



# A WORKING FUTURE AND A NEW ERA OF COLLABORATION

Taking cross-sector partnerships  
beyond philanthropy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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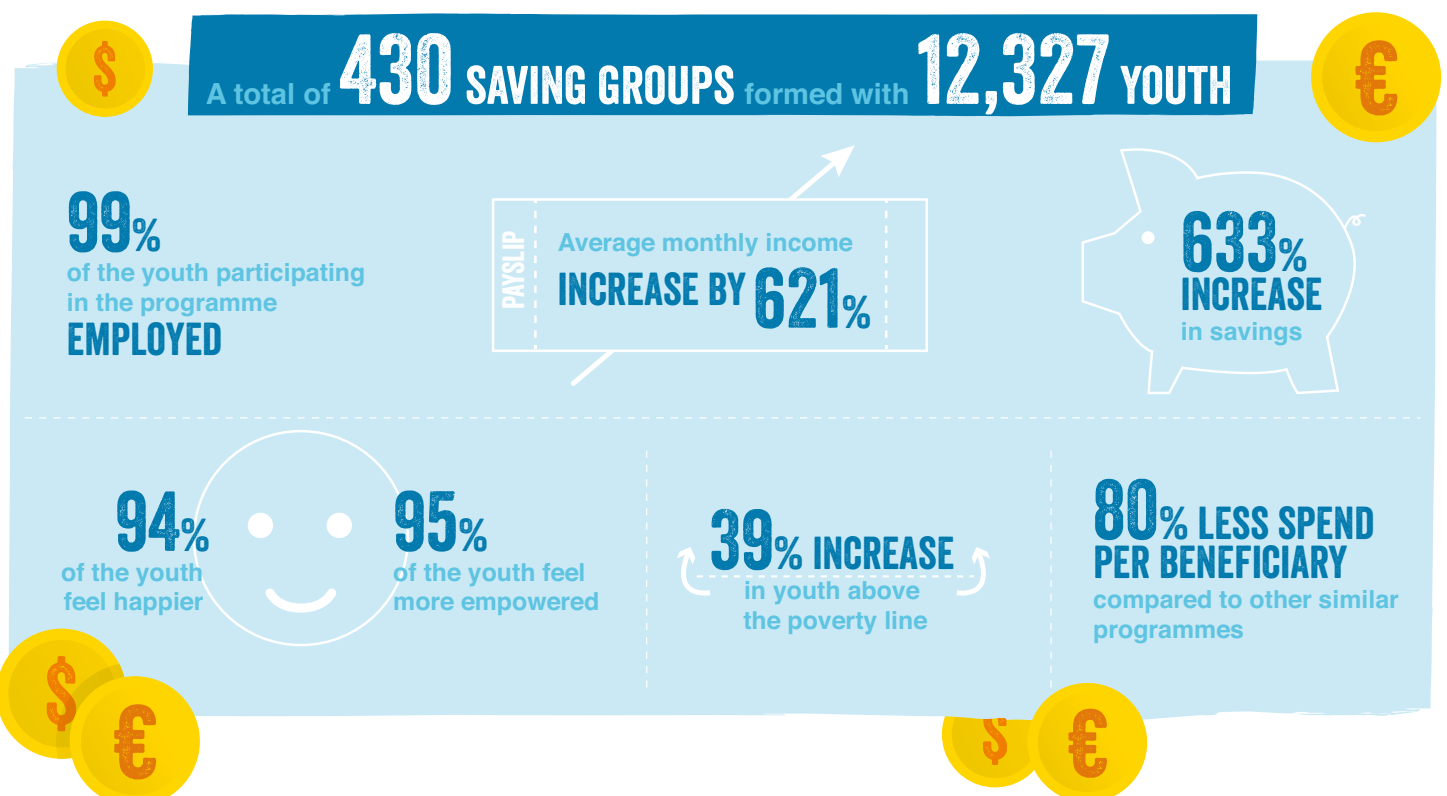
The A Working Future youth economic empowerment programme has proven that partnerships between the development sector and corporate sector can successfully address social issues while also generating commercial value. A Working Future is a perfect example of a contextually adapted model for change in a new era of collaboration, for all sectors to be inspired by.

With an increasing youth unemployment rate, particularly in developing countries, it has become increasingly evident that new measures are required to address the lack of opportunity and sustainable income that these youth face. Cross-sector partnerships have a central role to play in meeting this challenge and helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. There is a growing awareness that cross-sector collaboration has the potential of effectively addressing social issues and creating value to satisfy the needs of both society and business.

New contextually adapted models are needed to scale and sustain initiatives to solve social issues. Surprisingly, few skills-building programmes are anchored in the local context, often based on donor strategies over market relevance and rarely incorporating the private sector. Therefore, innovative models for sustainable development are needed, where both strategies and resources are shared across sectors. It is unrealistic to think that the social

issue of youth unemployment can be solved without collaborating across sectors. New approaches for partnering are needed that adapt to the local context.

The A Working Future programme was born out of the desire to identify ways to support youth economic empowerment through innovative methods of collaboration with the private sector. The programme targeted a total of 12,000 youth, aged 15-25 years old, in the rural Tororo and Kamuli districts in Eastern Uganda. The A Working Future model had its foundation in savings groups to provide increased access to financial services, and used them as a platform to teach critical skills required for formal jobs and self-employment. The youths were then linked to the private sector through three different employment pathways: job placements, micro-franchises, and producer groups. The private sector was engaged in all stages of the programme. The outcome of the programme has been fantastic.



## THE FACTORS IN A WORKING FUTURE'S SUCCESS

Three separate key success factors have been identified from interviews with key stakeholders in the programme:

### Being able to adapt to the local context

The A Working Future programme started in an inception phase with a feasibility study, which enabled the programme to adapt to the local context and fully understand the needs of the market and beneficiaries. This was critical to ensuring that appropriate employment opportunities were developed, skills provided to the programme participants were appropriate, and the right private sector relationships were established. Adapting the programme to the actual market needs not only increased the rate of employment, but also the income-earning potential of the participants. It has therefore been key in the overall success of the programme, and proven to be a necessary activity for the development of any youth empowerment programme.

### Leveraging the savings groups platform for outreach and scalability

The flexibility in approach which enabled leveraging the existing programme structures of the savings groups for outreach has been key to the success of A Working Future. The savings groups have proven a formidable platform for facilitating youth economic empowerment in the rural context, and a digital mobile banking component, as well as other potential digital solutions to drive businesses and facilitate private sector linkages, supports scaling. Given that savings groups are a frequently used form of organising youth in many regions, the A Working Future model holds a great potential for scale and outreach.

### Taking private sector partnerships beyond philanthropy to create shared value

Collaborating with the private sector was a part of the core objectives of A Working Future from the start. As an organisation that focuses on ending child poverty and helping youth transition into adulthood, there is a direct correlation between the mission of Plan International and a focus on reducing unemployment. However, there are several components that Plan International Uganda would simply not be able to conduct by themselves; they needed the resources and expertise of partnering organisations from all sectors. An ecosystem was developed where multiple partners supported the outcomes of the programme with their specific expertise and capabilities, engaged in everything from programme design to training the youth, building a strong foundation for providing the youth with the support they needed to achieve economic empowerment. These partnerships were strategic and based on shared value for both society and business. The partners in the A Working Future programme all have a clear business case for participating and will keep working with the youth after the programme end. Therefore, the impact of the private sector partnerships in A Working Future is continuing to grow, creating more shared value as they mature.

**FULL REPORT AVAILABLE AT:**  
[plan-international.org/working-future](https://plan-international.org/working-future)

## ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL



We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 75 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 70 countries.







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Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions – underpinned by the world's largest delivery network – Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With more than 373,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.

## ABOUT ACCENTURE SKILLS TO SUCCEED ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROGRAMME

A global Accenture Corporate Citizenship driven five-year academic research programme to increase insights the role of cross-sector collaboration in solving social issues and finding solutions for employment and livelihoods. The programme started in 2013, and includes an academic component in form of a PhD programme at Stockholm School of Economics.

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### Plan International

International Headquarters  
Dukes Court, Duke Street, Woking,  
Surrey GU21 5BH, United Kingdom  
t +44 (0) 1483 755155  
f +44 (0) 1483 756505  
e [info@plan-international.org](mailto:info@plan-international.org)

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