The Youth Banner

SNAPSHOT	
Organization(s)	The Youth Banner
Project Name	Intel 'She Will Connect' Campaign
Location	Kenya
Date(s) of Implementation	October 1, 2014 – February 28, 2015
Funding Amount	USD 26,561
Partner(s) / Funder(s)	The Rockefeller Foundation's Digital Jobs Africa (DJA) Initiative
Number of Youth Beneficiaries Trained	Total: 686| Women: 686| Men: 0
Number of Youth Beneficiaries Employed	Total: N/A	Women: N/A| Men: N/A
Type(s) of Digital Work	Online Outsourcing – Microwork
Source of Metrics	Internal monitoring & evaluation

ABOUT THE YOUTH BANNER

The Youth Banner is a non-profit organization that aims to decrease youth employment and increase the success of youth entrepreneurs through various platforms. The Youth Banner's mission is to develop economically empowered youth by creating an enabling environment for young people to earn sustainable income.

Through its programs, the Youth Banner further aims to:

- Give youth and women the opportunity to play an increasingly viable, sustainable and effective tole in achieving long-term benefits for themselves through business development.
- Support long-term growth in entrepreneurship with more opportunities and more effective targeted support for young people.

The Youth Banner implements the following programs of relevance to the DJA grant:

- **The Youth Banner Economic Empowerment Program (BEEP)** is a six-month program that recruits young entrepreneurs into business clubs led by experienced business professionals who train the entrepreneurs, mentor them and expose them to market opportunities. BEEP clubs meet weekly; these weekly meetings include mentorship and coaching, business support services; and training on digital literacy, financial linkages and market opportunities.
- **The Intel 'She Will Connect' program**. The DJA grant was used to support the Intel 'She Will Connect' program which aimed to close the Internet gender gap and connect young women to digital opportunities. Under this program, the Youth Banner partnered with the Kenyan

government to provide training of trainers (TOT) services to local community centers that in turn provided digital literacy and skills training to disadvantaged youth.

- **Amka Tujiinue Groups.** This is a women-only program aimed at training young women in entrepreneurship which includes business and financial education and access to markets and credit. Additionally, they also train in life skills. Under this program, there is the Women Sharing Wisdom Initiative (WSWI) which assists female entrepreneurs to run their enterprises sustainably through training in entrepreneurship, life skills and business mentorship. [1]

PROJECT DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATON

Program Design	Supply-Side Components		Demand-Side Components	
	Training & Skills Development	✓	Improving Access to Finance for SMEs	×
	Employment & Intermediation Services	×	Capacity Building & Information Provision	×
	Subsidized Employment	×	Targeted Sector-Specific Approaches	×

ACTIVITIES

Under the Intel "She Will Connect" program, the Youth Banner partnered with the Kenyan government to provide training of trainers (TOT) to local centers that provided digital literacy and skills training to disadvantaged youth. These "PASHA Centers" are part of the Kenyan government's Digital Villages Project (DVP)[2], which provides a suite of services to communities via computers connected to the Internet.

The Youth Banner trained PASHA Center managers who were subsequently tasked with providing digital literacy training to disadvantaged youth and women within their PASHA Center vicinity. The long-term goal was the roll out of a widely distributed program available to women across Kenya. The training was held at a central location called Ruiru Rainbow Resort in Ruiru near Nairobi.

The TOT curriculum was designed to equip PASHA Center managers with the skills to train young women in online work and arm them with the skills to successfully access online job opportunities. Over a day and a half, the TOT curriculum addressed the following topics:

- **Getting started with online work:** How to sign up, how to build an online profile, how to verify your ID and payment methods.
- **What online work entails:** Skills and expertise required and types of jobs available.
- **Bidding on projects:** How to bid for a project, what information should be included and client relationship management.
- **Pros and cons of online work:** Pros include no commute, flexible timing and no limit to your earning potential. Cons include difficult clients, no paid leave and time delays amongst others.

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[1] The Youth Banner (2017). Available at: http://theyouthbanner.org/
[2] Government project aimed to boost internet connectivity in Kenya.

RECRUITMENT

In the past, The Youth Banner program staff reported having difficulty recruiting women for the BEEP program, because women were not comfortable being in the same BEEP clubs as their male counterparts. Female beneficiaries also reported that they felt they could not openly share their thoughts and ideas in these co-ed clubs, and instead opted to be placed in female-only groups. Based on these experiences, the Intel 'She Will' Campaign and specifically and exclusively targeted women.

The Intel 'She Will' TOT program targeted PASHA Center managers from 40 counties in Kenya. The Youth Banner targeted PASHA Center managers as it saw this partnership as a means of increasing the bouquet of services PASHA Centers provided to local communities. In addition, the income generated by PASHA centers would increase due to higher foot traffic as more women surf and work when jobs are secured.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Insufficient time was allocated for the training. The program was designed such that after the initial training, PASHA Center managers navigated the online work sites on their own. This was to embed their understanding and ensure that they could adequately train beneficiaries. However, the Youth Banner trainers would have preferred time for one-on-one sessions so that they could go through the online work sites with the PASHA Center managers to ensure that they had fully grasped all the concepts taught. The online work sites that were presented in the training included elance, upwork, tukoworks and odesk. Without this one-on-one support, managers they took longer than expected to understand the content. This also delayed the roll-out of the training to the female beneficiaries. This feedback was received too late in the program however to make changes to the implementation for correction.

The PASHA Center managers had misconceptions about online work opportunities. The believed that payments for online work were irregular and often late. As a result, they did not fully buy into the program. During follow-up visits to the PASHA Centers, The Youth Banner discovered that several PASHA Center managers had not passed on their knowledge to their staff to support online work training initiatives. To address this challenge, The Youth Banner dispatched trainers to re-train PASHA Center staff and to raise awareness about the potential of online work to accelerate the rate of training.

PASHA Center managers from rural areas cited the prohibitive cost of Internet as a barrier to navigating the online jobs sites or training beneficiaries to do the same. They also believed that the income earned from training was not sufficient to cover the cost of Internet usage. Limited access to the Internet in remote villages also delayed the implementation of training by PASHA Center managers to local young women.

BENEFICIARY EXPERIENCES

PASHA Center managers reported that participants were seen as leaders in their communities and subsequently gained a greater sense of self-awareness. This was found to be instrumental in their self-confidence and subsequent job application processes.

Access to the training resulted in some beneficiaries accessing online work opportunities from which they subsequently earned an income to support their families. The Youth Banner's M&E systems however did

not track the numbers of youth that accessed these opportunities, or the value of income that earned through online work.

The primary challenge faced by young women in accessing employment was their household responsibilities. Typically, women are responsible for looking after the children and undertaking household chores, which prevents them from accessing traditional employment opportunities. Non-traditional employment opportunities, such as those presented by the Intel 'She Will' Campaign, were thus found to be increasingly important for women.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

59	**686**
PASHA Center managers trained	**young female beneficiaries trained**

The program had the following target outputs:

- 61 trainers would be trained in online work skills including how to register on online work sites, create a professional profile, bid for online jobs and manage client relationships once a job is secured.
- 2,000 disadvantaged women would receive training on online work from the trainers who participated in the session.
- An online work training manual would be developed for PASHA Center managers.

The Youth Banner trained 59 PASHA Center Managers throughout the program, two short of its original goal of 61. 686 women were subsequently trained by PASHA Center Managers on online work at the PASHA Centers. This was a 34% achievement of its initial goal of 2,000. The main reason for this under-achievement is the delayed implementation of training to beneficiaries. This was caused by the additional time that trainers required to navigate the online sites after the training, the delay in training PASHA center staff and the challenges faced with infrastructure in rural regions.

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Female beneficiaries prioritized flexible work arrangements that would allow them to fulfill their household duties.** This included raising children and siblings and performing household chores. These demands on their time often conflicted with their career aspirations. Young women indicated that they needed to pursue careers that were more flexible in terms of their time and ability to be at home.

2. **The lack of soft skills remains a pervasive skills gap for youth.** This gap is related to the soft skills required to succeed as an online worker. Independent working, self-motivation, self-discipline and client engagement were identified by the Youth Banner as the skills with the highest gaps amongst the youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Digital jobs programs should partner with IT companies, traditional authorities and government agencies that can assist in overcoming barriers to accessing ICT.** This is particularly crucial when implementing digital youth employment programs in informal settlements and rural regions, where Internet access is expensive and residents have limited access to or ownership of computers.

2. **Greater effort should be made to inform youth about the value of and opportunities available within online work**. This can be done, for example, through online awareness campaigns, word of mouth through trusted community organizations, print advertisements or social media campaigns.

3. **Digital Jobs programs should equip youth with both technical and soft skills.** Programs should develop curricula that address soft skills topics such as self-motivation and self-discipline, patience and independent working. This will help to ensure beneficiaries are sufficiently prepared to face the challenges associated with online work and subsequently reduce the drop-out rate of online work.

4. **Programs must develop evaluation tools to assess beneficiaries' level of competency for navigating online work and determine the skills training they require based on the gaps identified.** This will enable more targeted, tailored training. such tools can test aspects of digital literacy, familiarity with digital tools and programs, familiarity with digital terminology and jargon, and, degree of comfort with online browsing and use of online platforms.

5. **Program staff should determine whether it is necessary to separate male and female beneficiaries**. This can help ensure that women are comfortable to participate in digital jobs programs and attain the maximum benefit from the training.

6. **Digital jobs programs need clearly set expectations for youth beneficiaries. Program staff must clearly communicate key information with respect to** the program curriculum and the nature of digital work. This will help to ensure that youth beneficiaries understand the content of the training, income potential of online work, payment schedule and consistency of work. This will further increase retention in the program and contribute to the sustained, long-term success of beneficiaries.