

Strengthening inclusion of under-represented and marginalized youth in education and workforce development programs

Youth Represent DRC - As the second-largest country in Africa, plagued by instability, conflict, limited infrastructure, and low levels of educational access and outcomes, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is home to a young, diverse population. Underrepresented and marginalized youth (including ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, young women, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ youth) face compounded forms of exclusion from education and workforce programming and are more likely than their peers not to access, advance, or complete education nor to access dignified work.

Youth Excel's Issue-Based Collaborative Network (ICON)

Youth Excel supports young leaders and youth-led and youth serving organizations around the globe to use research and data to improve their own positive youth development programs. It helps young leaders leverage the research and data that they produce in intergenerational learning and dialogue to strengthen local, national, and global development outcomes.

What is an Issue-Based Collaborative Network (ICON)?

Youth Excel's ICON whole-system-in-the-room model convenes a diverse group of youth-led and youth-serving organizations and groups to form a place-based collaborative that collectively tackles a shared problem. The participants build skills in Research-to-Change (implementation research), conduct research to strengthen their own work, share data, create new knowledge collectively, learn from each other, and produce knowledge products to support youth advocacy and engage with local decision-makers.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)



Kinshasa and North Kivu ICONs - youth-led and youth-serving organizations convene to address a central learning question: How might we strengthen the inclusion of under-represented and marginalized youth in education and workforce development programs? This activity is led by Search for Common Ground: Anti-Corruption Research Center and Business Investment Management



What is Research-to-Change?

Research-to-Change is concerned with understanding how and why interventions work under real world conditions so that implementation can be adapted and strengthened. It is participatory, it is iterative, it is inclusive. Organizations can use Research-to-Change as a tool to gather data, take what they learn, and turn it into what they do in real-time. Research-to-Change supports continued learning for stronger and more impactful interventions.

Research-to-Change and Ongoing Learning

Planning
Imagine the change

Implementing
Act to make the change



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ICON participants are youth-led and youth-serving organizations and groups. They develop learning goals to gather data about implementation factors such as feasibility, stakeholder and participant relevance, reach, effectiveness, and more. They each select appropriate research methodologies such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, and/or observations.

What do North Kivu Organizations want to learn?

We need to know the level of skills of former child soldiers in ICT and business plan development in order to offer them training that matches the needs of the market.

Peace Building Team

We need to identify the sectors of activity that easily hire young people living with disabilities and why this is the case in order to facilitate their professional integration.

EDA

We want to know what occupations LGBTQ+ youth are most often engaged in as freelancers or employees with a view to training them.

MEPRODES

We need to know if young girls and boys, entrepreneurs and students consider digital training as a relevant field to promote their socio-economic development.

CTJ Masisi

We want to know the extent to which youth released from prisons have access to education and employment in order to develop a civic education and career guidance plan for them.

AJALSI

We need to know what measures are being taken to support the socio-economic reintegration of demobilized youth.

CJVP

We need to know if homeless youth are interested in urban agriculture to align our training to their interests.

CUJ

We need to know whether urban authorities consider job training for homeless youth as an effective way to combat drug abuse in order to develop a program to address it.

IGNITUS

We need to know whether young single mothers see the entrepreneurship capacity building program as an effective means of their socio-economic inclusion so that we can tailor our interventions to their needs.

BENEFANCE

We need to know if deaf-mute girls and their families see sewing as an effective way to combat unemployment.

AKRAM



Diverse Youth from North Kivu during an ICON Workshop

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What do Kinshasa Participants want to learn?

We need to know the barriers that prevent youth with disabilities from equitably accessing education and vocation training to propose responsive solutions to their problems.

Congo Pour Tous

We need to know the level of education and knowledge about ICTs of young single mothers living in Kokolo Military Camp in order to design a program on economic empowerment through ICT education.

Jeunes Chefs d'Etat

We want to better understand the daily life of illiterate and homeless youth to improve their participation in our program to better their living conditions by learning trades related to sanitation.

Kin Car Wash

We need to know the reasons why youth drop out of school to improve their participation in training programs and to strengthen their leadership and digital literacy skills.

Synergie des Jeunes pour l'Unité et le Développement

We need to know the needs of young single mothers in the rural commune of Kinseso for vocational training to work on capacity training modules for our training centers.

Action et Solidarité de Femmes pour la Gouvernance

We need to know why empowerment programs for youth with disabilities are not sustainable to integrate more sustainable leadership, innovation and social entrepreneurship training in our programs.

Congolese Innovation Academy

We need to know whether LGBT youth are able to protect themselves from risks and retaliation related to their identities to improve our protection program to strengthen their leadership.

Jeunialissime

We need to understand the employment opportunities that could exist for unemployed youth living in rural areas to better orient our support program, introducing them to leadership and the digital culture.

Parlement des Jeunes de Kinshasa

We want to know the learning and training needs of homeless youth living in the rural areas of Mont Ngafula to advocate with decision-makers for a community-based program for the learning and vocational training..

Ujuzi

Learn with us!

Youth Excel is committed to bridging the gap between research and practice, and the gap between practice and research in youth development programs. We are developing and testing strategies to make research, data, and learning useful, usable, and accessible to more youth organizations and in demand by donors and other decision-makers.

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