TogetherForSDGs

Co-creating flourishing futures

A youth-led *intergenerational* approach to the **advancement** of the Sustainable Development Goals

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Executive Summary

The TogetherForSDGs Impact Hub is an initiative designed to foster intergenerational collaboration between youth leaders, civil society organizations, and policy bodies to advance the Sustainable Development Goals through a design-thinking process. This initiative bridges youth, older adults, local civil society, and intergovernmental actors to create scalable, sustainable, and impactful partnerships that drive meaningful change.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development champions the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs are a set of goals agreed upon by Member States of the United Nations in September 2015 related to poverty, education, gender equality, and climate change. The goals are aligned with the five themes of the 2030 Development Agenda, which encompass: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership.

Advancing the SDGs calls for people across generations to collaborate, drawing on their diverse experiences and perspectives to address shared global challenges. An intergenerational approach is essential for fostering meaningful relationships and reducing stereotypes between younger and older generations. The experiences and ingenuity of both generations serve as catalysts for identifying and advancing solutions to the SDGs.

As emphasized in the theme of partnership, a spirit of strengthened global solidarity is required to ensure all individuals are able to lead meaningful and dignified lives [1]. Inclusive, participatory approaches to community-led development help ensure that no one is left behind–one of the core commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The TogetherForSDGs report summarizes an initiative led by youth through an intergenerational approach to advancing solutions to the SDGs. The initiative was launched in April 2025 as a follow-up to key commitments on intergenerational solidarity articulated at the UN Civil Society Conference 2024 [2], translating global dialogue into community-led action.

Through intergenerational collaboration, participants developed prototypes that address pressing issues within their communities. This report highlights solutions and key insights emerging from the process, offering learning and inspiration for practitioners working in diverse contexts globally.

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[1] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations. https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda.
[2] 2024 United Nations Civil Society Conference. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/civilsociety/2024uncsc.

Participants continue to refine, implement, and share lessons learned from their initiatives. The recommendations in this report align with United Nations global frameworks that support community-led development, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the World Programme of Action on Youth (WPAY), and the Pact for the Future.

The TogetherForSDGs participants are pleased to share their passion and invite collaborators and partners to join them in continuing to make a meaningful impact in communities around the world.

As Margaret Mead once observed, "*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.*"

Inspired by this spirit, and echoing Malala Yousafzai's wisdom: *"Let us make our future now, and let us make our dreams tomorrow's reality",* this report shares how emerging youth leaders and experienced changemakers are working side by side to advance the SDGs across generations. Ultimately it is an invitation for us all to take action, co-creating and prototyping ideas in collaboration across the generations.

intergenerational

/in·ter·jeh·ne·ray·shuh·nuhl/ adjective

Intergenerational programs are defined as programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between people of different generations, allowing them to share their talents and resources and support each other in relationships that benefit both the individuals and their community.

https://www.gu.org/projects/program-certification/

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the TogetherForSDGs Co-Leads, **Dr. Kristin Bodiford**, UN Representative for Generations United, for sharing the Building Communities in Action framework *which* she co-designed into our initiative's design research process and for stewarding intergenerational learning spaces alongside **Cairo Eubanks**, UN Youth Representative for Generations United, who provided co-leadership and representation on panels, and **Omondi Peter** Founder & CEO at Global Youth Forum (Member of the UN Football For The Goals) and Club17, who mobilized and mentored Design Teams.

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Gratitude is extended for the opportunity to share TogetherForSDGs and our youth-focused intergenerational approach in multistakeholder workshops and panels convened by United Nations entities, NGOs, civil society mechanisms, and local government partners, including the following:
- **#YouthLead Dialogues Foresight Workshop** (*UNICEF Innocenti – Global Office of Research and Foresight*, *UN Futures Lab*, and the *UN Youth Office*)
- **UN Global Horizon Scanning Panel for the Second World Social Summit** (*UN Futures Lab Network* and *UN DESA*)
- **Joint panel** of the *NGO Committee on Ageing* and the *Global NGO Executive Committee*

- **Youth Engagement Panel** at the **Florida International Trade & Cultural Expo (FITCE)** hosted by *Broward County Government* in Florida, United States.

Special thanks to the *International Youth Day: Designing the Future Together: Local Action, Global Impact* moderators and TogetherForSDGs Initiative Co-Leads *Cairo Eubanks*, *Dr. Kristin Bodiford*, and *Peter Omondi*; to Design Team Leads **Elizabeth Waliuba**, **Aishu Narasimhadevara**, **Tito Mwenda**, **Nazia Naz**, **Ralia Ali Hussein**, **Timothy Emmanuel**, **Anini Esho**, and **Fana Ceesay** for sharing their teams' prototype solutions, and to **Donna Butts** (Generations United) and **Carole Agengo** (Co-Chair, 2024 UN Civil Society Conference & Center for Global South Initiatives in Development) for sharing intergenerational strategies and planting reflection "seeds" in response to Design Team Leads prototype solutions.

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Introduction

Background

Purpose

This insights document synthesizes the lived wisdom, bold ideas, and emerging strategies from intergenerational conversations across diverse communities. It highlights youth and older persons who are addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through relational, culturally relevant collaboration.

Through TogetherForSDGs, our intention is to invite co-designing by:
- Listening deeply to what communities already know.
- Building relationships across generations.
- Testing small, field-based prototypes that bridge traditional wisdom and innovation.

By lifting up these insights, we aim to support teams, networks, and organizations in designing intergenerational strategies that are relational, regenerative, and responsive—rooted in the belief that transformational change begins in the space between us.

This document is both a map and an invitation to:
- honor what has come before,
- create together in the present, and
- nurture a future where all generations flourish.

Context

These insights were generated through intergenerational conversations using a methodology called *Building Communities in Action* (see Appendix A, Page 56).

This participatory research is being led by youth and community teams across multiple countries. The dialogues include:
- Rural and urban voices, including participants from Turkana, Kakuma refugee communities, Bungoma, Makueni, Meru, Nairobi County, informal settlements in Nairobi, and rural and semi-urban contexts in southern Pakistan and Sindh Province.
- Multiple generations, from adolescents and young adults to older persons with deep cultural knowledge and life experience.
- A wide range of professions and lived roles, including smallholder farmers, students, healthcare providers, traditional healers, social workers, psychologists, civil society advocates, teachers, spiritual leaders, and policymakers.

This diversity ensured that the insights reflect real-world experience across different ages, geographies, and cultural contexts. Together, these voices illuminate how intergenerational collaboration is already happening in practice—and where new strategies, support, and relational design can help it grow.

In every region where conversations were held, participants across generations expressed a clear interest in working together. These partnerships weren't framed as obligations, but as a meaningful way to contribute. Whether through farming practices in Meru, vocational training in Nairobi, or mentoring relationships in Accra and Kolkata, intergenerational collaboration shows up as a practical strategy for strengthening communities. The insights point to intergenerational collaboration as a welcomed and necessary strategy for advancing the SDGs.

Vision

We believe that intergenerational collaboration is a mindset, a strategy, and a relational commitment to how we build a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world.

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires more than technical solutions. It requires connection across generations, where wisdom is not lost, innovation is not isolated, and leadership is not limited to any one age or role.

This work envisions a future where:
- Older persons are recognized as stewards of knowledge, culture, and resilience.
- Youth are seen as catalysts for creativity, technology, and bold change.
- And the space between them becomes a source of learning, healing, and transformation.

Through intergenerational collaboration, development shifts from top-down models to co-created futures, with solutions shaped by community knowledge, lived experience, and local culture.

What we are learning is that intergenerational collaboration is not an add-on, but a strategic accelerator for achieving the SDGs.

"It's not optional—it's foundational." – Michelle Gathoni

Overview

With less than five years to 2030, only 17% of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are on track [2]. Achieving these goals requires bold, inclusive collaboration across all sectors and generations.

SDG 17 calls for partnerships. By bringing together the creativity of younger leaders and the wisdom of older generations, we can co-create powerful, scalable, and sustainable solutions.

"We need people of all ages, young and old alike, to join forces to build a better world for all." — António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

TogetherForSDGs is a global initiative mobilizing intergenerational collaboration to accelerate the SDGs. Through the Intergenerational Impact Hub, youth advocates, older changemakers, civil society organizations, and policy actors come together to co-design and implement solutions rooted in community wisdom and shared leadership.

Advancing the Pact for the Future Through Intergenerational Action

At the 2024 UN Civil Society Conference in Nairobi, civil society leaders and youth delegates affirmed their commitment to intergenerational partnerships through the Pact for the Future [3]:

- Action 35: Promote intergenerational solidarity to foster inclusion across families, workplaces, and society.
- Action 36: Ensure meaningful youth participation in shaping policies and decision-making at all levels, including intergenerational dialogue.
- Action 37: Strengthen meaningful youth participation at the international level.

TogetherForSDGs builds on this momentum by catalyzing action for International Youth Day 2025 and beyond through listening sessions, design research, capacity building, and global advocacy.

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[2] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2024). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report*. United Nations. https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda.

[3] *2024 United Nations Civil Society Conference*. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/civilsociety/2024uncsc.

Building Communities in Action Framework

Intergenerational Methodology: The Building Communities In Action Framework

This initiative follows the Building Communities in Action Framework that offers a relational approach to complex challenges grounded in co-creation, shared power, and community-led innovation.

Rather than jumping straight into solutions, this framework begins with listening to:
- surface lived experiences,
- honor community strengths, and
- cultivate trust across generations.

It creates space for youth, elders, and allies to move from insight to action, and from action to sustained impact.

In practice, this kind of bridge-building goes beyond attending meetings together to co-designing solutions. It offers processes where a young person's lived experience and knowledge carries the same weight as decades of institutional memory, technical expertise, or elder leadership.

In TogetherForSDGs, this shows up very practically: youth designers work directly with older adults to shape our design research questions, gather global and community insights, test prototypes, and co-create recommendations.

This methodology — the Building Communities in Action framework — intentionally integrates intergenerational perspectives. It's built on relational and practical pillars:
- *Know-Being*: which is about presence, deep listening, trust-building, and recognizing the strengths that different generations bring.
- *Know-How:* which includes co-framing the challenge, designing solutions together, enacting and adapting prototypes, and reflecting as a community.

This framework ensures that intergenerational collaboration isn't symbolic — it's systemic. This kind of bridge-building is both a mindset and a methodology: design together, decide together, deliver together.

Building Communities in Action Framework

An iterative relational process including know-being principles and know-how practices

Reflecting
Integrating ongoing learning to refine processes and sustain meaningful change

Framing
Developing clarity and building trust to align community efforts

Know-Being Principles
Centering relationships
Engaging dynamically
Recognizing complexity
Focusing on usefulness

Enacting
Implementing and adapting solutions through community-led action

Designing
Co-creating solutions that respond to community needs and priorities
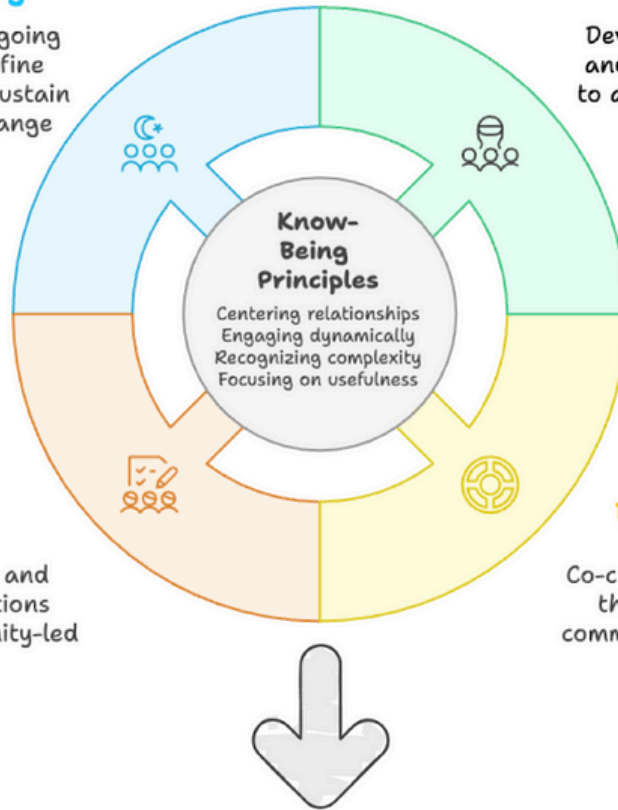
Know-Being Principles

Centering Relationships
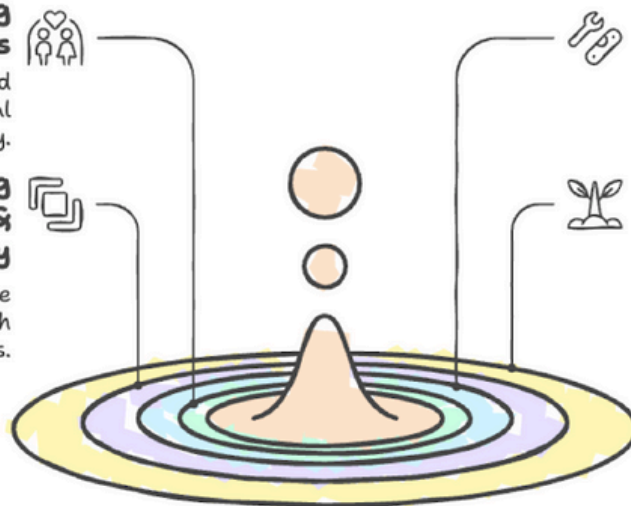Creates trust, shared meaning, and mutual accountability.

Focusing On What's Useful
Fosters action-oriented & meaningful co-owned solutions.

Recognizing Complexity & Multiplicity
Encourages diverse perspectives with inclusive approaches.

Engaging Organically & Dynamically
Builds possibilities through participation, connection, and responsiveness.

TogetherForSDGs implemented the Building in Communities Framework in the following three phases.

✅ Phase 1: Framing & Listening (April – June 2025)

Goal: Align grassroots strategies with local realities and global SDG goals through intergenerational collaboration.

Design Activities:
- Launch of the TogetherForSDGs Design Team.
- A global group of younger and older leaders engaged in relational research and listening sessions in their communities.
- "Story catching" and dialogue facilitation surfaced shared values, strengths, and community challenges.

Deliverable:
An insights report summarized key findings to inform strategic design and policy advocacy in Phases 2 and 3.

✅ Phase 2: Designing Intergenerational Strategies (July – August 2025)

Goal: Co-create SDG-aligned, community-rooted strategies that strengthen intergenerational collaboration.

Design Activities: Using insights from Phase 1, participants engaged in participatory workshops, storytelling circles, and co-design labs to identify shared priorities and opportunities, and co-design strategies

Flagship Event:
A hybrid global workshop synthesizing the information gained during the Phase I design training sessions and throughout the design research process resulted in a virtual global presentation and workshop, titled Designing the Future: Local Actions, Global Impact, in honor of International Youth Day (August 12, 2025). Participants presented insights and strategies, learned from each other, and built global momentum for intergenerational action.

Deliverables:
- A report on Intergenerational Action featuring case studies and strategies (this report!).
- Action recommendations for UN bodies, CSOs, and grassroots leaders to sustain impact (included in this report).

✅ Phase 3: Enacting & Advocacy (October 2025 and Beyond)

Goal: Translate community-designed strategies into tangible action, global advocacy, and long-term systems change.

Design Activities:
- Catalyzing intergenerational action through a virtual event to share resources, success stories, and community commitments.
- Dissemination of a digital toolkit for intergenerational action (launching soon!).
- Policy engagement to embed intergenerational collaboration into ongoing SDG implementation efforts.

Outcomes:
- Stronger cross-generational partnerships and peer learning networks
- Replicable strategies and tools in use across diverse contexts
- Policy recommendations shaped by grassroots wisdom and community experience

Intended Outcomes & Impact

✓ **Strengthened Local Capacity:** Grassroots organizations are empowered to implement intergenerational projects aligned with the SDGs.

✓ **Intergenerational Networks:** Youth and older adults collaborate to address local and global challenges.

✓ **Scalable Strategies:** Intergenerational approaches are shared and replicated globally.

✓ **Policy Influence:** Insights from grassroots initiatives shape global discussions on intergenerational collaboration.

Framing Insights

This section summarizes insights from Phase 1: Framing & Listening. Each team framed research questions. Framing is the foundation for relational research and co-design by creating questions that invite curiosity, connection, and possibility. The insights and opportunities are organized by related SDGs that were most important to their community. These insights formed the co-design of prototypes in Phase 2.

SDG 1: No Poverty

Framing Question: What strengths and roles do the younger and older generations play in eradicating poverty, and how can intergenerational collaboration accelerate progress towards SDG 1?

Insights:

Youth bring innovation, technological expertise, and fresh perspectives, driving entrepreneurial energy to create jobs and sustainable solutions.
- They leverage digital activism, social media, and global connectivity to influence policy, mobilize resources, crowdfund projects, and share knowledge.
- Youth are encouraged to prioritize formal, informal, and vocational education as a key tool for poverty eradication.
- Their enthusiasm for making an impact often manifests through joining and volunteering in community service groups

Older generations offer invaluable wisdom, experience, generational wealth, and established networks for sustainable poverty alleviation.
- They provide mentorship and traditional knowledge, support community-based initiatives, and advocate for social protection policies like pensions and healthcare.
- Crucially, older persons contribute to economic development and community leadership, educating youth on skills, values, work ethic, and social responsibility through mentorship, volunteering, and financial contributions.

Synergistic intergenerational approaches create comprehensive, resilient solutions to complex challenges, fostering lasting impact.
- This includes multi-generational program designs (2G and 3G models) that address family needs and promote economic empowerment.
- Mentorship & skill transfer build financial literacy and career opportunities for youth.
- Youth-led technology initiatives improve digital literacy for older adults, boosting access to healthcare and resources.

Barriers to Poverty Eradication:
The following barriers were identified in their community conversations:
- A social disconnect in understanding complex issues often stems from living in distinct societal "dimensions," hindering poverty and food insecurity eradication.
- Corruption is a significant negative factor, with leaders stealing billions and hindering the allocation of funds for crucial issues like water access, thereby contributing to poverty
- Progress has been fragmented due to the rise of geopolitical tensions and politicians working for their own agendas.
- Unequal access to water due to rainfall disparities and varied soil fertility contributes to food insecurity and poverty.
- There remains limited access to appropriate financial services like microloans, insurance products, and savings mechanisms. A lack of agricultural experts on the ground to advise smallholder farmers leads to low crop yield and insufficient guidance on fertilizers and pesticides.
- Excessive use of technology among younger generations can sometimes affect their awareness of global issues.

What's Emerging
- **Intergenerational collaboration is a core strategy**, not a supporting activity, for addressing poverty across education, finance, civic engagement, and values transfer.
- **Poverty reduction requires integrated responses**, combining institutional capacity, education, and skills development, appropriate technology, and inclusive financial systems.
- **Governance and transparency are foundational,** with corruption identified as a key barrier to progress on poverty reduction and the SDGs.
- **Wealth building must span generations,** linking intergenerational wealth transfer with sustained economic participation by younger generations.
- **Values matter,** with work ethic, social responsibility, and community commitment seen as essential to long-term impact.

Strategic Opportunities for Poverty Eradication:
- **Leverage existing institutions:** Paramount in addressing these complex issues.
- **Embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI has transformative potential for data collection and analysis, informing Technical Vocational and Education Training institutions to tailor curricula for evolving job market needs, empowering individuals, and fostering economic resilience.

- **Improve financial access:** Crucial for poverty eradication, this involves providing microloans, agricultural insurance, and savings mechanisms to empower communities to invest and build resilience. Integrating financial literacy, potentially via TVET, amplifies impact
- **Strengthen governance:** Creating a disciplinary committee that actively monitors government spending could address issues like food security and lack of access to water.
- **Localize global goals:** Governments should adopt tips to localize Global Goals in education, for example, by installing young SDG ambassadors in schools.
- **Invest in multi-generational programs:** Address economic, educational, and social needs.
- **Empower youth and integrate wisdom of older people:** Create pathways for youth participation as co-leaders in decision-making, and facilitate knowledge transfer of sustainable practices from older generations.

"Mentorship is essential in ensuring there is collaboration amongst various generations for equality." – Group Summary

📝 **Design Idea: Intergenerational Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship Hub**
Co-create a community space where older persons, with their life experience and financial wisdom, mentor youth in developing business plans, accessing microloans, and understanding financial services, potentially integrating digital tools and AI for market analysis.

SDG 2: Zero Hunger Through Food Security & Sustainable Agriculture

Framing Question: How can older persons' indigenous farming wisdom and youth innovation co-create food systems for future generations?

Insights:

By combining traditional knowledge and innovation, we can develop shared practices such as the use of granaries, neem leaves, natural preservation techniques, vertical farming, sprinkler irrigation, and hydroponics.

Barriers:

- Climate unpredictability
- Lack of access to tools or knowledge
- Policy gaps

What's Emerging:

- **Strong enthusiasm for blending knowledge systems:** Youth expressed excitement about integrating modern farming innovations—such as vertical farming, hydroponics, and organic systems—with traditional agricultural knowledge to address sustainability, food storage, and climate challenges.
- **Youth as bridge-builders:** Younger generations see themselves as carriers of ancestral wisdom, adapting indigenous practices to contemporary climate conditions and technological realities.
- **Knowledge transfer as food security strategy:** Passing on planting, harvesting, seed saving, and food preservation practices from older to younger generations—while incorporating new technologies—was identified as essential to strengthening food security.
- **Intergenerational collaboration is essential:** Participants emphasized that food security depends on collaboration between older generations' experiential knowledge and younger generations' technical and digital expertise.

Strategic Opportunities:

- **Support intergenerational collaboration in agriculture:** Leverage older generations' knowledge of traditional farming techniques, indigenous seeds, water conservation, and food preservation alongside youth-led innovations such as AI tools, digital marketing, and climate-smart agriculture.
- **Develop intergenerational innovation hubs:** Establish spaces where youth and older adults co-create solutions—such as combining seed saving with vertical farming—through demo farms, school garden clubs with elders as trainers, youth-led digital storytelling, and mixed-age cooperatives.

- **Strengthen documentation and knowledge transfer:** Train youth to document and scale indigenous practices (e.g., natural pest control, soil care, drought resilience) using digital tools and platforms.
- **Promote intergenerational farming cooperatives:** Support cooperatives where youth introduce technology-enabled irrigation and market access while older farmers share drought-resistant crop methods and land stewardship practices.
- **Advance climate-resilient seed development:** Facilitate collaboration across generations to preserve and adapt indigenous seed varieties suited to drought-prone and climate-vulnerable regions.
- **Improve market access for smallholder farmers:** Invest in software and AI-driven solutions that connect farmers directly to markets, reducing food loss, poverty, and reliance on intermediaries.
- **Strengthen community-based food systems:** Support community gardens where older generations teach plant care, cultivation methods, and food waste reduction and recycling.
- **Advocate for land rights and fair trade:** Draw on the lived experience of older generations to inform advocacy for land security and fair agricultural policies.

"Passing on planting, harvesting, and food storage traditions with the involvement of tech is key." – Gloria Livingstream, Ghana

"Younger and older generations are collaborating for food security through initiatives that combine modern farming techniques and digital literacy with traditional agricultural practices." – Sulaiman, Nigeria

📝 **Design Idea: Intergenerational Learning Gardens & Digital Knowledge Exchange**
Prototype a school-based learning garden that blends ancestral seed saving, soil care, and pest management with youth-led digital tools such as drone crop surveillance, weather apps, and mobile storytelling.

The garden functions as an intergenerational innovation hub—a shared physical and digital learning space where older adults serve as knowledge holders and youth act as translators and bridge-builders. Digital channels (e.g., WhatsApp groups, community radio, or short-form video) document local food knowledge and enable youth to remix and share practices for wider community learning and adaptation.

SDG 3: Mental Health & Traditional Healing

Framing Question: How can relational healing bridge generations, blending spiritual wisdom and psychological tools?

Insights:
Traditional healing integration can be strengthened with public openness, the successful use of herbal remedies, and spiritual healing collaboration with clinics.

Barriers:
- Lack of regulation
- Scientific skepticism
- Inter-practitioner distrust

What's Emerging:
- **Strong public support for integration:** Youth-led research found broad support—particularly among younger generations—for recalling and integrating traditional healing systems (e.g., herbal medicine, cupping, shamanic practices) into national mental health strategies.
- **Demand for legitimacy and safeguards:** Participants emphasized the need for formal recognition, safety standards, and research funding to responsibly preserve, regulate, and integrate traditional healing practices.
- **Traditional healing as a parallel system:** Traditional medicine is not viewed as an "alternative," but as a parallel system with deep cultural roots that can complement modern healthcare when validated and harmonized.
- **Gendered knowledge gaps:** Women healers often hold extensive health expertise without formal recognition or credentials, highlighting the need for inclusive validation mechanisms grounded in community trust.

Reframe: Traditional medicine is not an "alternative"—it's a parallel system waiting to be validated, preserved, and harmonized.

Strategic Opportunities:
- **Establish certification and research pathways:** Develop government-supported certification frameworks and research partnerships to legitimize traditional healing while ensuring safety, ethics, and accountability.
- **Support community-led knowledge preservation:** Invest in documentation, archiving, and storytelling initiatives that preserve healing knowledge through oral histories, community records, and digital archives.

- **Create bridge-building health models:** Pilot dual or collaborative clinics that bring traditional healers and biomedical practitioners into dialogue and coordinated care.
- **Integrate traditional healing into education:** Include culturally grounded healing practices and mental health approaches in school-based curricula to promote respect, awareness, and intergenerational learning.
- **Formalize training rooted in community trust:** Establish certification and training pathways for traditional healers that are grounded in cultural knowledge, community validation, and ethical practice rather than solely formal academic credentials.
- **Center gender equity in health recognition:** Use tools such as gender audits and ongoing community feedback to ensure women healers' knowledge is recognized, supported, and resourced.
- **Strengthen community healing spaces:** Encourage healing circles, storytelling forums, and collective care practices that support mental health, belonging, and cultural continuity.

📝 **Design Idea: Intergenerational Mobile Healing Hub**
Co-create a mobile healing hub managed by youth and older community members that integrates traditional healing knowledge with modern mental health and primary care services.

The hub operates through two-way healing clinics, pairing traditional healers with nurses, therapists, or community health workers in pop-up settings, while also hosting story and healing circles where youth and elders share experiences of resilience, care, and well-being. Together, these elements support culturally grounded mental health care, knowledge preservation, and intergenerational connection.

SDG 5: Gender Equality & Power-Sharing

Framing Question: How can intergenerational mentorship dismantle harmful norms and support bold, joyful leadership across gender lines?

Insights:
Women across generations experience lived challenges:
- Girls leaving school
- Caregiving burdens
- Silence around trauma
- Stigma of being "rebellious"

What's Emerging:
- **Mentorship as healing, not just advancement:** Participants described mentorship that centers healing, belonging, and transformation—rather than narrow definitions of success—as critical for girls and women.
- **Safe spaces for storytelling and dialogue:** Safe, intergenerational storytelling spaces and family-based conversations are emerging as effective ways to shift gender norms and redistribute power.
- **Relational role modeling matters:** Older women and male allies play a key role in modeling shared leadership, care, and accountability across generations.

Strategic Opportunities:
- **Build circles of mentorship rooted in power-sharing:** Support intergenerational mentorship emphasizing mutual learning, shared leadership, and collective care.
- **Strengthen school-based leadership pathways:** Establish leadership clubs co-led by younger and older women to nurture confidence, voice, and civic participation.
- **Embed accountability through community feedback:** Implement participatory feedback mechanisms—such as community-informed gender audits—to track progress and surface lived realities.

📝 **Design idea: Relational Leadership Journey for Gender Equity**
Design a relational leadership journey that supports girls from home to community leadership, grounded in intergenerational care and shared power. Through mentorship with older women and male allies, girls build leadership and agency across family, school, and community life. Change begins with family dialogues on roles, power, care, and mutual support, and is reinforced through community-led gender audit learning labs that track indicators such as school attendance, caregiving responsibilities, and participation in decision-making.

Cross-Cutting Insights: Relational Levers for Intergenerational Transformation

1. Blending Traditional Wisdom with Modern Innovation

Stories highlight crop preservation techniques, drone technology, hydroponics, agri-tourism, and mobile applications. In health, case studies include herbal medicine, spiritual healing, and integrative care. Modern approaches still need "the stories from before".

As articulated: *"Old is gold, but innovation gives it wings."*

"Elders are the custodians of our food systems—knowing what grows where, when to plant, and how to preserve it." — Gregory Kimani, Founder of Cty Shamba

"Youth can use social media and mobile apps to share what older persons know so that wisdom is not lost." — Vincent Muthini, Smallholder Farmer

"We're farming differently now—vertical gardens, apps, and solar irrigation—but we still need the stories from before." — Saud-ur-Rehman, Age 35

2. Creating Intentional, Inclusive Intergenerational Spaces

Examples include learning partnerships, school garden clubs, and story circles. Government/NGO-supported models of intergenerational collaboration include wellness hubs, community forums, 4K Clubs, NARIGP (National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project, KCSAP (Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Project), and Community Sand Dams (see appendix). Co-advocacy and policy can be influenced led by youth-older person teams.

"We're not just passing the baton—we're rewriting the race together."

"Transformation begins with safe spaces and mentorship." — Participant, Gender Equality Dialogue

"We learn that each single generation has something unique." — AGYW participant, Refugee Community

"Healing is remembering we belong to each other."

3. Mutual Empowerment & Leadership

Mentorship is seen as power-sharing, not advice-giving. For example, older women can be seen as allies in reshaping leadership narratives. The emphasis is on circles of leadership, not ladders. Stories of collaboration often brought together youth boldness with older people's resilience.

"Shared leadership is not transfer of power. It's growing power together." — David

"Mentorship is more than giving guidance—it's about transferring power."
— Community respondent on women in leadership

4. Technology as a Powerful Enabler

Youth-led digital tools can document & disseminate older people's knowledge. Platforms like WhatsApp, SMS, and various apps are used for health outreach and organizing. Community radio serves as a rural access bridge. Technology supports the documentation of traditional healing knowledge through digital archives and apps for herbal uses. A key design prompt asks: "How can we ensure youth are not just digital consumers but digital stewards of ancestral wisdom?" This is evident in proposals for AI-driving solutions to connect smallholder farmers to markets.

5. Addressing Cultural, Societal & Institutional Barriers

Barriers include harmful gender norms, early marriage, mental health stigma, and resistance to integrating traditional healers. Crucially, corruption also acts as a significant institutional barrier to SDG achievement. Strategies involve creating safe spaces, fostering mindset shifts, promoting storytelling, and advocating for research-based policy change.

"Storytelling by older people helps young people realize they are not alone"— Mitchelle Semo, Psychology Student

"We both want the patient to heal. Let's support each other." — Dr. Sajid, Primary Health Center, Mirpurkhas

"These women are health experts, but they lack education and recognition." — Rabia Naz, Sociology Student

"We need tools like gender audits and regular feedback from communities to assess their impact." — Participant, PEOPLE SDG 5 Gender Equality Dialogue

🛠️ Summary of Design Ideas for Field Testing

Each of these design ideas is rooted in real stories, wisdom, and opportunities that emerged across community dialogues. The goal for Phase 2 is to test things out, to learn in action.

🍲 SDG 1: No Poverty

Prototype an Intergenerational Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship Hub. Co-create a community space where older persons, with their life experience and financial wisdom, mentor youth in developing business plans, accessing microloans, and understanding financial services, potentially integrating digital tools and AI for market analysis.

🌱 SDG 2: Food Security & Sustainable Agriculture

Youth-Older Adult Intergenerational Innovation Hubs. Prototype a shared learning space—physical or virtual—where older persons teach seed saving, soil care, or pest control, and youth introduce a tool like drone imaging, weather apps, or mobile storytelling.

Intergenerational Garden Clubs. Start a school- or community-based garden where each bed reflects different knowledge systems to learn about seed saving, soil care, neem ash preservation, vertical towers or hydroponics. Invite storytelling from both generations.

Digital Bridge Builders. Co-design a WhatsApp group, short radio series, or Instagram page that documents local older persons' food knowledge and invites youth to remix it into short videos or voice notes for local dissemination.

🧠 SDG 3: Mental Health & Traditional Healing

Mobile Clinic and Herbal Knowledge Hub. Co-created and managed by youth and older persons.

Story & Healing Circles. Invite older persons and youth to a regular conversation circle where each shares a story of resilience. Close with a shared grounding practice (breath, herbal tea, journaling) and reflect on shared tools for well-being.

Two-Way Healing Clinics. Partner a local herbalist or traditional healer with a nurse, therapist, or community health worker to run a pop-up clinic together—co-sharing what they each offer.

Youth-led Documentation of Traditional Healing. Test a field journal, audio storytelling tool, or short survey to gather and respectfully document local healing knowledge. Ensure feedback loops so knowledge is returned to the community, not just extracted.

⚖️ SDG 5: Gender Equality & Power Sharing

Family Conversations as Change Agents. Pilot a 3-part family dialogue toolkit where each conversation explores family roles, power, and support—guided by questions like: "What did leadership look like when you were young? What does it look like now?"

Intergenerational Leadership Circles. Host a story-based mentorship gathering where younger and older women reflect on their leadership journeys—focusing not just on success, but on healing, failure, and what support meant most.

Gender Audit Learning Labs. Prototype a community-led tool (e.g., sticker wall, visual mapping, question cards) where youth and older persons track whether girls are staying in school, who speaks in community meetings, or how caregiving is shared.

🔄 Testing Guidelines

- Start small—focus on a single interaction or group.
- Co-design with community members from the beginning.
- Use relational reflection (e.g., "What surprised us?" "What shifted in the space between us?").
- Document the learning with voice notes, quotes, sketches, or short videos—then bring it back for shared reflection.

Summary

Intergenerational collaboration for sustainable development is much like a river flowing into the ocean. The river, representing the older generation, carries ancient wisdom, carved pathways, and accumulated experiences from the lands it has traversed. The ocean, representing the younger generation, brings vast, boundless energy, new currents, and the potential for uncharted exploration. For true sustainable growth, the river's wisdom must nourish the ocean's dynamism, creating a powerful, interconnected ecosystem where both contribute their unique strengths, ensuring that the journey continues, evolving and enriching everything in its path.
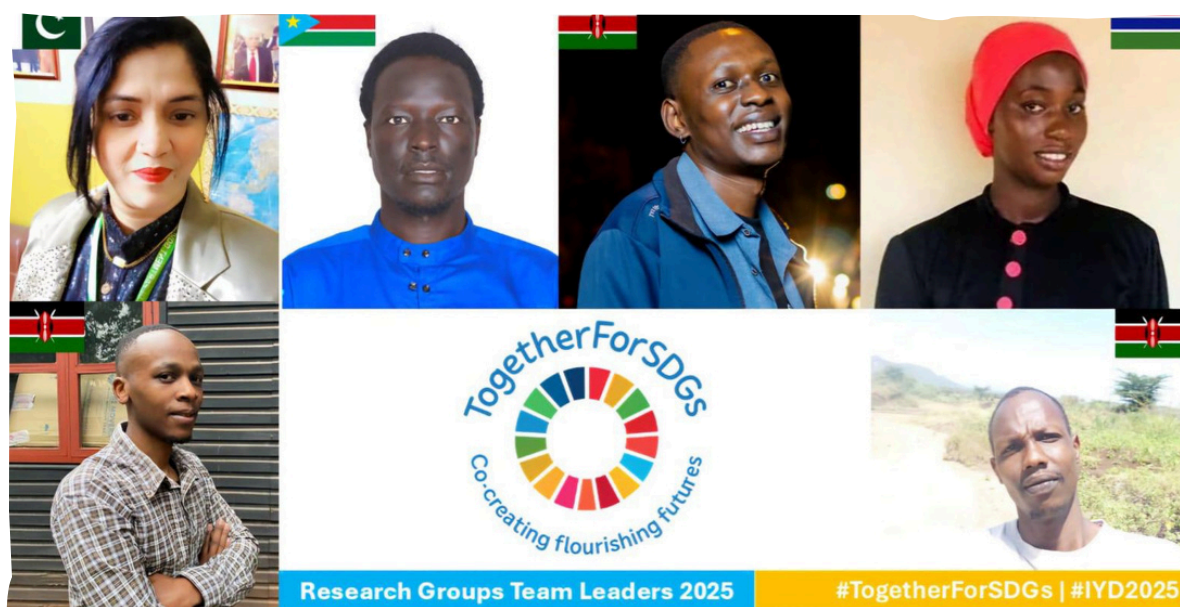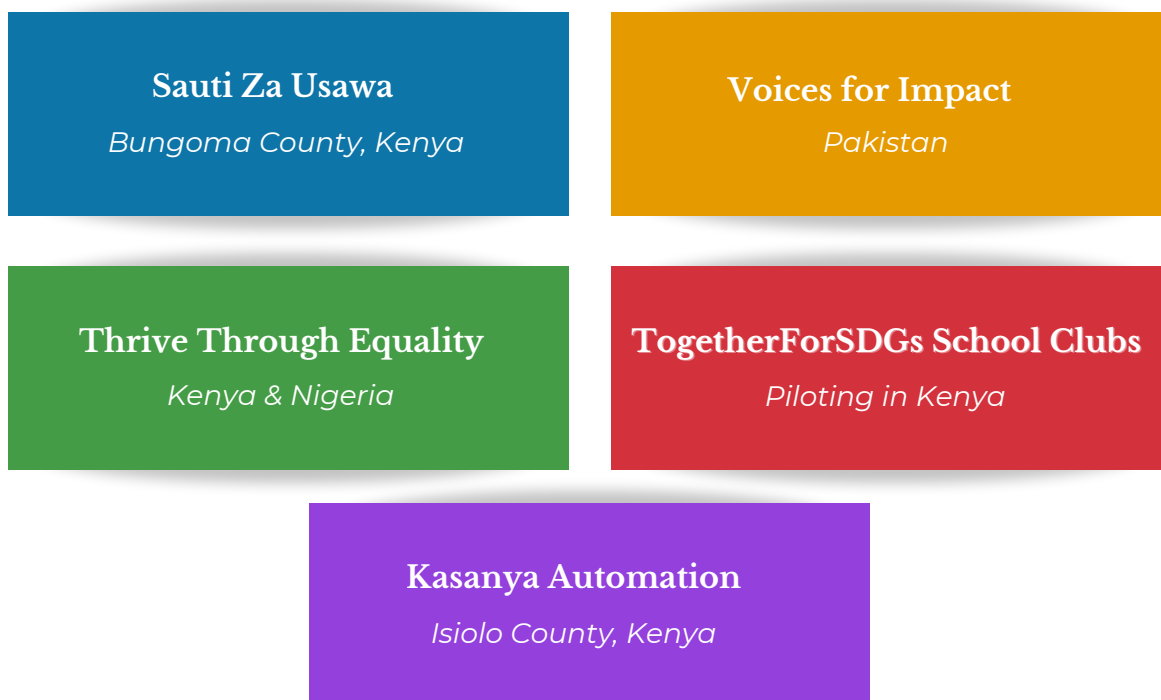
Designing Prototypes

Overview

During the International Youth Day 2025 event, "Designing the Future Together: Local Action, Global Impact," four Design Teams presented prototypes they have developed that transform intergenerational collaboration into tangible, community-rooted solutions. Each prototype demonstrates how younger and older generations working side-by-side create strategies that are more innovative, grounded in lived reality, and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

This section presents each Design Team's prototype journey through the Building Communities in Action framework—revealing what was learned during Framing, how intergenerational collaboration shaped the Designing phase, what challenges emerged during Enacting, and what is needed to Reflect and Scale.

TogetherForSDGs Prototypes Launched in 2025:

Sauti Za Usawa
Bungoma County, Kenya

Voices for Impact
Pakistan

Thrive Through Equality
Kenya & Nigeria

TogetherForSDGs School Clubs
Piloting in Kenya

Kasanya Automation
Isiolo County, Kenya

PROTOTYPE: SAUTI ZA USAWA – VOICES OF EQUALITY

Using Basketball to End Gender-Based Violence Across Generations

Team Leads: Elizabeth Waliuba & Joan Gathoni (Kenya)
SDGs Addressed: SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education)
Geographic Reach: Bungoma County, Kenya

Problem Framing: What Intergenerational Research Revealed
In Bungoma County, Kenya, high rates of gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy threaten the safety and futures of girls and young women. Through community listening, the team learned that:

- Sports and basketball are culturally valued and naturally bring youth and adults together
- Older women in the community possess deep wisdom about addressing harmful gender norms, but often feel sidelined in youth-focused programming
- Safe spaces and dialogue—not lectures—are what shift mindsets and behaviors
- Community heroes, traditional leaders, and cultural figures can be powerful allies in normalizing intergenerational collaboration

Strategy: Creating Safe Spaces Through Sports and Dialogue
Sauti Za Usawa – Voices of Equality uses basketball as an entry point to create safe spaces and hubs for dialogue, healing, and collaboration to advance gender equality. The initiative:

- Unites generations to end gender-based violence and empower girls and young women.
- Engages older women to support campaigns on ending violence against girls and women in relation to deep-rooted gender, cultural, and social norms.
- Leverages the power of teams, networks, and culture to strengthen and sustain grassroots, community-led actions that confront gender disparities.

In this prototype, intergenerational collaboration connects elders' wisdom and resources with youth creativity and energy through joint projects and mentorship. This can include youth leading festivals, design campaigns, and sitting alongside elders in decision-making spaces. Together, generations create culturally grounded solutions rather than externally imposed ones.

Barriers Include:
- Limited intergenerational trust in some community contexts.
- Resource constraints for sports equipment and facility access.
- Need for sustained, community-led funding versus one-time project grants.

Support Being Piloted:
- Youth Leadership Organization (YLO) funding to support salaries and program operations.
- Community-led advocacy to secure court access and facilities.
- Mentorship training for older women to co-facilitate dialogue circles alongside youth basketball events.
- Documentation and storytelling to track behavior change and social impact.

Current Status (Post-IYD 2025)
The team has organized two community basketball festivals in Bungoma County, bringing together over 150 youth and elders. Older women have become active co-facilitators of post-game dialogue circles addressing gender-based violence. The team is developing a curriculum guide that integrates sport, storytelling, and civic engagement and is in conversations with local governments to integrate the model into district youth policy.

PROTOTYPE: VOICES FOR IMPACT

Connecting Youth with Policymakers Through Community Engagement

Team Leads: Nazia Naz (Pakistan)
SDGs Addressed: SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality)
Geographic Reach: 31 districts across Pakistan (Sindh Province focus)

Problem Framing: What Intergenerational Research Revealed
Across 31 districts of Pakistan, persistent poverty, gender inequality, and education gaps limit opportunities for young people, especially in rural areas. Voices for Impact turns educational institutions into community engagement hubs where youth work side-by-side with mentors from government and civil society to shape inclusive, evidence-based solutions. Through interviews, surveys, and community dialogues, the team learned that:

- Youth leaders bring urgency and innovation to problem-solving, but lack access to district-level decision-making spaces
- Government officials and senior experts possess institutional knowledge and policy networks, but are often disconnected from community realities
- Educational institutions, particularly schools, are natural gathering spaces where intergenerational trust can be built

Strategy: Intergenerational Bridge-Building

Voices for Impact pairs youth leaders with mentors from government and civil society at district-level working groups. This builds trust, shares institutional knowledge, and ensures solutions are both community-owned and policy-supported.

Solutions Being Piloted:
- Making SDG data accessible in Urdu to reach broader audiences.
- Increasing government accountability through youth-led monitoring and feedback.
- Providing facilitators to bridge generational and institutional divides.
- Building structured mentorship pathways between youth researchers and officials.

Youth Influence in Local Action:
- Youth researchers conduct household surveys on education access, feeding data into district education plans.
- Youth facilitate joint public–private workshops and advocate for youth quotas in district development forums.
- Youth co-lead local problem-solving sessions to address poverty, gender inequality, and education gaps, advancing SDGs 1–5 and WPAY priorities in civic engagement.

Barriers Include:
- Limited digital access in rural areas, hindering data collection and communication.
- Low trust from traditional power holders unfamiliar with youth-led research.
- Lack of youth-friendly policy channels and formal recognition pathways.
- Infrastructure gaps in education and government systems.

Current Status (Post-IYD 2025):

The team is consolidating survey data across multiple districts and preparing policy briefs for provincial government review. Early feedback from government partners has been positive, with interest in scaling the model to additional districts in 2026. Youth researchers are being considered for internships within district planning offices.

PROTOTYPE: THRIVE THROUGH EQUALITY

Empowering Girls and Young Women in Kenya's Underserved Communities

Team Leads: Ralia Ali Hussein (Kenya) and Timothy Emmanuel (Nigeria)
SDGs Addressed: SDGs 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 1 (No Poverty)
Geographic Reach: Rural and Urban Communities in Kenya

Problem Framing: What Intergenerational Research Revealed
In Kenya's rural and urban underserved communities, girls and young women face barriers to education, skills training, and health services that limit their potential and reinforce cycles of poverty.

Through intergenerational community engagement, the team learned that:

- Elders hold cultural wisdom, community trust, and deep experience navigating gender norms, but are rarely invited into youth-focused program design.
- Safe, women-centered spaces that intentionally connect girls, young women, elders, faith leaders, and local professionals are critical for honest dialogue about gender inequality, health, and opportunity.

Strategy: Creating Safe Spaces, Expanding Opportunity, and Building Women's Leadership

Thrive Through Equality tackles challenges girls and women face by creating safe spaces, expanding opportunity, and building their leadership to drive gender equality and community transformation.

This intergenerational approach brings together adolescent girls, young women, elders, faith leaders, and local professionals to co-create solutions. Elders offer cultural wisdom and trust-building; youth contribute fresh ideas, tech skills, and peer influence, making strategies both community-rooted and future-ready.

The initiative creates safe, inclusive spaces where adolescent girls, young women, elders, and community leaders can learn together, address gender-based discrimination, and co-design practical responses that fit local realities. Its intergenerational strategy ensures that elders guide, support, and legitimize the work, while youth design and lead implementation, connect generations in practice, and translate ideas into concrete activities such as learning hubs, awareness campaigns, and income-generating groups.

Youth Influence in Local Action:
- Youth design mentorship programs, running digital literacy hubs, leading health outreach, and adapting content to local needs.
- Youth-led women's groups sustain advocacy and income-generating activities beyond the project's initial funding cycle.

Current Status (Post-IYD 2025)
The team has launched initial mentorship, life-skills, and wellness sessions through youth-led hubs, actively engaging elders, faith leaders, and local professionals as co-facilitators. They have also initiated a joint digital fundraiser and begun exploring youth-led social enterprises to sustain activities and expand support for girls and young women in additional communities.

PROTOTYPE: TOGETHERFORSDGS SCHOOL CLUBS

Empowering Young Ambassadors Through Intergenerational Leadership

Team Leads: Tito Mwenda (Kenya) & Aishu Narasimhadevara (India/USA)
SDGs Addressed: SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality)
Geographic Reach: Starting in Kenya communities, with the vision of expanding globally.

Problem Framing: **What Intergenerational Research Revealed**
Girls and young women in their communities face persistent barriers in education, health, and gender equality—compounded by cultural taboos that prevent open dialogue between generations. When youth and elders work together, these barriers become opportunities for transformation. Through community dialogues, the team learned that:

- Girls often lack safe spaces to discuss health and well-being with trusted mentors
- Grandmothers and older women possess deep cultural knowledge and social standing that can legitimize conversations about sensitive topics
- Schools can serve as dual spaces—both learning centers and community gathering places—where intergenerational mentorship flourishes

Strategy: Transforming Schools into Innovation Hubs
TogetherForSDGs School Clubs transform primary schools into community innovation hubs where students, guided by older people and community mentors, address real-world challenges in education, health, and gender equality. Activities include storytelling from grandmothers, skill-sharing workshops, and health awareness campaigns to empower girls and young women.

Intergenerational collaboration combines the wisdom and lived experience of older generations with the energy and creativity of youth. It also breaks down cultural and generational stereotypes, builds trust, and creates lasting solutions by having youth and elders work side-by-side in school clubs and community events.

Youth Influence in Local Action:
- Youth lead quarterly dialogues with students, parents, and grandparents on health and gender equality.
- Youth co-design campaign messages and facilitate skill-sharing workshops.
- Young ambassadors ensure that young voices are central to decision-making alongside elders.

Barriers Include:
- Cultural taboos that make open conversations about girls' and women's health difficult.
- Limited experience among youth and teachers in facilitating sensitive intergenerational dialogues.
- Sustainability challenges in maintaining engagement beyond school hours.

Recommended Strategies:
- Training for culturally sensitive facilitation practices.
- Creative tools like stories, visual cards, and role-playing exercises.
- Sustainable support structures to maintain the hybrid school-and-community club model year-round.
- Partnership with health organizations to provide resource materials and guest facilitators.

Current Status (Post-IYD 2025)
The team is in the process of launching pilot clubs in Kenyan communities. Initial discussions show increased participation from older women mentors and positive feedback from students about the club activities. Plans are underway to develop a toolkit for replication in additional schools in 2026, with focus on documenting "what works" in culturally diverse contexts.

PROTOTYPE: KASANYA AUTOMATION

Sports, Skills, and Digital Tools for Decent Work

Team Leads: Anini Esho & Fana Ceesay (Kenya)
SDGs Addressed: SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)
Geographic Reach: Isiolo County, Kenya

Problem Framing: What Intergenerational Research Revealed
In Isiolo County, many young people from vulnerable backgrounds are trapped in irregular, low-paying jobs, often in the informal construction sector, with few pathways to stability. Through community engagement, the team learned that:
- Youth possess energy and willingness to learn, but lack mentorship and skill-training opportunities
- Older construction workers and business owners have decades of technical knowledge and connections to market opportunities
- Sports and community identity (particularly through the Kasanya Football Club) are powerful entry points for engagement
- Combining work readiness training, digital skills, and sports-based community creates holistic pathways out of poverty

Strategy: Integrating Sports, Skills, and Mentorship
Kasanya Automation empowers youth through sports, skills training, and automation tools to create decent work opportunities, reduce poverty, and counter risks such as drug abuse, armed conflict, and social exclusion.

This intergenerational model automates and equips unemployed youth in the informal construction sector with skills, digital tools, and mentorship. It is anchored in the Kasanya Football Club, the program promotes gender equality, education, and peacebuilding through sports, skills training, and community activities. The model brings together multiple generations in steering committees, mentorship roles, and digital collaboration spaces (e.g., a county-level WhatsApp group) to share guidance, cultural wisdom, and connections.

Youth Influence in Local Action:
- Youth lead on implementing automation projects and organizing football events for health and wellness.
- Youth create partnerships through digital platforms and engage in climate action activities tied to sports tournaments.
- Elders offer motivation, mediation, and counseling; youth bring innovation and energy.

Current Status (Post-IYD 2025)
The team has enrolled 45 youth in the first cohort of automation training and organized three community football tournaments. Early retention rates are strong, with youth showing increased confidence and engagement. The team is in conversations with the county government about establishing a formal Digital Skills Hub in Isiolo and exploring partnerships with construction companies to create job placement pathways for program graduates.

Cross-Team Synthesis: What Intergenerational Design Revealed

Shared Patterns Across All Prototypes:

- **Safe spaces as foundation:** Each prototype invested heavily in creating psychologically safe, culturally grounded spaces where intergenerational dialogue could happen before action. This requires intentional facilitation, not just co-location.

- **Elders as change agents:** In all prototypes, older persons are co-leaders and decision-makers, not advisors in the background. This shift in positioning dramatically increases buy-in and sustainability (***Thrive Through Equality***).

- **Local institutions as anchors:** Schools, football clubs, and district offices provide both infrastructure and legitimacy. Prototypes grounded in existing community institutions scaled faster than standalone initiatives.

- **Data + Stories + Action:** The most effective prototypes combined rigorous data collection (***Voices for Impact's*** household surveys) with emotional storytelling (***Sauti Za Usawa's*** dialogue circles) and concrete skill-building (***Kasanya's*** training programs).

- **Digital as bridge, not replacement:** Technology (WhatsApp groups, data visualization, mobile surveys) strengthened intergenerational collaboration when used to amplify human relationships, not replace them.

What Each Prototype Needs to Scale & Sustain

Prototype	To Strengthen	To Scale	To Sustain
Sauti Za Usawa	Community facility access; dialogue facilitator training	Scaling to additional counties; sports league partnerships	YLO funding model; local government recognition and co-funding
Voices for Impact	Government policy partnerships; youth researcher visibility	Expand to additional provinces; formalize youth-official mentorship	Institutional embedding in district planning cycles; youth employment pathways
Thrive Through Equality	Seed funding to deepen mentorship, life skills, and wellness hubs; stronger trust-building wiht caregivers, elders, and faithe leaders	Expansion of youth-led hubs to additional rural and urban communities; formal partnerships with schools, health providers, and women's groups	Multi-year funding and resourcing for youth facilitators; youth-led social enterprises to generate local income; long-term community and institutional partnerships anchoring the model
TogetherForSDGs School Clubs	Facilitator training; cultural adaptation toolkit	Multi-country replication; integration into school curricula	Dedicated budget line in school budgets; sustained elder recruitment
Kasanya Automation	Equipment & internet infrastructure; employee partnerships	Expansion to additional information sectors; digital hub formalization	Job placement commitments; government recognition of informal workers; multi-year funding

Recommendations for Supporting Prototype Scaling in 2026

To move from successful prototypes to widespread practice, we must focus on the following strategic priorities:

Build Equitable Digital Infrastructure

Support prototypes in reaching offline and low-connectivity communities through strategic partnerships with community radio, SMS platforms, and local media, bridging the digital divide.

Formalize Mentorship Pathways

Create standardized training and recognition for older adult mentors, enabling them to transition from volunteers to valued community facilitators with modest compensation, ensuring sustainability and quality.

Anchor Prototypes in Local Government

Collaborate with district and county governments to integrate successful prototypes into annual development plans, securing institutional support and dedicated budget lines for long-term impact.

Share & Document Learning Across Teams

Establish quarterly cross-team learning forums where leads share successes, failures, and adaptations—building a robust collective knowledge base for effective scaling.

Establish a TogetherForSDGs Innovation Fund

Create dedicated seed funding (low to medium commitment) for design teams to strengthen capacity, test new approaches, and sustain momentum for scaling.

Enacting and Reflecting

When Design Teams came together for International Youth Day 2025, each prototype was still an early sketch: a promising idea shaped by insights from phase 1. A slide deck and a handful of field stories showed what intergenerational collaboration could make possible. In the months that followed, team leaders listened again to youth, elders, caregivers, teachers, and community partners—testing, adapting, and refining their work in real contexts.

Their reflections show just how far these projects have come. What began as concepts has evolved into stronger intergenerational systems: hub models, school–community clubs, mentorship and wellness programs, multi-district SDG circles, and sports-anchored economic initiatives. Along the way, leaders like **Elizabeth Waliuba, Nazia Naz, Ralia Ali Hussein, Tito Mwenda, Aishu Narasimhadevara, Anini Esho Lokono,** and **Aditya Raja** share both their breakthroughs and their constraints—with a recurring theme that impact is outpacing investment.

The next pages offer a brief "Then vs. Now" journey for each prototype, highlighting how, through enacting and reflection, intergenerational listening and collaboration reshaped their strategies. They share what additional mentorship, partnerships, and resources could unlock. Ultimately, they demonstrate that these prototypes are grounded, community-owned initiatives that are ready to deepen and scale with the right support.

Prototype Journeys: Then vs. Now

Sauti Za Usawa / Balance 360 – Elizabeth Waliuba

Then: Early Prototype
Elizabeth Waliuba's *Sauti Za Usawa (Voices of Equality)* focused on using sports and arts events to spark conversations on gender equality between girls, caregivers, and community leaders. Intergenerational collaboration was present, but mostly as participation in one-off activities.

Now: Balance 360 – An Intergenerational Gender Justice Hub

Today, **Balance 360** anchors the Usawa Festival and intergenerational hubs as a sustained, hybrid online–offline model where youth, caregivers, educators, elders, and partners co-design and deliver dialogues, arts, sports, and digital storytelling. Elizabeth notes that young people *"[often normally] feel spoken about rather than spoken with,"* and that *"all actors want continuous action and not moments that lead to no impact,"* which pushed her to build a hub-based model with ongoing accountability rather than isolated events. She now calls explicitly for mentorship in intergenerational program design and long-term, flexible financing to sustain hubs and youth-led actions.

Voices for Impact – Nazia Naz

Then: Early Prototype

Nazia Naz's **Voices for Impact** began as a youth-led effort to collect data across districts and connect young people with decision-makers on education, poverty, and inequality.

Now: People-Centered Intergenerational SDG Circles

Nazia now describes **Voices For Impact** as a *"people-centered, SDG-driven initiative shaped through field research across five districts,"* intentionally bringing together input through surveys from over 80,000 youth, elders, women, teachers, and community leaders throughout Pakistan. Listening to these groups, she learned that while generations view problems differently, their core concerns are deeply aligned and that women's insights on issues like child marriage and poverty are indispensable. This led to concrete innovations such as community-led SDG circles, local storytelling, and a youth–elder monitoring program, paired with a clear roadmap for SDG Resource Centers, district partnerships, micro-grants, and integration of youth-generated data into official plans.

Thrive Through Equality – Ralia Ali Hussein & Timothy Emmanuel

Then: Early Prototype

Ralia Ali Hussein and Timothy Emmanuel initially framed **Thrive Through Equality** as an integrated idea on paper, a way to empower girls and young women through mentorship, life-skills education, healthcare and wellness programming, and youth-led educational hubs that intentionally connect generations. The team knew that elders held cultural wisdom and trust, and that youth brought digital skills and adaptability, but had not yet tested how these assets could work together in practice.

Now: Intergenerational Mentorship, Wellness, and Youth-Led Hubs

The initiative has evolved into a model that combines mentorship, life skills, healthcare/wellness programs and youth-led educational hubs, where elders guide and support while youth design, lead and connect generations in practice and implementation. Ralia reports that *"real change occurs when both cultural wisdom and modern innovation are amalgamated,"* with elders emphasizing trust and youth contributing digital skills and adaptability. In response to funding and sustainability challenges, she is exploring youth-led social enterprises and a digital fundraising campaign with elders, faith leaders, and professionals.

TogetherForSDGs School Clubs – Tito Mwenda and Aishu Narasimhadevara

Then: Early Prototype

Led by Tito Mwenda and Aishu Narasimhadevara, the team's early concept envisioned school-based clubs where youth and older people come together around the SDGs, especially girls' health, education, and climate.

Now: Inclusive School–Community Hubs for Co-Creation

The **TogetherForSDGs School Clubs** are now a detailed platform where primary school students and older women—grandmothers, aunties, and elder community women—co-create solutions on climate, gender equality, health, and digital literacy. Interviews revealed how deeply relationships matter. Reflecting on his grandmother, Tito shares, *"When I thought about the role my grandmother played in my life, I knew our solutions had to include her wisdom."* Elder Julia Muthuri also shared, *"Old people are not just listeners, we are learners too. I want to understand this AI everyone keeps talking about."* The team has translated these insights into phased activities (tree planting, health workshops, digital literacy circles, school gardens, and SDGs workshops), inclusive design standards, contingency plans for taboo topics and low connectivity, and proposals for roles like "elder-in-residence" in schools and partnerships with SDG education networks.

Kasanya Automation Project – Anini Esho Lokono

Then: Early Prototype

Anini Esho Lokono's **Kasanya Automation Project** began by connecting youth in sports with skills training and exposure to automation and entrepreneurship.

Now: Intergenerational SDG Awareness and Resource-Pooling

The project now intentionally convenes intergenerational vulnerable persons, SDGs enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, politicians, emerging leaders and youth in the sports sector, using the club as an entry point to SDG awareness that was previously unknown to many before. From conversations, Anini learned that people are verbally ready to see it happen, others wait to see it happen to join later, prompting him to rethink how he sequences engagement. He now highlights specific structural needs (such as transportation, digital tools, and materials) and calls for logistical assistance, funding, and paying TogetherForSDGs Isiolo County SDG monitors, alongside incorporating the SDGs into curricula and training leaders who are held accountable.

The Inspiring Indian – Aditya Raja

Inspired by his involvement with TogetherForSDGs, Aditya Raja (His Excellency, Dumka City) independently developed **The Inspiring Indian**, a storytelling initiative that brings together neuroscientists and youths, unsung heroes, guest writers, and very young students alongside experienced public speakers and administrators to write about mental health, resilience, and the challenges young people face. His reflection shows how this idea has grown into a national intergenerational writing collaboration, using stories as a tool for healing and mutual learning, and calls for systemic changes in education so that students whose learning was disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic can access better support for both quality education and well-being. (www.facebook.com/teaminspiringindian)

What Their Evolution Reveals: Shared Insights and Needs

Across these journeys, several overarching insights emerge that are highly actionable for partners and prospective funders:

Intergenerational collaboration is now baked into the model, not added on. Teams have moved from youth-led projects with elder input to shared leadership, where younger and older people co-create strategies, share accountability, and are recognized as knowledge-holders.

Prototypes are becoming community infrastructure. What began as isolated events or pilots are evolving into hubs, circles, clubs, and resource centers that can anchor ongoing SDG work in schools and communities.

The limiting factor is not ideas—it is resourcing. Design Team leaders clearly articulate what would allow their projects to grow: mentorship, small but reliable funding, basic logistics, digital tools, and partnerships that connect their work to policy and systems.

These teams have already done the hard work of listening, designing, and testing intergenerational solutions in real communities. With targeted investment and accompaniment, their "then" prototypes are ready to become "now" models for how intergenerational collaboration can accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendations

Policy and Action Recommendations

The Design Teams' reflections and post-IYD engagements point to a simple truth: intergenerational collaboration is a practical strategy that can be designed, funded, and embedded into systems. The recommendations below translate their lived experience into concrete actions for schools, communities, governments, intergovernmental and UN entities, civil society organizations, and people of all generations, aligned with the 30th Commemoration of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY30), the Pact for the Future **(Actions 35–37)**, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—especially SDG 17 on partnerships.

Schools

- **Institutionalize intergenerational clubs and hubs.**
  Establish permanent intergenerational SDG clubs (like *TogetherForSDGs School Clubs*) where students, elders, caregivers, and community experts co-design activities on climate, gender equality, health, and digital literacy, treating "everyone, at every age" as a knowledge-holder.
- **Create formal roles for elders and youth co-leaders.**
  Pilot roles such as "elder-in-residence" and youth SDG ambassadors who co-facilitate learning, mentorship, and career guidance, particularly for girls and marginalized students.
- **Integrate SDGs and local data into curricula.**
  Use youth-led community surveys and SDG circles as classroom material so students analyze real data on poverty, school dropouts, and gender norms, while elders and women contextualize the findings.

Communities

- **Develop intergenerational hubs and festivals.**
  Support models like *Balance 360* and the *Usawa Festival* that bring youth, caregivers, elders, and leaders together through arts, sports, dialogue, and digital storytelling to challenge harmful norms and co-create commitments.
- **Invest in SDG resource centers.**
  Create low-cost community resource centers that host SDG circles, store local data, offer digital tools, and serve as meeting spaces for youth–elder teams and women's groups.

- **Make safe, inclusive spaces the norm.**
  Ensure that dialogues on sensitive topics—such as girls' health or child marriage—are held in culturally appropriate, gender-responsive spaces (e.g., women-only sessions led by trusted older women) while maintaining youth leadership.

Governments
- **Embed intergenerational mechanisms in planning cycles.**
  At local and district levels, create standing intergenerational advisory groups that include youth, elders, women, and teachers, and formally link their inputs to education, social welfare, and gender policies.
- **Fund proven community-led models.**
  Shift funding toward initiatives that demonstrate grounded impact—such as multi-district SDG circles, intergenerational hubs, and sports-anchored skills programs—and provide multi-year, flexible grants rather than one-off project funding.
- **Integrate SDGs and accountability into education and governance.**
  Incorporate SDG literacy into school curricula and leadership training, and hold public officials accountable for progress, as suggested by teams calling for SDG-aware leaders and county SDG monitors.

Intergovernmental & UN Entities
- **Move from consultation to co-leadership.**
  Design intergovernmental processes and feedback reporting mechanisms (with follow-up and follow-through) so that youth and older persons share decision-making power in agenda-setting, resource allocation, and monitoring, not only in side-events.
- **Establish intergenerational impact and foresight hubs.**
  Create intergenerational foresight and impact teams that pair youth, elders, and community innovators to interpret data, validate early signals from the ground, and advise UN entities on SDG implementation and anticipatory governance.
- **Resource grassroots intergenerational pilots as learning labs.**
  Provide catalytic funding, technical accompaniment, and global visibility to prototypes like those in TogetherForSDGs, using them as learning sites for WPAY30 and Pact for the Future Actions 35–37 on intergenerational solidarity and meaningful youth participation.

Civil Society Organizations

- **Design for reciprocity, not tokenism.**
  Build programs where young and older people share power, roles, and recognition—avoiding models where elders are only gatekeepers and youth are only volunteer labor.
- **Create follow-through coalitions after conferences.**
  Following the example of [ImPACT Coalitions](#) emerging from the 2024 United Nations Civil Society in Nairobi, Kenya (#2024UNCSC), form intergenerational implementation teams that shepherd outcomes into concrete programs and policy advocacy. TogetherForSDGs is a direct outcome of the #2024UNCSC!
- **Provide mentorship and safeguarding support.**
  Offer structured mentorship for youth leaders in intergenerational design, movement-building, safeguarding, and systems change, responding directly to requests from teams like **Balance 360** and **Thrive Through Equality**.

Generations (Youth, Older Persons, and Allies)

- **See each generation as a knowledge-holder.**
  Embrace models where youth lead on digital tools, organizing, and innovation, while older persons contribute trust, cultural wisdom, and networks—an approach repeatedly highlighted by teams across countries.
- **Practice shared leadership in everyday spaces.**
  In families, schools, workplaces, and community groups, adopt practices such as co-facilitation, shared storytelling, and intergenerational mentoring circles to normalize collaboration across ages.
- **Advocate together for structural change.**
  Youth and elders can jointly advocate for policies that embed intergenerational participation into education, social protection, health, and climate strategies, ensuring that local voices shape the implementation of WPAY30, the Pact for the Future, and the SDGs.

These recommendations are grounded in what teams and intergenerational initiatives are already doing on the ground. With intentional policy shifts, targeted funding, and sustained partnerships, they can be scaled to make intergenerational collaboration a core driver of global SDG progress rather than an exception.

Post-IYD 2025: UN & Civil Society Engagement Highlights & Insights

Insights from Workshops, UN Events, and Civil Society Dialogues

Overview

Following the International Youth Day 2025 flagship event, "Designing the Future Together: Local Action, Global Impact," held on August 12, 2025, TogetherForSDGs expanded its reach through direct engagement with UN bodies, civil society networks, and global stakeholders. This section captures the momentum, feedback, and systemic insights that emerged from post-IYD dialogues—including the #YouthLead Dialogue with the UN Youth Office, UNICEF Innocenti consultations, UN Futures Lab sessions, and civil society convenings. Together, these engagements reveal both the power of intergenerational collaboration and the structural barriers that must be addressed for youth-led solutions to achieve lasting impact.

1. The August 2025 IYD Event: *Designing the Future Together: Local Action, Global Impact*

Event Overview & Participation

On August 12-13, 2025, TogetherForSDGs hosted a hybrid global workshop titled "Designing the Future Together: Local Action, Global Impact," honoring International Youth Day 2025 and its theme: *Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond*.

Participants & Reach:

- Over 300 registrants across 25 countries
- Four design teams presenting live intergenerational prototypes
- Intergenerational speakers and reflection seeds: **Donna Butts** (*Generations United*), **Carole Agengo** (*Center for Global South Initiatives in Development*, Co-Chair 2024 UN Civil Society Conference)
- Civil society partners: Tangaza Institute for Social Transformation, Global Youth Forum, Generations United

Event Structure & Key Moments

Opening Context: The event was framed as a #YouthLead Dialogue, a campaign organized by the UN Youth Office in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY30). The moderators explicitly connected the local prototypes being presented to the global WPAY30 priority areas—education, employment, health, environment, girls' empowerment, and intergenerational solidarity.

Design Team Presentations (5 minutes each):
1. *Voices for Impact* (led by Nazia Naz, Pakistan) – Youth-led policy research across 31 districts
2. *TogetherForSDGs School Clubs* (led by Aishu Narasimhadevara & Tito Mwenda) – Intergenerational clubs in Kenya with international extension
3. *Sauti Za Usawa* (led by Elizabeth Waliuba & Joan Gathoni, Kenya) – Basketball and dialogue circles for gender equality
4. *Kasanya Automation* (led by Anini Esho & Fana Ceesay, Kenya) – Sports, skills, and digital tools for employment

Reflection Seeds – Intergenerational Wisdom:

Carole Agengo (*Center for Global South Initiatives in Development*, Co-Chair 2024 UN Civil Society Conference) shared key principles:
- Generations are not homogenous; balance novelty with history
- Build power together; step out of generational cocoons
- Challenge cultural narratives and recreate new ones
- Build viable succession plans for all ages

Donna Butts (*Generations United*, former Executive Director) emphasized:
- Young people leading, with intergenerational younger and older people working together
- Understanding the relevance of older people to the work
- Intergenerational work can be fun—thinking, planning, implementing together
- Intersectionality matters; men must be present in conversations
- Utilize accessible resources while acknowledging funding gaps
- Intergenerational work must be based on reciprocity

Working Sessions: Feedback from Breakout Rooms

Participants engaged in five breakout rooms, one per design team, using the feedback frame:

- I Like: What inspires you about this idea?
- I Wish: What could be strengthened or clarified?
- What If: Possibilities for evolution, scale, or deeper impact?
- What Would It Take: For this idea to grow roots in your community?

Cross-Cutting Themes from Participant Feedback:

1. Funding and Sustainability – Participants consistently asked: "Who funds this? How is it sustained beyond the pilot?" This revealed a critical gap: **intergenerational prototypes often lack access to multi-year funding mechanisms.**
2. Government Integration – *Voices for Impact* received particular enthusiasm with questions about how to formalize youth-government partnerships into policy cycles, suggesting readiness for institutional scaling.
3. Cultural Adaptation – *TogetherForSDGs School Clubs* and *Sauti Za Usawa* prompted questions about cultural appropriateness and localization, revealing both excitement and caution about replication in diverse contexts.
4. Digital Equity – *Kasanya Automation* discussions highlighted that automation and digital skills, while promising, risk excluding offline and low-connectivity communities.
5. Systemic Change – A dominant sentiment: *"This is beautiful work, but how do we move from local pilots to systems change?"* Participants sensed that **individual prototypes, while powerful, needed policy anchors to scale.**

Harvest & Outcomes

Breakout room rapporteurs synthesized insights into 12 key takeaways per team, which were documented and submitted to:

- UN Youth Office for inclusion in WPAY30 commemoration materials
- #YouthLead Festival during UN General Assembly (September 2025)
- Civil society networks for amplification and partnership-building

2. Post-IYD UN Engagement: #YouthLead Dialogues & WPAY30 Process

UN Youth Office #YouthLead Dialogues

Following the August event, TogetherForSDGs was formally recognized as a #YouthLead Dialogue—one of a select number of global youth-led initiatives invited to feed directly into the WPAY30 High-Level Plenary scheduled for September 25, 2025, at UN Headquarters.

Key Submission to WPAY30 Process:

TogetherForSDGs prepared a collective youth statement emphasizing four core messages:

1. From Dialogue to Action

There is a lot of talking going around with limited to no actions. If the UN is to remain credible, we must stress actions more than reports—creating structures that ensure conference outcomes are carried forward into tangible results.

2. Funding Proven Concepts

The people who need funding are being left behind, while those accessing funding are delivering nothing. We must shift the funding paradigm to invest in proven, community-led models that deliver measurable change.

3. Reshaping UN Conferencing

Our Intergenerational Youth Sub-Committee of the 2024 Civil Society Conference became an Active Impact Coalition—a follow-through team ensuring outcomes are implemented. Imagine if every UN conference had such a structure.

4. Digital Tools as Bridges

Digital tools like TogetherForSDGs and Club17 have the power to unite the world to drive grassroots impact. They connect local voices to global platforms and transform isolation into solidarity.

WPAY30 High-Level Plenary Submission
TogetherForSDGs also contributed a submission to the UN Youth Office WPAY30 High-Level Plenary, titled: "From Local Action to Global Impact: Ensuring Meaningful Youth Participation Through Intergenerational Collaboration."

Key Arguments Presented

On Youth Participation:

Participants envisioned youth participation not as consultation, but as co-leadership. Full and meaningful engagement requires dismantling tokenism, ensuring youth-friendly channels into governance, and embedding accountability within policymaking. When schools become hubs where youth and policymakers sit at the same table, and when intergenerational leadership teams are empowered, we create the foundations for sustainable and inclusive governance.

On Evidence of Innovation:

Young people are already innovating—whether through sports and digital tools to equip unemployed youth, school clubs that connect youth with grandmothers to pass on cultural resilience, or community-based programs advancing gender equality. These models prove that youth participation is not a future ideal; it is a present reality that must be scaled and integrated into national and international processes.

Calls to Member States:
1. *Institutionalize intergenerational decision-making at every level*
2. *Provide resources for youth-led experimentation and scaling*
3. *Ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups from the outset*

3. #YouthLead Dialogues Foresight Workshop

#YouthLead Dialogues Foresight Workshop

In September 2025, Cairo Eubanks participated on behalf of TogetherForSDGs in a #YouthLead Dialogues Foresight Workshop, organized by UNICEF Innocenti - Global Office of Research and Foresight, UN Futures Lab, and UN Youth Office. The workshop focused on anticipatory governance and emerging social trends affecting youth and families, contributing to a report ahead of the one-day high-level plenary meeting commemorating the 30th anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY).

Key Presentation Points
1. Demographic Shifts & Intergenerational Implications
   - Work and career transitions: Young professionals experience gig economy, hybrid work, delayed milestones
   - Family structure changes: Women shifting career-household roles; families are smaller; delayed lifecycle milestones
   - Labor market impacts: Caregiving models, household economics, community planning (housing, care infrastructure)
   - Foresight Question: How can policies link employment across the life course, caregiving across generations, and community innovation?
2. Digital Transformation as Driver of Inclusion or Exclusion
   - Digitalization and AI are no longer emerging trends; they are structural forces
   - Risk: Digital divides persist both within and across countries
   - Opportunity: Digital literacy and device access can either exclude or empower
3. Recommendation for UN Foresight Tools
   - Integrate intergenerational impact analysis (how a policy benefits one generation while disadvantaging another)
   - Visualize and tag signals reflecting underserved communities and local innovations
   - Center civil-society contributions and lived-experience data

UN Global Horizon Scanning Panel – Second World Social Summit
In November 2025, Cairo participated as a panelist on behalf of TogetherForSDGs for UN Global Horizon Scanning for Governance and Social Development, a side event of the Second World Social Summit organized by UN Futures Lab Network and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

Critical Reflections on Anticipatory Governance

1. Localize Foresight
Many early signals of transformation come from grassroots innovators, youth movements, and civil-society networks. Horizon-scanning tools should surface and amplify these "weak signals" as early indicators of scalable change.

2. Intergenerational Foresight Validation
How can intergenerational foresight teams within the UN system—linking youth delegates, senior experts, and local innovators—strengthen the validation and interpretation of AI-generated insights? Intergenerational validation workshops could serve as a quality-assurance mechanism, grounding AI-generated insights in real-world experiences before they inform policy.

3. Digital Equity in Foresight
The tool must recognize that digital divides persist. Digital literacy, connectivity, and device access vary significantly—these gaps shape who gets represented in data and who benefits from insights. Intersectional foresight should track how gender, geography, and income interact to influence access to digital tools and decision-making power.

4. Cross-Sector Civil Society Engagement

NGO Committee on Ageing & Global NGO Executive Committee Joint Panel
In December 2025, TogetherForSDGs was highlighted as an exemplar approach to intergenerational solidarity (organized the NGO Committee on Ageing-NY and the Global NGO Executive Committee) a panel titled *"Aging and the Lifespan: How to Create More Intergenerational Collaboration and Coalition Building."*

Focus: Helping NGO leaders across generations find common interests (social justice, workforce, climate, mental health, caregiving, innovation) and develop intergenerational policies and programs.

Key Insights Shared:
1. Creating Open Spaces – Generations meet each other halfway through intentional, transparent partnerships
2. Reciprocity, Not Hierarchy – Acknowledge varying generational contributions; avoid top-down mentorship models
3. Compensate Youth Engagement – Youth cannot volunteer all their time away and make a living; some intergenerational work must be paid
4. Intersectionality Matters – Gender, race, class, and other identities shape generational experience; intergenerational work must account for this
5. Communication Bridges – Gen Z may be more comfortable behind screens; recognize this and find ways to bridge communication gaps
6. Challenge Assumptions – Move beyond stereotypes of youth as "digital natives" and elders as "out of touch"

Florida International Trade & Cultural Expo (FITCE) Youth Engagement Panel
In October 2025, Cairo co-organized and co-moderated the 10th Anniversary FITCE Youth Engagement Panel, organized by Broward County government (South Florida, United States): "Youth Empowerment to Build a Stronger Global Economy."
Panelists:
- Nasreen Sheikh (Empowerment Collective) – Survivor-led entrepreneurship and ethical supply chains
- Aaron Clemens (We Save Teens) – Community-driven youth leadership programs reaching 50,000+ teens
- Teddy Derulo – Musician and youth empowerment advocate using creativity as bridge-building

Key Messages:
- Youth economic empowerment is essential: 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 globally, yet 20% not in employment, education, or training
- Passion alone cannot sustain programs; youth need resources, mentorship, and strategic intergenerational partnerships (presented TogetherForSDGs)
- Creative expression (music, art) is a powerful tool for youth voice and bridge-building across cultures

- Intergenerational collaboration translates entrepreneurial innovation into scalable economic impact
- Call to action: Leaders with resources, influence, and decision-making authority must fund, scale, and support youth initiatives

5. Synthesis: What Post-IYD Engagement Revealed

System-Level Insights
Across all post-IYD engagements, a consistent pattern emerged:

1. Tokenism vs. Co-Leadership
Youth want meaningful participation, not consultation. The difference is structural: co-leadership requires shared decision-making power, budget authority, and accountability—not just a seat at the table.

2. Action Over Discourse Fatigue
Young people globally are exhausted by endless reports and consultations with no follow-up. The totem of success is no longer a declaration; it is an Active Impact Coalition—a follow-through team mandated to shepherd conference outcomes into policies and practices.

3. Funding Mismatch
Grassroots innovators and community-led programs consistently lack access to multi-year funding. Meanwhile, organizations with polished proposals but limited results cycle resources. The funding paradigm must flip: invest in proven, community-led models.

4. Digital as Both Bridge and Divider
Technology (WhatsApp, platforms, AI tools) amplifies intergenerational collaboration and solidarity when used to strengthen relationships. However, digital divides risk deepening inequalities if not designed with intentionality and equity.

5. Intergenerational Collaboration as Systems Change
Individual prototypes are powerful but insufficient. Systems change requires intergenerational teams embedded in government cycles, school budgets, and policy processes—not just standalone initiatives.

Emerging Call for "Impact Hubs"

One of the strongest proposals to emerge from post-IYD engagement is the creation of Intergenerational Impact Hubs across Member States—dedicated spaces for youth, elders, civil society, and government to collaborate on SDG-aligned solutions. These hubs would be:

- Anchored in local institutions (schools, sports facilities, community centers)
- Powered by a Global Youth Fund, ensuring resources reach grassroots actors
- Structured for accountability and follow-through (not one-time events)
- Intergenerational in governance and staffing
- Connected to policy cycles and measurement systems

6. Momentum into 2026 & Beyond

Conclusion

Post-IYD 2025 engagement transformed TogetherForSDGs from a promising initiative into a growing voice in global youth policy and intergenerational collaboration. The August flagship event demonstrated that youth-led design research, when coupled with intergenerational partnership and authentic feedback mechanisms, can generate insights that directly inform UN processes, civil society strategy, and community action. Yet the same engagement also revealed critical barriers: the funding gap, the persistence of tokenism, the challenge of translating conference outputs into sustained action, and the digital divides that risk deepening existing inequalities.

The path forward requires Member States, donors, UN bodies, and civil society to move beyond celebration of youth voices toward structural change: institutionalizing intergenerational co-leadership, funding proven community-led models, reshaping UN conferencing for follow-through, and creating intentional spaces (Impact Hubs) where youth and elders collaborate not as a nice-to-have, but as a core driver of sustainable development.

What's Next (And Where You Come In!)

What's Next

TogetherForSDGs is emerging to become an intergenerational impact platform! As a platform, this digital hub will include resources like the Building Communities in Action framework, see what intergenerational prototypes look like in practice, and use these tools to shape solutions in your own context.

On this hub, you will find real projects that show how youth, elders, caregivers, teachers, and local leaders can co-design for the SDGs. You can borrow what fits, adapt what needs changing, and share back your learning so others can benefit from your experience.

Each year, around International Youth Day, you will be able to join a live workshop designed to help you move from "idea" to "prototype" with intergenerational partners. The recordings, guides, and templates from these workshops will live on the site so you can work at your own pace and still feel part of a wider, global community.

At the same time, what you build locally does not stay local: your insights and challenges can feed into local and intergovernmental processes, discussions, and implementation spaces where intergenerational perspectives are often missing. When you document what works, you help shape policies, guidance, and funding priorities that affect communities far beyond your own.

How You Can Get Involved Now

- ***If you lead a school, program, or community space:***
  Take the Building Communities in Action framework and pilot one intergenerational club, hub, or circle with the people you already have—students, parents, elders, staff—and share your learning back to the hub.

- **If you are running or dreaming of a project:**
  Submit your intergenerational prototype to be featured, or use the toolkit to refine what you are already doing so others can see, learn from, and support your work.

- **If you are a mentor, policymaker, or technical expert:**
  Offer to walk alongside one design team—by mentoring them, opening doors into policy spaces, or helping them with monitoring, communication, or safeguarding so their impact is safer and stronger.

- **If you steward resources or partnerships:**
  Explore how your institution can provide multi-year, flexible support—financial or in-kind—to treat these projects as learning labs for community and intergovernmental commitments, and SDG implementation.

- **If you simply want to stay close to this work:**
  Join the TogetherForSDGs communication channels by visiting our website, sign up for the annual IYD-aligned workshop, and watch for opportunities to bring an intergenerational lens into the spaces where you already have influence.

View updates on the TogetherForSDGs page:
https://www.gu.org/events/togetherforsdgs/

TogetherForSDGs: Bridging generations to create intergenerational ImPACT and build futures that last.

Appendix

Appendix A. Building Communities in Action: Methodology At a Glance

The Building Communities in Action framework is a relational design approach that moves from listening to action through four interconnected phases: 1) Framing, 2) Designing, 3) Enacting, and 4) Reflecting. It centers intergenerational collaboration by treating youth and older persons as co-researchers, co-designers, and co-leaders in every step of the process.

1. **Framing – Listening and Sense-Making**
   Design Teams hold community dialogues, interviews, and storytelling sessions with people across ages, geographies, and lived roles (e.g., smallholder farmers, refugee youth, traditional healers, teachers, and policymakers) to surface strengths, tensions, and priority issues. Teams use open framing questions linked to specific SDGs (e.g., SDG 1, 2, 3, 5) to understand how intergenerational collaboration is already happening, and what else is needed.

2. **Designing – Co-creating Strategies and Prototypes**
   Using insights from the Framing phase, teams co-design small, testable prototypes that blend traditional wisdom and modern innovation, such as financial literacy hubs, school garden clubs, healing circles, and sports-based gender equality initiatives. Youth and elders intentionally share power in this phase, deciding together which ideas to test, what roles each generation will play, and how success will be defined in their context.

3. **Enacting – Testing, Adapting, and Learning in the Field**
   Prototypes are implemented in real settings (schools, clinics, sports clubs, community centers), with teams tracking participation, stories of change, barriers, and unexpected outcomes. Simple feedback tools such as "*I Like, I Wish, What If, What Would It Take?*" help communities iterate quickly and keep the work grounded in lived experience.

4**. Reflecting – Synthesis, Policy Links, and Next Steps**
  Teams periodically pause to synthesize what they are learning about intergenerational collaboration, document stories and data, and identify what would be needed to strengthen, scale, or sustain each prototype. These reflections feed directly into policy recommendations for schools, communities, governments, and UN entities, as well as into the evolving design of TogetherForSDGs as an intergenerational impact platform.

A more detailed description of the framework, including example prompts and facilitation tips for each phase, will be available on the TogetherForSDGs digital hub so that organizations can adapt it to their own contexts.

Appendix B. Reframed Questions for Intergenerational Design

To deepen the quality of intergenerational collaboration, Design Teams moved beyond generic consultation questions and experimented with reframed prompts that foreground power, relationships, and systems. Examples include:

Surface Question	Hidden Assumptions	Reframed Relational Question
How do we get young people to care about the SDGs?	Young people don't already care. Caring looks one specific way.	What hopes and dreams do young people already hold for creating a better future? How might we listen to and amplify the ways young people are already leading change?
How can we get elders to mentor youth?	Elders must lead, youth must follow. Mentoring is one-way.	What shared wisdom and learning can grow between generations? How might elders and youth co-create new forms of mentorship and partnership?
How do we convince different generations to agree on SDG priorities?	Agreement is necessary before collaboration. Differences are barriers.	What values and dreams are shared across generations for a flourishing world? How might diverse priorities create new possibilities when woven together?

These reframed questions are woven throughout the SDG-specific sections (e.g., SDG 1, 2, 3, 5) and can be adapted by practitioners as interview prompts, dialogue openers, or reflection questions in their own intergenerational design processes.

Appendix C. Examples of Intergenerational Collaboration in Practice

Beyond the Design Team prototypes, TogetherForSDGs draws inspiration from community-based efforts that already embody intergenerational collaboration as a strategy for systems change. These examples illustrate how policy, funding, and practice can reinforce each other when youth and elders work side by side.

- **National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project (NARIGP) – Kenya**
  NARIGP supports climate-smart agriculture and rural livelihoods, with older persons advising on traditional crops like millet and sorghum while youth manage digital record-keeping, marketing, and innovation. This creates a practical model for blending indigenous knowledge with modern tools, and demonstrates how intergenerational collaboration can be structurally embedded in a national program.

- **Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Project (KCSAP)**
  KCSAP trains youth as Climate Smart Agriculture Champions while older persons contribute indigenous weather forecasting and planting practices, making adaptation strategies more locally grounded and sustainable. The project shows how government-led initiatives can formalize roles for both younger and older generations in addressing climate risk.

- **Community Sand Dams – Dryland Water Security**
  Sand dams in arid and semi-arid regions are designed and built through intergenerational effort: elders identify viable sites based on long-term ecological memory, while youth provide labor and introduce new tools to improve construction. The result is a nature-based solution that is technically sound, culturally rooted, and socially owned across generations.

These and other examples will be spotlighted on the TogetherForSDGs platform as case studies, offering concrete design patterns that teams can adapt in different sectors and regions.

Appendix D. TogetherForSDGs Design Team Members (2025 Cohort & Design Teams)

The 2025 cohort of TogetherForSDGs is composed of youth leaders and older changemakers who co-designed, tested, and refined prototypes across multiple SDGs.

Sauti Za Usawa / Balance 360 (Gender Equality and Intergenerational Hubs)
- Elizabeth Waliuba – Founder, Imarisha Usawa; Gender and Youth Advocate.
- ***Intergenerational Collaborators included in Prototype:*** Community collaborators including older women mentors, coaches, and local leaders supporting Sauti Za Usawa and Balance 360 hubs.
-

Voices for Impact (Intergenerational SDG Circles and Youth–Government Bridges)
- Nazia Naz – Lead, Voices for Impact, Pakistan.
- ***Intergenerational Collaborators included in Prototype:*** District-level mentors from government and civil society who support youth-led data collection and SDG circles.

Thrive Through Equality Initiative (Intergenerational Mentorship, Wellness, and Youth Hubs)
- Ralia Ali Hussein – Founder and Lead, Thrive Through Equality.
- ***Intergenerational Collaborators included in Prototype:*** Elders, health practitioners, and youth mentors co-leading wellness and life-skills hubs.

TogetherForSDGs School Clubs (Intergenerational School–Community Innovation Hubs)
- Tito Mwenda – Co-Lead, TogetherForSDGs School Clubs, Kenya.
- Aishu Narasimhadevara – Co-Lead, TogetherForSDGs School Clubs, India/USA.
- ***Intergenerational Collaborators included in Prototype***: Grandmothers, aunties, and elder community women serving as mentors and "elders-in-residence" in emerging school clubs.

Kasanya Automation (Sports, Skills, and Decent Work Pathways)
- Anini Esho Lokono – Lead, Kasanya Automation, Isiolo County, Kenya
- Fana Ceesay – Co-Lead, Kasanya Automation.
- ***Intergenerational Collaborators included in Prototype:*** Older construction workers, business owners, and coaches mentoring youth on technical skills, work ethics, and SDG literacy.

The Inspiring Indian (Intergenerational Storytelling for Mental Health and Resilience)
- His Excellency Aditya Raja – Founder, The Inspiring Indian, Dumka City, India.
- ***Intergenerational Collaborators included in Prototype:*** Neuroscientists, educators, and local leaders contributing to an intergenerational writing and storytelling initiative.

Names in Italics are team lead(s)

People's Team:

Group 1
TogetherForSDGs School Clubs
Michell Laura Achola
Neema Muthoni Muthami
Tito Mwenda
Aishu Narasimhadevara
Lenox Oyanga

Group 2
Voices for Impact
Vincent Cheptarus
Timothy Emmanuel Danladi
Ralia Ali Hussein **(Thrive for Equality)**
Nazia Naz
Watton Olungata

Group 3
Sauti Za Usawa
Joan Gathoni
Samuel K. Kimeu
Cliff Olal
Saido Omar
Elizabeth Waliuba

Group 4

Victoria Chepkurui
Dris Salisu Idris
Gorffly Mokua
Buay James Hoth Reath

Team Planet:
Kasanya Automation
Mohammed Gomna Bukar
Fana Ceesay
Anini Esho Lokono
Peter Kipkirui
Eltrud Okeyo

Team Peace:
Abdikadir Mohamed Mohamud
Andrew Nabuluku
Mary Yvonne Ododah

Team Prosperity:
Florence Awuor
Kimberly Chepngeno
Patrick Cheruiyot
Xiaohan "Sally" Ding
Anini Esho Lokono

Team Partnership:
David Nyutu Waithaka
Precise Syowai

[IYD 2025 Presentation Slides](#)

Together, these Design Team leaders and members demonstrate how intergenerational collaboration moves from aspiration to practice when leadership, learning, and responsibility are shared across ages.

Appendix E. Where to Learn More and Stay Connected

To honor the spirit of "*from local action to global impact*," TogetherForSDGs is curating a digital archive where readers can:

- Access the full Building Communities in Action framework, facilitation guides, and prototype toolkits.
- Explore project summaries, slide decks, and short videos from the 2025 Design Teams.
- Read the collective youth statement submitted to the WPAY30 High-Level Plenary and related UN engagements.
- Submit new intergenerational prototypes and stories for future cohorts and reports.

https://www.gu.org/events/togetherforsdgs

Supporting Partners