

Youth Innovation Challenge Program



About 50% of Africa's population is below the age of 18 and an extraordinarily high percentage of it is between the ages of 15-25, and this figure is growing by the day making Africa amongst the most 'youthful' continents. Despite this, African Youth are often placed at the margins of the public sphere and major political, socio-economic, and cultural dialogues. Above all, 72% of African Youth live on less than \$2 a day. Africa's poverty is therefore largely a problem of the youth.



The African Technology Policy Studies network (ATPS) therefore places a huge emphasis on building capacities of African youth and women as drivers of their own destinies and Africa's development, through dynamic engagement in science, technology and innovation (STI) policy research, policy process and policy practice. It was in pursuance of this objective that the African Youth Forum for Science and Technology (AYFST) was initiated in 2005 in collaboration with the Centre for Tropical Agriculture, CTA, the Netherlands. Since then, the AYFST has provided a useful platform for African Young Professionals to build capacity in STI policy research, policy dialogue and policy practice both within Africa and in the Diaspora (for details see, <http://www.ayfst.org>).

In response to the findings from the report of the Africa Commission "Realizing the Potential of Africa's Youth"; the NEPAD strategy for Science and Technology and other African and International initiatives for the empowerment of the youth, the ATPS is pleased to announce the launch of a new program, "The Youth Innovation Challenge (Y I CAN) program, 'read as "Why I Can." The program" has been developed under the auspices of the ATPS Phase VI Strategic Plan, 2008 – 2012. The Y I CAN program is designed to build a culture of innovation amongst young people in Africa by promoting innovation through targeted collaboration/partnerships with the triple helix: (Researchers, Private Sector Actors and Policy Makers). Y I CAN will be implemented in five modules designed to fit targeted young people categories:

1. Innovation Incubator Initiatives (3-Is):

This is a strategic mentorship initiative where competition winners are given a chance to translate their ideas (tacit or codified) into actual technologies or innovations for addressing specific challenges in a production or service chain in specified sectors or stakeholder communities. Specific attention will be paid to inclusion of ideas



based on tacit or codified knowledge, scientific research and/or craftsmanship in selected sectors including sustainable water and environmental management, climate change, health, and agriculture. The idea or prototype technology should be aimed at solving a specific problem in the production or service chain of a target industry or stakeholder community in Africa. It could be in the form of a specific research idea, science manuscript or craftsmanship that require testing in a target laboratory, a rural community, a private industry or a government ministry. Successful applicants will be linked with relevant actors in the relevant areas (private or public sectors) on the continent for a chance to incubate the idea and turn it into tangible technologies/innovations to solve practical problems identified.

2. Innovation Challenge Awards:

This involves competitive award of annual prizes for outstanding achievements by African Youths in addressing development challenges in specific sectors, including climate change adaptation and mitigation in Africa; agricultural innovation systems; public health and disease prevention (including HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Cholera); water and sanitation, and sustainable management of ecosystem services.

3. Youth Internship and Post Doctoral Fellowship program.

The program seeks to provide opportunities for short-term mentoring of students at college, undergraduate and postgraduate levels in STI policy related subjects. The 3-6 month Placements and staff exchange programs aim to enable young people at the beginning of STI research careers under the supervision of senior colleagues in Africa to work in multidisciplinary environments and establish networks to foster systems thinking and innovation under close supervision by experienced colleagues. The program will also include training and mentorship for scientific writing; science publications, and science journalism. ➤

Africa's youth composes a huge pool of talent and energy that is currently not being fully exploited. Given the opportunity the African youth can be an important driver of change. They have the potential to lift the continent out of poverty.

Ulla Törnæs
Member of the Africa Commission

“ There’s always something new from Africa ”

Pliny the Elder (23-79 AD)



4. Integrated leadership & Entrepreneurship Training.

Y I Can seeks to develop innovative youth leaders through an integrated leadership and entrepreneurship training programme. The course places an emphasis on self-discipline and self-mastery to guide principled actions. It uses 4 Great Purposes to shape the vision of these young entrepreneurs to create businesses committed to excellence and a service to others:

1. “The Good” – Providing an authentic service based on empathy towards the needs and desires of other people.
2. “The True” – Using the excitement of discovery and the pursuit of truth to create products or services that have never existed before and advance the well-being of humanity.
3. “The Beautiful” – Searching for creative excellence and the quest for perfection in design and functionality to enrich the lives of customers or users.

4. “The Heroic” – Creating systems that change or improve the world through heroic efforts.

5. Integrated Peer-to-Peer Collaboration

This will involve match making to enhance inter-regional South - South as well as North - South collaboration amongst innovative youths.

Pay it forward

The Y I CAN program is built on the strong belief that the future of Africa largely depends on STI capacity of youths. By providing platforms for proactive mentorship and entrepreneurship incubation, ATPS hopes that the multiplier effects on poverty alleviation and sustainable management of ecosystem services in Africa will be significant.

The program will be implemented under the “Pay It Forward” (PIF) mentorship concept. The “Pay It Forward” concept is based on the commitment by graduates of the program to ensure that the knowledge and skills gained through the Y I CAN program will be paid forward through a reciprocal process to another group of youths within their communities and networks. (See Figure 1 below). By promoting youth-youth interaction, Y I CAN will be a catalyst for the innovating innovation in Africa. This ensures that the program will have a wider circle of influence and bigger impact on the society.



fact file:

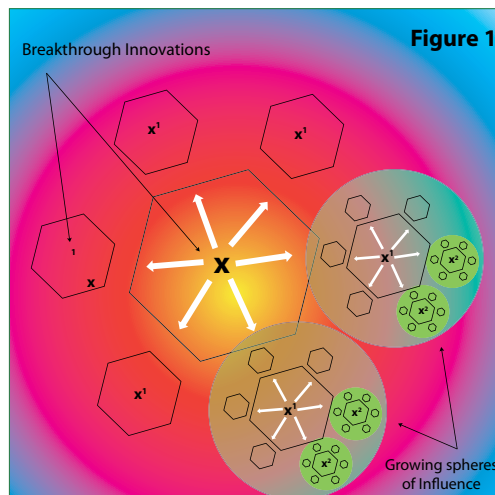
More than 70 % of all Zimbabweans are now under 30. The same is true for Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda Liberia and Nigeria. This “youth bulge” may also be viewed as an opportunity for the continent to capitalize on its large youthful workforce before it starts to age.

72% of African Youth live on less than \$2 a day.

Economic growth over the past two decades has not translated into job creation, so the rapidly expanding group of young adults must find its way in the informal economy.

African youth have far less access to ICT’s than their counterparts in developed countries. In the continent, which comprises 13% of the world’s population, half of which is below the age of 18 has only 0.4% of the content on the World Wide Web.

Pay it Forward Concept (PIF)*



innovation:

William Kamkwamba:

The story of a young innovator

Forced to drop out of school at age 14 because his family could no longer afford tuition, William Kamkwamba of Malawi set out to study energy and build windmills on his own. Kamkwamba, now 20, built his windmill, by lashing blue-gum tree trunks together for the base and adding flattened plastic pipes for the blades and bike parts for the turbine, all the while relying on a textbook donated to his local library.

His story traveled over the Internet, and environmental activists and venture capitalists have since teamed up to fund his education and projects. Kamkwamba’s story demonstrates how need and motivation, along with a tiny spark of globalization, contribute to innovation that’s both powerful and inspirational.

*The PIF concept is adapted from community leadership model developed in Nigeria.

Call for Expression of Interest (EOI):

ATPS is pleased to call for expressions of interest (EOI) for participation in these initiatives from:

Category		Who Should Express Interest?	Program Contact e-mail
A	Potential Applicants	African youths aged 18 – 35 years in Africa and in Diaspora	YICAN@atpsnet.org
B	Potential Mentors	Relevant experts from the triple helix (Science Institutions, Private Sector Actors, and Government Ministries)	YICAN@atpsnet.org
C	Institutional Partners	Industries, Science Laboratories, Government Ministries, Academies of Science, NGOs, UN Agencies, etc	YICAN@atpsnet.org

Development Partners, Private Sector Entrepreneurs, Government Agencies, and Donors who wish to support this initiative are requested to contact Dr. Kevin Urama, the Executive Director by email at: ExecutiveDirector@atpsnet.org

Expression of Interest (EOI) application form:

If you are interested in participating in these initiatives in either of the above categories kindly fill in the form and submit it to the relevant email addresses specified above or to the address provided overleaf. The Y I CAN Steering Committee will revert to you regarding further procedures for participation.

Please tick the appropriate title Prof. Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms.

Category of Expression of Interest
(Please refer to the table above)

Full Name

Country

Address

Telephone Fax

Email Website

Current Position

Organization

Academic Discipline
Industry/Policy Sector

*(Supporting documentation; CVs/ Institutional Profiles are required for **category A & B** only)

Specialist Interest(s)

Date

Signature

“ATPS is committed to building the STI capacity of Africa’s youth today, for sustainable development tomorrow”

About the ATPS

The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) is a leading multi-disciplinary network of researchers, practitioners and policy makers that promotes science, technology and innovation (STI) policy research, dialogue and practice, for African Development. It’s mission is to improve the quality of science, technology, and innovation research, policy and practice for sustainable development in Africa, by Africans and for Africans. The fundamental

strategic goal of the ATPS is to build Africa’s STI capacity today for sustainable development tomorrow. With a Secretariat Headquarters in Nairobi, the ATPS works through national chapters in 23 countries of sub-Saharan Africa with a vision to cover the whole of the region by 2015 (see Figure 2). The regional secretariat and the national chapters provide ground facilities and platforms for STI capacity building at both regional and national levels.



For more information, please contact:



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