive training in soft skills and learn about the expectations often set in a workplace, addressing the peripheral actors through a systems approach will be helpful for future opportunities to open for the youth. In this realm, change in mindset could be expanded beyond youth themselves to employers and how they view the younger population. Perception changes can help to broaden the economy to be more inclusive of youth.

Apart from the vast outreach accomplished through youth training, a significant accomplishment can be witnessed in the routine convening of local stakeholders (government, youth, community-based organizations, the public sector, and education institutions) to discuss the cross-cutting theme of youth development and empowerment. Holding these

meetings has shed light on the unique yet integral roles each actor plays in enhancing and supporting the lives of youth. It has also reemphasized the critical importance and need for collaboration among multiple stakeholders to address youth unemployment and livelihoods and for each stakeholder to reflect on their specific role, how such roles overlap with others, and the impact of such a broader understanding on their operations and plans.

The partnerships forged from the quadruple helix approach will remain one of CoELIB's long-term legacies. This, coupled with the impact and reach of youth lives through training and job linkages, has the potential to spur inspiration to others in the community and drive long-term change.

The operating environment is budding with collaboration and a willingness of diverse local partners to come together to address the current economic climate for youth. This positive setting, coupled with the emboldened and encouraged youth population that the project had the opportunity to work with, allows great potential for advancement.

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