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Challenge Fund for Youth Employment Endline Evaluation Report

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CHALLENGE FUND FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not necessarily represent those of CFYE or any individuals and organisations referred to in the report.

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List of acronyms

3MTT	3 Million Technical Talent
ACE	African Clean Energy
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BI	Bakery Initiatives
CFYE	Challenge Fund for Youth Employment
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDE	Sustainable Economic Development Department
DMSI	Digital Marketing Skill Institute
EF	Evaluation Framework
EQ	Evaluation Question
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft Für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HCD	Human-Centred Design
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP	Implementing Partner
KEPSA	Kenya Private Sector Alliance
kg	Kilograms
KII	Key Informant Interview
LMS	Learning Management System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCIT	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MFA	Ministry of foreign Affairs
MTR	Midterm Review
MYP	Meaningful Youth Participation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
OBUL	Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OIUK	Opportunity International Uk
PbR	Payment By Results
PWD	People with Disabilities
QA	Quality Assurance
RFP	Request for Proposals
RLO	Refugee-Led Organisation
RTC	Rural Transformation Centre
SGB	Small and Growing Business
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
TA	Technical Assistance
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UGX	Ugandan Shilling
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
YEER	Youth Engagement, Empowerment and Resilience
YLP	Youth Livelihood Programme

Executive summary

Purpose

The endline evaluation of the Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) was designed to test assumptions about how CFYE interventions contributed to youth employment outcomes, while also capturing country-specific dynamics and lived experiences of young people who benefited from the Fund. As a theory-based assessment using a mixed-methods approach, the evaluation used the Fund's Theory of Change as the central framework for analysis. The evaluation combined quantitative portfolio data with qualitative evidence from case studies of selected implementing partners (IPs) across multiple countries. At the request of the funder, the evaluation also examined some areas outside of the Fund's express mandate (e.g. systemic change) to speak to the extent to which the environment of the Fund's IPs may have shifted.

Overall result

CFYE demonstrated significant achievements in supporting youth employment through private sector engagement. By the end of the first quarter of 2025, the Fund had supported IPs in 11 countries, resulting in approximately 132,000 jobs at the time of the evaluation, against its original target of 230,000.[1] Importantly, over 50% of these opportunities were taken up by young women, marking notable progress on gender inclusion. The portfolio introduced innovative models of skilling, job placement and enterprise development. Challenges remained in reaching rural and marginalised youth, balancing job quality with job quantity, and embedding sustainability strategies; but the Fund provided credible evidence that a challenge fund mechanism can stimulate large-scale employment opportunities and add value to global debates on the role of private sector growth in advancing youth employment and social impact.

Findings

By utilising results-based funding, the programme drove delivery across a diverse portfolio and surfaced practical models for inclusive job creation in complex labour markets. Notably, CFYE contributed to global conversations on approaches to youth employment by supporting partners to implement solutions considering alternative business practices, flexible work arrangements and workplace adaptations, including gender-transformative approaches. It also advanced the use of demand-driven skilling and digital job-matching platforms, offering replicable solutions for employment challenges faced by young people. These contributions reinforce the value of challenge funds as a mechanism not only for job creation but also for testing, learning and scaling approaches that respond to evolving economic and social realities.

Impact: The interventions contributed meaningfully to improved economic and social outcomes for youth, particularly through expanded access to stable employment and increased financial autonomy. Many beneficiaries, especially young women, reported enhanced confidence, income security and professional growth, providing examples of progression into supervisory roles or self-employment. In some cases, CFYE-supported interventions also helped shift employer practices on job quality and workforce diversity. These early outcomes indicate credible contributions to improved livelihoods. However, impact measurement varied across the

[1] The Fund's implementation continues beyond this evaluation. The evaluation uses the nominal end of Q1 2025 as a timeframe from which to assess and calculate quantitative achievements.

portfolio, with limited systematic tracking of longer-term effects such as job retention or household-level changes.[2]

Inclusion: Inclusion was a core objective for CFYE, and the programme achieved strong results in gender equity, with more than 50% of job outcomes taken up by young women. Some IPs adopted gender-transformative approaches, offering flexible work arrangements and supportive workplace policies; generally, however, inclusion efforts focused on gender parity, given that broader inclusion was not a mandate of the Fund. As a result of this, data disaggregation, beyond gender, was inconsistent, making it difficult to assess intersectional barriers or tailor solutions accordingly.

Sustainability and scale: The Fund demonstrated strong delivery at scale; in several contexts, partners exceeded job creation targets and introduced innovative solutions to connect young people with market-relevant opportunities. However, the speed and scale of delivery sometimes overshadowed deeper attention to institutional sustainability and long-term resilience. Many employment outcomes were tied to businesses or delivery models that lacked structured plans for continuation once CFYE funding ended. Some IPs had strong financial models, internal capacity, and strategic alignment to sustain outcomes, but others relied heavily on external support. Strengthening sustainability will require clearer expectations from the outset, including support for business continuity planning, local partnerships, and alignment with public and private sector systems that can extend the reach and durability of impact beyond the programme life cycle.

Effectiveness: Many IPs exceeded their delivery targets, particularly in job matching and digital employment models, but the strong emphasis on job numbers, reinforced by the payment-by-results structure, sometimes came at the expense of job quality, with less systematic attention to wages, safety, or job security or tenure. Effectiveness varied by context, showing greater consistency in examples where partners had prior experience with donor-funded employment programmes. Analysis of the CFYE portfolio indicates that its employment pathways are both valid and well aligned with the programme's intended outputs and outcomes. Across the portfolio, the three pathway categories effectively capture the different mechanisms through which jobs are created or enhanced:

- **Created jobs** typically involve entrepreneurship or enterprise growth.
- **Matched jobs** connect youth with existing vacancies.
- **Improved jobs** focus on enhancing the quality, stability, or conditions of existing employment.

IPs generally apply these pathways with clarity, and reporting is disaggregated accordingly. Several examples illustrate how IPs shifted between pathways in response to operational realities—for instance, prioritising job creation when waged employment was scarce, or emphasising job improvement where formal sector growth was limited. This adaptability reinforces the conclusion that the pathways are not only valid but also sufficiently flexible to accommodate context-specific labour market dynamics.

Relevance: The evaluation found CFYE to be broadly relevant to the priorities of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their embassies, national governments and youth employment needs in participating countries. The Fund successfully engaged the private sector to address labour market gaps, and it created employment pathways in high-growth sectors such as digital

[2] The Fund was not mandated to track systemic impact, and so its systems were not designed with this in mind. However, the client asked the evaluation to comment on systemic impact. This limitation is a limitation to the evaluation rather than a limitation to the Fund's implementation or impact.

services, logistics and manufacturing. However, the jobs created by the partners in the reviewed cases were more strongly aligned with urban, formal and digitally connected economies, limiting its reach to rural youth and those in informal sectors.

Coherence: Moderate coherence between IP initiatives and other youth employment initiatives at country level was present, particularly where IPs had pre-existing relationships with actors or had participated in national policy platforms. In some contexts, interventions complemented broader efforts in skilling, entrepreneurship and labour market activation, helping to fill gaps in private sector engagement. However, formal coordination with national strategies and donor-funded programmes was erratic across the portfolio. IPs were not always positioned to influence or align with national employment systems, particularly in countries with fragmented institutional landscapes. Internally, the portfolio showed alignment around shared objectives and learning priorities, but coordination across IPs within countries largely focused on the programme's learning events, with limited attention to the potential of forming stronger strategic partnerships across IPs. Greater investment in structured portfolio-level coordination and stakeholder engagement would improve coherence and increase the programme's contribution to system-wide outcomes.

Meaningful youth participation (MYP): CFYE demonstrated a strong commitment to MYP by embedding opportunities for youth engagement throughout the programme cycle. Across the portfolio there were examples of co-creation, feedback loops and youth-informed adaptations at the project level. However, youth influence was typically concentrated in operational and implementation stages, with limited participation in governance, strategic design or policy dialogue. Only a small number of IPs achieved full-cycle youth participation.

Lessons

Several lessons from the evaluation can inform the design of future challenge funds focused on youth employment. First, meaningful inclusion requires more than gender targets; it demands intentional strategies to reach diverse marginalised groups and tailor delivery models to their needs. Second, balancing job quantity with quality is essential, and associated performance frameworks should reward not just numbers but also fair wages, safety and stability. Third, flexibility in IP contracting and adaptive learning mechanisms are critical to enable course correction and innovation during implementation. Finally, sustainability must be built in from the outset through strong business models, system-level engagement, and clear exit strategies. These lessons highlight the need for challenge funds to go beyond delivery incentives and embed equity, relevance and long-term impact into their core design.

Recommendations

At the time of writing, the Fund is nearing closure, with many projects having already concluded. The recommendations provided should be taken into consideration for the design and implementation of future interventions.

1. Support IPs to balance job quantity and quality targets based on national labour market conditions, using clearer and contextualised definitions of 'decent work'.
2. Embed adaptive learning loops and structured peer learning mechanisms across the portfolio to improve programme effectiveness and responsiveness.
3. Encourage sustainability planning on the part of the IPs as a requirement up front, with technical support provided to ensure results can endure beyond the lifespan of the project.
4. Encourage collaboration across sectors to drive structural change, working through IPs as ecosystem actors.

5. Broaden the inclusion focus beyond gender to be a more context-responsive and sustainability-focused approach to youth employment.

The endline evaluation confirms that a well-structured challenge fund can drive large-scale youth employment through private sector engagement and innovation. The programme delivered substantial results, but its long-term impact will depend on how the IPs continue to address inclusion gaps and strengthen job quality. The lessons and recommendations from this evaluation offer practical guidance for designing more equitable, context-sensitive and durable youth employment initiatives going forward.

1. Introduction

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE) is a programme funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and managed by a consortium led by Palladium. It aims to create decent employment opportunities for 230,000 young people across Africa and the Middle East, with a focus on ensuring that at least half of these opportunities benefit women. The Fund has been operational from 2019 and aims to close its operations in 2026.

CFYE supports private sector-led initiatives that both increase the number of jobs available to young people and enhance the quality of those jobs. Through organising competitive Challenge Fund calls, the programme provides grants and co-invests in projects across 11 countries. In addition to financial support, CFYE offers tailored technical assistance (TA) to help projects align with its core objectives and maximise impact.

The endline evaluation builds on a midline evaluation conducted in mid-2023, and assesses the overall performance and impact of the CFYE programme to Q1 2025. This process has generated evidence on and insights into the effectiveness of the challenge fund model and the interventions implemented to promote quality youth employment. Particular attention is given to the experiences of young women and the contextual factors influencing outcomes in each country.

The findings are intended to guide future programming and provide valuable lessons for stakeholders working to address youth employment challenges in similar contexts.

The report is structured into four sections, including this introduction.

Section 2: Methodology. The evaluation methodology employs a theory-based design, combining a portfolio review with both light-touch and in-depth case studies as the core analytical unit. This approach integrates desk review of programme documents and contextual materials alongside primary data collection through stakeholder interviews and project visits. By triangulating evidence across multiple sources and methods, the evaluation generates a comprehensive understanding of CFYE's performance and impact.

Section 3: Findings. The findings of the evaluation are organised around seven key criteria: impact, inclusion, systemic change, sustainability, effectiveness, relevance, and coherence. The 'impact' section details evidence on employment results and performance across various countries and programme models. The 'inclusion' discussion explores gender and diversity data, emphasising differences in involvement and outcomes for distinct groups. The 'systemic change' segment reviews advances towards broader structural reform and sectoral developments.[3] Within 'sustainability', the focus shifts to the endurance and future prospects of positive results. 'Effectiveness' analyses whether CFYE's approaches to generating, upgrading and matching jobs are sound, and includes a look at programme adjustments, and the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system, as well as TA. The 'relevance' topic considers how well activities and impacts correspond to the needs of target groups and overarching goals, while 'coherence' reflects on the overall alignment and logic of the strategy, interventions and partnerships throughout the programme's lifespan.

Section 4: Conclusions and recommendations. The report synthesises the findings across all evaluation components to generate strategic insights and actionable lessons for future programming. By systematically analysing the evidence through the lens of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria and the programme's Theory of Change (ToC), the conclusions will highlight what

[3] Systemic change was not part of the CFYE mandate, but this has been included in the evaluation at the request of the funder.

worked, what challenges emerged, and the contextual factors influencing outcomes. These insights directly inform the recommendations, providing clear guidance for stakeholders on enhancing the effectiveness, inclusivity and sustainability of youth employment initiatives in similar contexts.

2. Methodology

The endline evaluation is theory-based, with case studies as the foundational unit of analysis in the context of a broader portfolio review. It comprises four interconnected components: (1) light-touch case studies, (2) in-depth case studies, (3) a portfolio review, and (4) an analysis and synthesis process, following a theory-based approach using contribution analysis with a strength of evidence assessment. Each component is tailored to address specific evaluation questions (EQs) aligned with the OECD-DAC criteria and the CFYE ToC.

2.1. Evaluation framework (EF)

The endline EF comprises EQs which include the OECD-DAC-aligned criteria of impact, inclusion, systemic change, sustainability, effectiveness, relevance, and coherence. The framework was revised after midline to ensure that the EQs being asked were relevant to the Fund and the funder. An organisational review of the project examined efficiency at midline. Strategic lessons are then drawn from insights synthesised across the criteria. The framework has been updated from the midline EF following feedback from DDE and the CFYE team, but it maintains its original structure and focus with the requested inclusion of a question on systemic change to understand the degree to which CFYE's interventions, TA and leveraged funding contribute to broader systemic change.

The full EF is included as Annex V: Endline Evaluation F.

2.2. Evaluation components

The light-touch case studies addressed six evaluation criteria (inclusion, systemic change, sustainability, effectiveness, relevance, and coherence) at the endline phase. These cases provided ecosystem- and context-level insights into youth employment dynamics and stakeholder environments. At midline, 16 light-touch case studies were undertaken across Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Egypt. At endline, six[4] new light-touch case studies were purposively selected from later CFYE funding rounds in the same countries. This allowed for comparative learning and exploration of adaptation between CFYE funding rounds.

[4] Two from Nigeria, two from Kenya and two from Uganda.

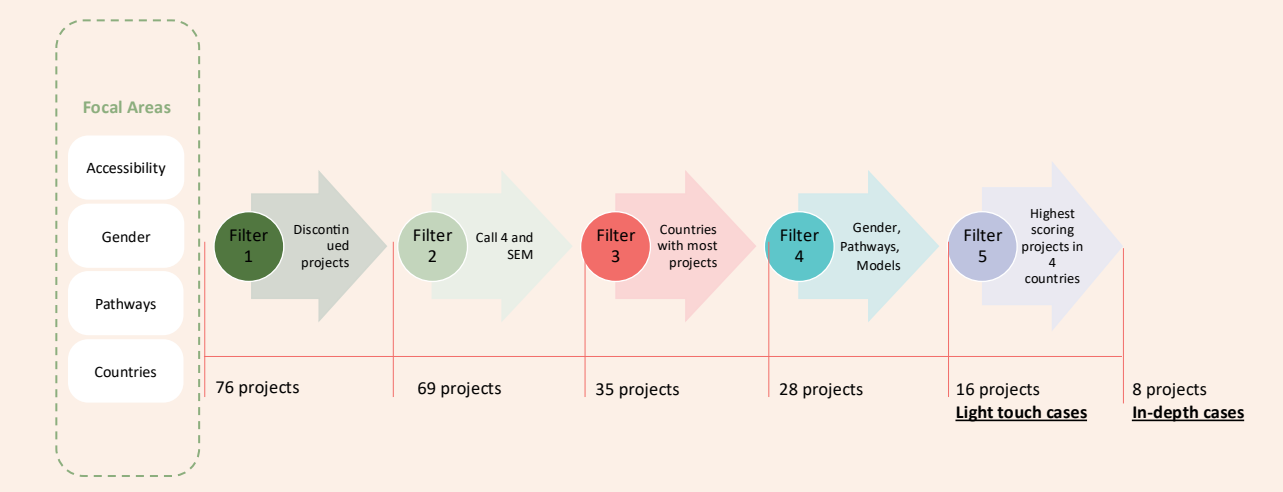


Figure 1. Selection of implementing partners (IPs) for case studies

In-depth case studies addressed impact, inclusion, systemic change, sustainability, effectiveness, relevance, and coherence at endline, using a two-step process. Eight out of the 16 light-touch case study projects chosen at midline were selected for in-depth analysis and were carried on to the endline phase. Both DMSI and Stutern (Nigeria) were in-depth cases at midline and participated in the endline, despite having concluded their engagement with the Fund.

The in-depth case studies aimed to assess projects against a reconstructed baseline (from the midline, and supplemented with additional data at endline) to give a 'before' and 'after' overview of the programme's contribution to the IP (and contextual and systemic changes if measurable).

Table 1. Light-touch and in-depth case studies at endline

IP	Light-touch	In-depth
Uganda		
Woord en Daad		X
Eco Brixs (new)	X	
OIUK	X	
Ballon Ventures		X
Kenya		
Shortlist		X
FUNDIS		X
SwahiliPot (new)	X	
Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) (new)	X	
Nigeria		
Stutern		X
Shecluded (new)	X	
DMSI		X
Bakery Initiatives (BI) (new)	X	
Egypt		

Jinni		X
Sprints		X
Almouneer Medical Service	X	
Aman Holdings	X	

The portfolio review extended beyond the case studies outlined above and examined impact pathways, systemic change and strategic lessons across the entire CFYE project portfolio. The portfolio review drew on data from CFYE's Salesforce platform and used this to test assumptions in the CFYE ToC and identify patterns across the entire CFYE portfolio. The aim was to use the portfolio review to evaluate the representativeness and effectiveness of different impact pathways and assess the success of implementation models in achieving decent work outcomes. The portfolio review also aimed to identify key drivers of results, including models and interventions that showed potential for scale and sustainability. It was not feasible to conduct an efficiency analysis, owing to the lack of availability of comparable financial data.

To ensure a robust and consistent evidence base, the evaluation drew on a mix of primary and secondary data sources, supported by standardised data collection and analysis tools. Primary data was collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) with CFYE programme teams (at central and country level), IPs, and external stakeholders such as policymakers and service providers. Secondary data sources included CFYE monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data and narrative reports as well as individual IP documents (concept notes, business case, proposals, results frameworks and reports – both annual and quarterly) downloaded from Salesforce. Standardised qualitative and quantitative instruments, including interview protocols and an analytical matrix, were developed to ensure consistency across case studies.

2.3. Data analysis and synthesis

The evaluation employed contribution analysis to assess progress in relation to the ToC. This analytical method systematically organised evidence in alignment with the ToC framework. This facilitated the establishment of findings related to outcomes, impact and systemic change, as well as supporting findings related to inclusion. Contribution analysis is particularly well suited to the complexity of the CFYE programme, in which multiple interacting factors and actors influenced outcomes, making direct attribution difficult. Instead of isolating impact through experimental or quasi-experimental methods, contribution analysis enabled the team to construct plausible, evidence-based narratives explaining how and why CFYE interventions contributed, or did not contribute, to observed changes.

The contribution analysis was structured around 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' research phases, combining a lighter-touch system-level analysis with ground-level insights. The top-down phase involved reviewing the ToC intended impact pathways and assumptions. The bottom-up phase focused on the implementation and outcomes of individual projects, as captured through the light-touch and in-depth case studies. This allowed the team to explore how the programme's interventions translated into change within different contexts.

We used an assessment grid (see Table 2) to evaluate the extent and certainty of CFYE's contribution to specific outcomes, based on reviewing the pathways outlined in the ToC from intermediate outcomes to the outcomes *create*, *improve* and *match* for the different approaches/outputs. It combines two dimensions: level of contribution and confidence in the evidence. The grid produces a nuanced judgement by showing both the importance of CFYE's role

in driving change and the degree of certainty in that judgement, ensuring that conclusions are transparent and evidence-based.

Table 2. Assessment grid

CFYE	Critical contributor (change would not have happened otherwise)	Important contributor (one of the most important factors, but there were others too)	Co-contributor (was part of, but not the most important factor in, an array of factors that influenced change)
High confidence (multiple triangulated consistent sources)	Very confident that CFYE made a critical contribution to the outcome	Very confident that CFYE made an important contribution to the outcome	Very confident that CFYE's contribution to the outcome was negligible
Medium confidence (credible evidence but not fully triangulated or consistent)	More confident than not that CFYE made a critical contribution to the outcome	More confident than not that CFYE made an important contribution to the outcome	More confident than not that CFYE's contribution to the outcome was negligible
Limited confidence (evidence is weak, anecdotal or inconsistent)	Limited evidence that CFYE made a critical contribution to the outcome	Limited evidence that CFYE made an important contribution to the outcome	Limited evidence that CFYE's contribution to the outcome was negligible

To ensure sufficient emphasis on other criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability), there was a separate analytical process which involved bottom-up identification of codes and themes related to the criteria from programme documentation, KIIs and focus groups, with key evidence summarised at various levels (individual projects and countries), facilitating synthesis at country level through pattern spotting and identification of outliers, enabling analysis of commonalities and differences.

Together, these two phases enabled the evaluation team to: (1) assess whether CFYE projects contributed to change regarding youth employment, inclusion, and institutional development; (2) understand the drivers and constraints of observed change, including the role of contextual factors and implementation adaptations; and (3) assess change at multiple levels, including individual, organisational and systemic where data was available, and relate these findings back to the various categories of questions in the EF.

We conducted two analysis and synthesis workshops as a team to present, discuss and review findings prior to drafting the report. The analysis and synthesis integrated findings from the midline, the eight new light-touch and eight in-depth endline case studies, and the portfolio review. Triangulation across all criteria also underpinned the contribution analysis framework.

2.4. Quality assurance (QA)

Itad ensured QA throughout the project life cycle to maintain technical rigour, ethical compliance and client relevance. The quality of the evaluation process was upheld through robust design, appropriate methodologies and realistic planning. The next stage focused on the quality of deliverables, using structured QA templates aligned with OECD-DAC standards, peer review and proofing to guarantee clarity, accuracy and methodological integrity. Itad emphasised continuous improvement *ex post*, securing client feedback and conducting internal reviews to close the learning loop. This system was underpinned by ISO 9001:2015 accreditation and reinforced by Itad's Project Director on this assignment, ensuring that outputs were credible, inclusive and actionable.

2.5. Use of artificial intelligence (AI) platforms

With the permission and foreknowledge of the client, the evaluation team made selective use of AI-assisted tools to support analysis and reporting, in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance commitments. AI was applied only to anonymised, non-personal data, such as coded extracts from transcripts, programme documents, and evaluation notes, ensuring that no raw or identifiable CFYE data was processed outside secure environments. The team used Itad's GDPR-compliant Microsoft 365 Copilot environment to assist with thematic synthesis, identification of illustrative quotes, and summarising coded content. All analysis, interpretation and conclusions were carried out and quality assured by the evaluation team.

2.6. Limitations and challenges

The midterm review highlighted that CFYE was not originally designed to intervene at the wider system level but rather to support IPs within their immediate operating environments. The programme had limited scope to influence broader systemic transformation across entire sectors. In turn, this limitation underscores why we could not assess broader systemic outcomes. The difficulty in assessing sector-wide change is not only a matter of a lack of data but also a reflection of CFYE's original design, which prioritised IP-level results. Without an explicit system-level orientation, CFYE has not consistently tracked, measured or influenced sector-wide dynamics that extend beyond the reach of individual IPs.

This situation is closely linked to the absence of baseline information at the sector level. Because the case study process has centred largely on IP-level changes, there is limited sector baseline-level data to benchmark or contextualise changes across the broader ecosystem. The lack of comprehensive sectoral baselines makes it challenging to assess whether CFYE's support has contributed to wider structural shifts in employment systems, value chains and market practices. However, where possible we have presented early signs of system-level change.

At the time of the evaluation, the Fund was still operational, although several IPs had completed their interventions. Thus, a key limitation is that a) reported performance against end-of-programme targets is assessed using results reported up to Q1 2025 and b) the level of achievement across country portfolios is affected by how many projects are still ongoing.

3. Findings

In this section, 'impact' presents evidence of job outcomes and performance across countries and models. CFYE outcomes are created, improved or matched employment. Created jobs are jobs that did not exist prior to the project. Improved jobs are existing jobs improved through better wages, working conditions, job security or compliance with labour standards. Matched jobs are where existing vacancies have been filled as a result of the project. 'Inclusion' examines gender and diversity metrics, highlighting variations in participation and outcomes for different groups. 'Systemic change' assesses progress towards wider structural transformation and sector-level shifts. 'Sustainability' looks at the durability and long-term viability of achieved results. 'Effectiveness' examines the validity of CFYE pathways to created, improved and matched employment, and then discusses the programme adaptation, the MEL system, and TA. 'Relevance' evaluates how well the programme's activities and outcomes align with the needs of target populations and broader objectives, and 'coherence' considers the consistency and logic of the strategy, interventions and partnerships throughout the programme life cycle.

3.1. Impact

This section summarises the achievements of the CFYE portfolio as a whole. It summarises the reported and verified results in terms of jobs created, improved and matched. It includes an analysis of the results at country level and discusses the degree to which the portfolio supported youth to access employment. It also looks at unintended outcomes.

Across its portfolio, CFYE reported nearly 132,000 job outcomes, with over half held by women and a diverse mix of created, improved and matched jobs. Although performance varied across countries, portfolio reached 79% of its job targets.[5] Gender inclusion was particularly strong in Burkina Faso, Senegal and Nigeria. Implementation in Kenya, appeared to support more stable and diversified outcomes. At a granular level, job model performance differed by context: job creation was more prominent in contexts characterised by higher levels of innovation, (e.g. clean tech in Uganda), risk-taking and proactiveness (e.g. Egypt and Nigeria); job improvement was effective across sectors such as health (e.g. Uganda); and job matching underperformed in markets with weaker formal employment systems (e.g. Uganda), though Kenya demonstrated effective approaches to job matching in informal contexts. These trends reflect how CFYE, working with its interventions across diverse countries adapted its portfolio to varying labour market conditions, population needs and implementation environments across its programme countries.

Of the total 131,737 job outcomes that were verified,[6] 55,334 jobs were created, 57,939 jobs improved, and 18,464 jobs matched. Of these, 652 were held by women, with variation by country and job type. Jobs spanned waged employment, self-employment and temporary roles, and were concentrated in sectors such as IT, manufacturing, education, agriculture and hospitality.

- Kenya reported a relatively balanced distribution across created jobs (11,882), and matched (3,649) jobs, with improved jobs reaching 15,209. This suggests a diversified portfolio combining enterprise growth, training-based quality improvement, and active job placement.

[5] Please refer to the limitations outlined in the Methodology section, which speaks to the limitation of performance against end-of-programme targets using results reported up to Q1 2025.

[6] All numbers quoted in the report use data that has been verified by CFYE.

- Nigeria and Egypt[7] had high reporting on job creation, with 7,027 and 9,878 created jobs respectively. These were often linked to entrepreneurship support, such as digital marketing or small-scale service delivery models, or the formalisation of previously informal jobs (Jinni), and were particularly important in contexts with limited formal wage employment.
- Uganda showed a strong concentration in job improvement (8,111), especially in sectors such as health and job creation (notably clean energy). The low number of matched jobs (75) reflects market constraints and fewer formal placement opportunities.
- Ethiopia demonstrated consistent delivery across all job pathways, including 6,316 created jobs and 5,542 improved jobs, and was the strongest performer in meeting job targets (104%). This may reflect more stable implementation conditions and effective matching between models and context.
- Jordan reported a high proportion (89%) of matched jobs held by women relative to its size. This points to effective skilling-to-placement pipelines, particularly in information and communications technology (ICT) and administrative roles.
- Burkina Faso and Sudan, although contributing smaller numbers overall, also reported notable gender inclusion, with over 80% of jobs held by women, driven primarily through job improvement and self-employment models. Tunisia[8] leaned heavily on job matching (1,698) but reached only 46% of its overall target, suggesting either overestimated potential for placements or operational delivery challenges.
- Senegal reported strong gender outcomes (83% women) and relatively high shares of improved jobs (820), despite small absolute numbers. This indicates a focus on quality upgrades in smaller labour markets, often through informal sector interventions.

From these findings, there are a few notable observations:

- Gender outcomes vary more by country than by model, with some smaller portfolios (e.g. Burkina Faso and Senegal) outperforming larger ones in terms of female participation.
- Matching models tend to underperform in lower-capacity or less formalised labour markets (e.g. Sudan), and job improvement is more feasible across contexts.
- Countries with stronger entrepreneurship ecosystems (e.g. Nigeria and Egypt) generated more created jobs, even where formal employment was limited.
- Portfolios where outcome performance is more equal, such as Kenya's, appear to mitigate risk across outcomes.

Gender participation rates also varied. Nigeria (73%), Senegal (83%) and Burkina Faso (84%) achieved the highest shares of female participation; Egypt and Kenya reported 48% and 39%, respectively. These figures reflect both sector dynamics and the strength of gender-specific outreach and support models.

In terms of employment types:

- Waged jobs totalled 66,358, of which 35,410 (53%) were held by women.
- Self-employment accounted for 35,533 jobs (54% women).
- Temporary waged roles were reported in smaller numbers (857 total), with 58% female participation.

[7] In Egypt's context of high youth unemployment and economic contraction, prioritising job creation over improvement was considered more urgent and feasible by the CFYE country team.

[8] Tunisia's recent political economic context has severely constrained economic growth.

Table 3. CFYE overall portfolio performance by country at end Q1 2025

Country	Jobs created	Target created	Jobs improved	Target improved	Jobs matched	Target matched	% women	Comments
Burkina Faso	1,280	1,740	1,057	1,545	5	65	84%	• Very high female participation • Job improvement through informal/self-employment
Egypt	9,878	13,575	3,933	6,053	1,118	2,435	48%	• Job creation dominant • Sectoral focus on hospitality and tech
Ethiopia	6,316	5,593	5,542	5,731	11	61	50%	• Strong across all models • Strong performance on created jobs
Jordan	3,369	5,823	1,935	2,865	631	980	49%	• Effective training-to-placement pipeline • Relatively high matched jobs
Kenya	11,882	12,4377	15,209	21,771	3,649	5,180	39%	• Balanced use of all models • Strong implementation capacity; largest job contributor
Morocco	808	1,028	1,095	1,488	243	700	50%	• Moderate results across models • Consistent gender representation
Nigeria	7,027	13,909	1,190	2,223	3,444	7,422	73%	• High female participation • Emphasis on job creation via entrepreneurship
SEM	3,227	5,766	18,132	10,543	7,590	4,130	53%	• Weak performance against improved jobs
Senegal	721	1,999	820	969	0	0	83%	• High gender outcomes • Small but focused improvement efforts in informal sector
Sudan	88	384	85	336	0	147	84%	• Small portfolio; high women's share

[9] of all jobs verified and achieved

								• Low matched job feasibility
Tunisia	817	2,743	830	2,475	1,698	2,021	62%	• Heavy reliance on matching • Low overall performance (15% of target)
Uganda	9,921	11,389	8,111	12,018	75	30	57%	• Focus on job improvement in health and in matching in clean tech

The overall portfolio had achieved 79% of its job targets by Q1 2025. The performance of case study countries against targets varied widely as reflected in the table above. However, as mentioned in the limitations, a direct comparison between the countries is not possible, as some countries are still in the process of delivery.

Table 4. CFYE performance by IP case study country at end of Q1 2025

Country	% target of created, improved and matched jobs achieved for all youth	% of the target created, improved and matched jobs achieved by women
Kenya	78%	57%
Uganda	77%	69%
Nigeria	50%	44%
Egypt	68%	57%

3.1.1. Unintended consequences across the CFYE portfolio

Unintended outcomes emerged within the CFYE portfolio. These consequences, both beneficial and challenging, went beyond the programme's intended results framework.

- **Broader economic impact:** Balloon Ventures provided estimates of some positive supply chain effects, including increased purchases from more than 2,000 farmers and the creation of new employment opportunities for hundreds of casual labourers.
- **Organic project adaptation:** District Spaces witnessed the spontaneous formation of an informal credit arrangement between local fodder suppliers and women, which was later formally integrated into project activities.
- **Intergenerational mentorship:** In Burkina Faso, Pan-African Microfinance unintentionally recruited older community agents. This resulted in strong mentoring support for younger agents, echoing recommendations from earlier human-centred design (HCD) work.

These examples show that although CFYE's interventions drive planned employment outcomes at the IP level, they can also catalyse context-specific ripple effects in the communities and ecosystems in which they operate. These broader effects are explored more fully in Section 3.3.

In summary, at the time of reporting, the CFYE portfolio achieved nearly 112,000 job outcomes, comprising created, improved and matched jobs across diverse sectors and employment types. Over half of these roles were held by women, reflecting strong gender inclusion across the programme. Job creation was driven by entrepreneurial activity and innovation, job improvement proved feasible across multiple sectors, and job matching showed mixed results, depending on labour market conditions. Balanced implementation models contributed to more

stable and diversified outcomes. Beyond its intended goals, there were also some indications of CFYE catalysing unintended but positive effects, highlighting its potential broader impact on local ecosystems and communities.

3.2. Inclusion

This section provides an overview of how CFYE's portfolio addressed gender-responsiveness and broader inclusion objectives within its supported projects. It details the range of strategies applied by partners to identify and address barriers faced by women, including gender analysis at the design stage, targeted recruitment and outreach, and adaptations to training and technology to enhance accessibility. The section also covers policy approaches to gender inclusion, from informal safeguards to formal quotas and enforcement mechanisms, with examples from several countries.

CFYE partners used gender analysis and targeted strategies to identify and address women's barriers, although effectiveness varied across IPs. At the design stage, most IPs conducted gender analyses that mapped constraints such as time poverty, mobility and safety risks, care burdens, and exclusion from male-dominated sectors. These diagnostics revealed cultural restrictions in contexts such as Upper Egypt, Northern Nigeria and rural Uganda, alongside persistent structural inequities such as gender pay gaps. In response, IPs developed inclusive outreach mechanisms: women-only recruitment cohorts (Digital Marketing Skill Institute (DMSI), KEPSA), female-focused campaigns for non-traditional sectors (Sprints, Shortlist), and community-based recruitment via trusted networks (Aman, FUNDIS, Opportunity International UK (OIUK)). Tailored financial products, such as Shecluded's faith-sensitive Mudarabah instruments for Muslim women in Nigeria, further lowered entry barriers.

Gender analysis contributed to the consideration, in IP design, of women's time, mobility and digital access constraints. Localised training reduced travel for rural women. In Uganda, OIUK worked in refugee/host communities with local halls and savings group spaces, and Woord en Daad organised beekeeping and vocational courses in trading centres and rural community facilities. In Kenya, KEPSA's ICT/e-commerce training relied on community outreach in informal settlements and peri-urban neighbourhoods to recruit nano-influencers and youth for SME digitisation outreach. Flexible scheduling addressed caregiving and the demands of agricultural labour through co-designed timetables and modular courses. Technology adaptations included remote learning options and Arabic-language platforms, device financing to support digital work, and tailored virtual training for caregivers and graduates. Sector-specific changes, such as simplified baking processes and automation tools in digital marketing, addressed operational barriers and saved time.

Box 1. Definition of gender-transformative approach[10]

Gender-transformative approaches are strategies that encourage critical awareness of gender roles and norms and ways to change harmful gender norms in order to foster more equitable power relationships between women and men, and between women and others in the community, as well as the more equal distribution of resources between men and women.

[10] Source: Spotlight Initiative, UNDP (2023). Practical Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment Implementation as a Gender-Based Violence Intervention Strategy. A Guide to Developing Women's Economic Empowerment Initiatives.

IP policy approaches to gender inclusion ranged from informal safeguards to strict inclusion enforcement mechanisms/quotas.

- Kenya demonstrated the strongest enforcement: FUNDIS's mandatory 50% female participation quota was tied to partner compliance, and Shortlist Professional institutionalised equitable pipelines through female recruiters and women-focused ICT partnerships.
- In Uganda, safeguards included women-only training cohorts (OIUK), with Balloon Ventures easing access through rapid finance processing. In Nigeria, Shecluded embedded women-only participation, and DMSI used human-centred research to tailor inclusion for groups such as pregnant mothers, graduates and rural women.
- Egypt combined policy commitments with operational shifts: Jinni and Sprints required gender-equitable hiring, safety and non-discrimination measures, integrating them into recruitment, flexible scheduling, and security provisions. Sprints went further by coupling employer engagement with advocacy campaigns to shift cultural narratives in ICT and AI.

Despite these advances, most measures were strongest at entry points and weaker on retention, career progression, pay equity and harassment protection, with few anchored in national frameworks.

Retention and structural challenges shaped the sustainability of women's participation, highlighting both innovation and persistent gaps. Many IPs sought to retain women through flexible scheduling, hybrid learning and childcare provision; others reinforced safety and confidence through mentoring, transport allowances and safeguarding protocols (e.g. Jinni in Egypt, Balloon Ventures in Uganda). Gender-disaggregated data was increasingly used to refine programming – with stronger application recorded in some IPs like KEPSA, Sprints and Jinni, than in others such as Eco Brixs and OIUK. Despite these efforts, systemic contextual challenges persisted: entrenched cultural resistance, limited childcare infrastructure, gender pay inequities and competition from other free training programmes all constrained impact. Moreover, IPs' prior expertise in women's empowerment was a contributing factor to enhanced gender inclusion practices, which limits the programme's overall contribution to gender inclusion across IPs and country portfolios.

Box 2. Notable examples of interventions to support women's inclusion

Women-only recruitment cohorts (KEPSA – Kenya; DMSI – Nigeria).
Faith-aligned financial products such as Mudarabah loans (Shecluded – Nigeria).
Childcare as an enabler of women's participation (BI – Nigeria; SwahiliPot – Kenya).
Safe workplace guarantees, including transport allowances and predictable hours (Jinni – Egypt).
Data-driven inclusion with embedded QA and adaptive targeting (Jinni – Egypt; KEPSA – Kenya).

CFYE went beyond enhancing beneficiaries' access to job opportunities and achieved partial institutional shifts in influencing employer practices, financing models and platform rules. In Kenya, KEPSA embedded equity logic and bias detection into the Twiva platform, boosting women's participation and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) leadership; Shortlist reduced hiring bias and achieved gender parity in male-dominated placements. SwahiliPot formalised creative sector work through county-level policy mechanisms; and in Egypt, Aman introduced safeguarding and norm-awareness training, and Jinni institutionalised flexible, safe workplace protocols. In Nigeria, Shecluded expanded access through culturally aligned Mudarabah financing, and BI created enabling environments for mothers through childcare and flexible hours. In Uganda, OIUK and Eco Brixs paired sensitisation campaigns with female role models. These examples illustrate important, although context-specific, structural changes that shifted workplace norms and access conditions in favour of women:

'We were able now to have a space … for the nursing mothers […] and also in terms of making sure that we are able to have a working training hours and days.'[11]

However, persistent gaps in norm change, male ally engagement and systemic reforms limited the programme's positioning on the gender-transformation spectrum. Although some partners engaged men, such as OIUK's household dialogues and Eco Brixs's work with community leaders, male allyship was generally applied inconsistently. Case study IPs in Nigeria relied on sporadic spousal sensitisation and those in Egypt prioritised workplace adaptations over direct engagement with male relatives of women beneficiaries. Care burdens and mobility restrictions continued to constrain women's participation, with only isolated childcare solutions (BI in Nigeria, limited provision in Kenya). Gender pay gaps in health and ICT sectors persisted, and flexible or remote options could not fully overcome cultural and economic barriers in contexts such as Upper Egypt or Northern Nigeria.

Box 3. Notable examples of gender-transformative approaches

Platform-level equity mechanisms (KEPSA/Twiva – Kenya).
Bias-free hiring models reducing structural exclusion (Shortlist – Kenya).
Community norm change via household dialogues (OIUK – Uganda; Eco Brixs – Uganda).
Culturally adapted financial models (Shecluded – Nigeria).
Childcare as structural enabler (BI – Nigeria).
Workplace safeguarding protocols (Aman, Jinni – Egypt).

CFYE expanded women's access to decent jobs by opening new pathways in digital work, and redesigned entry points into male-dominated sectors, and SME or self-employment growth. In Kenya and Nigeria, digital platforms created rapid entry into paid work, with women taking on roles in digital marketing, coaching, and influencer activities through KEPSA/Twiva, or entering bias-free hiring pipelines via Shortlist. Remote and flexible digital jobs also enabled women to balance work with caregiving (KEPSA, Shortlist, DMSI, Stutern). Beyond digital work, sector redesign unlocked safer opportunities in construction through FUNDIS and predictable incomes in waste recycling via Eco Brixs's micro-franchise model. Self-employment innovations also lowered barriers: BI's 'dough hub' widened female participation in bakeries, and Shecluded enabled low-income women to transition into more viable enterprises. However, these gains were concentrated in entry and mid-skill segments, with limited structured career ladders. This was clear in KEPSA's freelance digital work and Sprints' limited absorption of trained women into core tech roles.

CFYE also improved women's access to skills training by introducing adaptive, inclusive and practice-oriented models, although gaps remain in advanced upskilling. Stutern provided subsidised laptops, modems and solar kits for hybrid learning. DMSI offered self-paced online courses with peer support. KEPSA tailored evening sessions to caregiving schedules. In Egypt, Sprints extended training to underserved regions such as Upper Egypt, and Almouneer integrated digital literacy with sector-specific instruction. Training was often combined with practical exposure: FUNDIS linked technical learning to paid gigs in construction, and OIUK embedded financial literacy with market linkages for refugee and host-community women:

'Flexible training schedules […] allowed them to balance their training with other commitments like smallholder farming work and family care.'[12]

[11] KO3SwahiliPot
[12] UGWEDKII005.

Box 4. Notable interventions enhancing access to employment for women

'Fit-for-women' jobs – Almouneer designed flexible remote shifts; Jinni embedded safety and predictability into service roles (Egypt).
Process re-engineering – BI's dough hub removed physically demanding steps, widening women's entry into bakery production (Nigeria).
Credible gig marketplaces – FUNDIS bundled insurance, ratings and job management to convert informal blue-collar gigs into formalised opportunities (Kenya).
Last-mile enablement – Stutern distributed laptops, modems and solar inverters to bridge connectivity gaps for rural women (Nigeria).
Trauma and safety-aware training – Jinni paired vocational training with psychosocial support and workplace safety measures (Egypt).
Platform-level equity – KEPSA/Twiva automated pay negotiations and bias detection to enforce equal pay and inclusive hiring at scale (Kenya).
Income diversification – Woord en Daad added ancillary enterprises such as bee suits and candles, cushioning shocks for women producers (Uganda).

CFYE interventions supported some improvements in women's work–life balance, primarily through flexible and remote models that eased caregiving pressures. Remote and hybrid learning platforms (DMSI, Stutern) allowed women to study at their own pace; KEPSA institutionalised output-based work and AI-driven scheduling to accommodate caregiving cycles. Freelance and self-managed options, such as FUNDIS's marketplace, further enhanced autonomy. In restrictive contexts such as Upper Egypt, Aman and Almouneer used remote designs to overcome mobility and social barriers, markedly improving work–life balance for women. Ugandan partners tailored schedules to community schedules. Eco Brixs and BI went further by offering breastfeeding spaces and crèche facilities alongside flexible shifts. These measures reduced commuting stress, enabled evening training, and in some cases, such as Jinni's safe sites, gained family approval by visibly addressing safety concerns.

However, persistent gaps in care infrastructure and negative social norms limited the effectiveness of flexibility arrangements as a single strategy. Although women reported greater ability to balance work and caregiving, flexibility did not reduce their disproportionate care burden, because male allyship and shared responsibility were rarely addressed (see earlier conclusion). Isolated efforts such as OIUK's household dialogues or Jinni's persuasion strategies showed promise, but broader engagement of men, community leaders and employers was absent. Structural deficits also persisted: childcare provision was rare (with BI's crèche an exception); and women often remained in low-paid or precarious roles, as seen in Egypt's health sector and Nigeria's inflation-affected economy.

Box 5. Notable Interventions supporting women's work–life balance

Embedded care solutions: BI's childcare centre and Eco Brixs's breastfeeding room integrated maternal needs into workplaces, going beyond flexibility (Nigeria, Uganda).
Time-shifting technology: KEPSA's automation tools enabled asynchronous engagement and reduced scheduling conflicts (Kenya).
Safety as persuasion: Jinni's structured safety protocols and predictable hours secured spousal approval, easing women's participation in restrictive settings (Egypt).
Household-level levers: OIUK's couples-based financial literacy seeded shared decision-making around women's work (Uganda).
Platform-level fairness: KEPSA/Twiva embedded automated pay equity and bias detection, reducing women's 'mental load' in negotiating fair terms (Kenya).
Limitation: Most innovations stop at accommodation. Without childcare at scale, systematic male

allyship, or policy-level enablers (e.g. parental leave, transport compacts), balance remains fragile and project-bounded.

Inclusion barriers persist in undervalued sectors and conservative communities. In Egypt, housekeeping and hairdressing/beauty care occupations remain stigmatised even when formalised, and in Kenya's rural trades and Uganda's smallholder farming, cultural acceptance lags behind urban areas. Norm shifts are also better documented through anecdotes than systematic tracking; DMSI in Nigeria and Jinni in Egypt have compelling stories, but few IPs have robust systems to measure scale or sustainability. Where change relies heavily on economic necessity rather than deliberate norm-shifting strategies, there is a risk of reversal if financial pressures ease.

Overall, CFYE's portfolio was strongly gender-responsive, embedding safe, flexible and culturally sensitive approaches, but it lacked the systematic advocacy, male mobilisation and policy-level interventions needed to achieve fully gender-transformative impact.

3.3. Systemic change

This section outlines how CFYE-supported activities have influenced actors beyond CFYE's direct partners, including competitors, adjacent organisations, and others in the broader ecosystem. It highlights instances where IP models have been replicated or adapted by entities in Uganda, Kenya and Ghana, demonstrating CFYE's wider impact. The section also discusses challenges in sustaining inclusive, youth-focused features when commercial viability is uncertain, as well as CFYE's growing influence among donors and local governments.

We have defined systemic change as changes that non-IPs have made in response to CFYE-supported activities. The midterm review (MTR) confirmed that CFYE does not aim to work systemically but can catalyse systemic change through the work with IPs. Non-IPs include competitors, adjacent market actors, and organisations or individuals in the IP's supply chain or immediate ecosystem. We have aimed to capture changes in the wider development landscape where there were examples of other actors adopting elements of the overall CFYE approach.

There is strong evidence that CFYE-supported approaches have been taken up and replicated by competitors and adjacent market actors in some of the case studies, demonstrating the wider influence and sustainability of the programme's approaches. Given the highly context-specific nature of these cases, it is challenging to distil overarching lessons on the drivers behind the replication of these IPs or models; however, it is likely that the nature of CFYE and its partnership approach (shared risk) capitalises on local market knowledge and incentivises organisations to apply where they see a viable market opportunity, which other actors are likely to replicate. The following provides some examples.

1. **In Uganda, there is strong evidence that OIUK's integrated livelihoods and financial inclusion model has been replicated and adapted by other market actors.** UGAFODE has entered Nakivale, aiming to replicate Opportunity Bank Uganda Limited's (OBUL) financial inclusion model to target refugees; other banks, such as Equity, have introduced digital access channels for refugee communities. In addition, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are increasingly partnering directly with refugee-led organisations (RLOs).
2. **In Kenya, there is strong evidence that KEPSA's social commerce model has been replicated and evolved by other market actors.** For instance, KEPSA has linked trained influencers, digital resellers and coaches from its programme to external platforms such as Tappi and TokTV, enabling these organisations to expand their reach and capacity. In parallel, new entrants such as Trend AI have adopted the same underlying model but have

introduced innovations such as AI-driven matching of influencers to businesses, to enhance efficiency and scale.

3. **There is evidence that Balloon Ventures' post-investment support model has been taken up by other actors in the investment ecosystem.** SHONA Capital has adopted the model and, following knowledge-sharing sessions and targeted study visits with Balloon Ventures, is now delivering post-investment services to its own clients. This includes rolling out the model within programmes such as the National Social Security Fund's (NSSF's) Hi-Innovator programme, in which SHONA Capital serves as an enterprise support organisation, combining investment capital with tailored training and advisory.
4. **There is evidence that Shecluded's women-focused entrepreneurship model from Nigeria has been replicated and adapted in Ghana.** Kola Market, whose founder participated in Shecluded's training, contracted Shecluded to design a curriculum modelled on its own programme, paying approximately $3,000 for this service:

   'Yes, we have seen that a significant number of organisations in this space are now adopting the idea of making training demand-driven and inclusive […] we helped a fellow implementation partner set up Facebook ads […] we introduced the concept of asking beneficiaries to pay a small commitment fee […] now some of our fellow implementation partners are doing the same.'[13]

5. **However, there was also some evidence that CFYE's inclusive, youth-focused approach would not be replicated by commercial actors.** In Kenya, there is evidence that Shortlist's youth-friendly, low/zero-interest and flexible repayment approach for devices was not being taken up by commercial players. Other market actors, such as M-Kopa and WeCredit, have repayment terms that remain 'exploitative' or inflexible. Respondents also noted another organisation's unsustainable attempt to emulate Shortlist's model for the provision of laptops. This suggests that the youth-centric and inclusive features of CFYE-supported approaches may not be commercially viable in all cases, and therefore they may be at risk of being diluted or lost if scaled solely through market forces.

The CFYE model is gaining traction among other donors, development actors and local government, indicating its potential for broader influence beyond direct implementation. The following examples suggest that CFYE's blended model, combining shared risk, technical support and systemic engagement, is shaping practices across multiple actors and sectors. In Kenya, CFYE's use of performance-based funding to promote accountability, co-investment to encourage partner ownership, and tailored TA to strengthen business models has attracted interest from other funders; for example, the African Development Bank and a European embassy have engaged with CFYE to learn from its approach. At the subnational level, county governments have incorporated KEPSA's gender-sensitive recruitment strategies into their own employment initiatives. CFYE-supported innovations are also influencing the wider development landscape, as seen in the avocado value chain model piloted by DMSI – which has drawn attention from NGOs and donors for potential scale-up – and the Next Step Foundation's development of an open-source cloud-work training platform based on DMSI learnings.

Overall, although CFYE did not set out with an explicit objective to drive systems change, the evidence suggests that its approaches have influenced a range of actors across markets, government, and the development sector. Replication of CFYE-supported models by some non-IPs demonstrates the programme's potential to catalyse wider change, even if these examples are highly context-specific. At the same time, the limited uptake of certain inclusive, youth-

[13] N01KII.

focused features such as flexible, low-cost financing highlights the tension between social impact and commercial viability and the risk that these elements may be lost if scaling is left entirely to market forces.

3.4. Sustainability

This section examines the long-term viability of improvements and models introduced through CFYE's support, focusing on whether institutional and business changes are likely to endure beyond the programme's duration. It highlights how CFYE's TA, funding mechanisms and capacity building have strengthened systems such as MEL and digital infrastructure, enabled ongoing training, and have catalysed further investment. The section also discusses challenges to sustaining inclusive practices – particularly those targeting marginalised groups – and explores the balance between social impact and financial viability, ultimately illustrating how adaptive management has supported IPs' ongoing resilience.

CFYE's support has led to tangible improvements in institutional systems, which are likely to be sustained, including MEL, digital and organisational structure and policies, many of which are a direct link to CFYE's TA, such as their MEL capacity-building support:

- **CFYE's TA and performance-based approach have helped partners embed MEL as a core management function.** For example, BI moved from having no formal MEL system to establishing a structured framework, including standard operating procedures (SOPs) for data collection and a refined results framework. Similarly, Stutern, whose support from CFYE completed in 2024, institutionalised MEL by creating a dedicated unit, introducing standardised processes, and linking its new Learning Experience Platform to outcome indicators. This represented a shift from ad hoc reporting to embedded practice. DMSI also strengthened its MEL capacity by developing a centralised dashboard and using evidence to drive strategic pivots, such as revising employment pathways and introducing new tracking mechanisms. Sprints strengthened data-driven MEL capabilities, including the launch of a 'Talents Hub' database for outcome tracking and strategic decision during the period it received funding from CFYE. Additional improvements in MEL were noted by KEPSA, Balloon Ventures, Shortlist and FUNDIS.
- **CFYE funding has enabled IPs to make sustainable digital system upgrades that improve efficiency and scalability.** For example, Woord en Daad transitioned from manual Excel reporting to the Bantu core banking system (MIS) at the end of 2022, a shift that provided instant access to loan portfolio data and streamlined reporting processes. Similarly, Aman introduced a tailored Arabic Learning Management System (LMS) for financial literacy and entrepreneurship education, alongside digital loan application tools and a credit scoring system for first-time borrowers.
- **CFYE has also supported staff training, which will create lasting benefits in the IP organisations.** Although there will be some losses due to staff turnover, the training provided to IP staff through CFYE projects has been found to have increased the capacity of IPs. For example, Aman trained 39 branch managers in business coaching, loan officers have been retrained as business coaches, and branch managers have received capacity building to manage new loans aligned with CFYE's approach. Other examples were noted in SwahiliPot, FUNDIS, KEPSA and Woord en Daad.

Please see Section 3.5.4 for more information on the TA provided by CFYE.

There is also evidence to suggest that the business models and services supported by CFYE are sustainable in some cases. For example, Balloon Ventures in Uganda report that they have

reached business model sustainability in their model of providing financial investment with tech-enabled business support (i.e. they are now covering their operating costs without the need for further subsidies or grant support). In addition, in Egypt there is strong evidence that the support CFYE provided to Jinni has created sustainable changes to Jinni's role within the domestic work and care economy. Initially operating as a direct service provider, Jinni has evolved into a platform enabler, replicating its appointment-based model across more than 50 partner businesses in sectors such as housekeeping and beauty services. Similarly, in Uganda, with the support of CFYE, Eco Brixs has deepened its previous role within the waste management and recycling value chain, signalling good prospects for sustainability.

CFYE IPs also report securing additional funding, catalysed by CFYE support. For example, Balloon Ventures reports securing $4.5 million in additional funding through partnerships with the Dutch Good Growth Fund and Ceniarth, which will support expansion of the business model and will reach many more clients. DMSI in Nigeria leveraged CFYE's investment-readiness TA to secure a grant from the African Union's Skills Initiative for Africa, using it to pilot fee-financing tech (EduPayLater) and adapt its pricing model.

When looking specifically at IPs where CFYE support has closed out, indicators of sustainability are mixed. Sprints, despite its support from CFYE being discontinued owing to poor performance, demonstrated strategic plans for post-CFYE continuity and expansion, leveraging system improvements supported by CFYE, including embedded operational systems such as improved MEL processes, career readiness teams and Chief Learning Officers to pursue geographic growth into Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Nigeria and Jordan. However, critical gaps in robust delivery systems remain, such as the absence of a dedicated account manager for placement sustainability. Stutern, whose support ended in 2024, intends to continue placement activities, because beneficiaries from the project are still finding jobs; however, it has currently paused its training because of market saturation in tech education. In addition, the increase in staff numbers during the CFYE project has subsequently reduced, and there is limited evidence to indicate how the CFYE project has impacted Stutern's delivery model, placement numbers and internal capacities in the long term.

There are risks to sustaining inclusion targeting, given the additional costs of targeting marginalised groups. For instance, meeting targets for people with disabilities (PWD) proved particularly expensive for Eco Brixs, reducing profitability and raising concerns about viability without continued grant support. Similarly, rural outreach and gender equity quotas required significant investment in recruitment, training and infrastructure for partners such as Shortlist, Woord en Daad and FUNDIS, yet these efforts delivered limited immediate revenue returns. In some cases, inclusion measures also affected financial discipline; for example, Shortlist's lenient repayment terms, which had been introduced to lower barriers for disadvantaged youth, undermined repayment compliance and long-term sustainability. These findings echo midline evidence of a potential trade-off between prioritising those most in need and those easiest to support, highlighting the importance of balancing inclusion objectives with financial resilience.

Although CFYE's ambitious impact targets linked to their payment by results (PbR) approach created implementation challenges – most notably cash flow constraints reported at midline – these are unlikely to undermine the long-term sustainability of IPs' business models. This is largely because corrective adjustments were introduced during implementation. For example, Stutern's initial emphasis on rapid beneficiary placements diverted resources from its core operations, but strategic pivots later restored balance and mitigated further negative impact. Similarly, BI approved bake-offs in less profitable locations to meet early targets, which slowed business growth in the short term; however, subsequent revisions to the delivery model improved performance and positioned the enterprise for recovery. These experiences highlight

that although impact-driven pressures can strain operations, adaptive management has enabled partners to safeguard their core business viability.

In summary, CFYE's support has led to likely sustainable improvements in institutional systems, particularly in MEL, digital infrastructure and organisational capacity. TA and performance-based funding helped partners embed MEL as a core function and strengthen staff capabilities through targeted training. These changes have enhanced operational efficiency and accountability, with some partners continuing to expand and secure additional funding post-CFYE. Although sustainability indicators vary, especially among those no longer receiving support, many partners show promising signs of continuity. However, sustaining inclusive targeting remains a challenge, owing to the higher costs associated with reaching marginalised groups.

3.5. Effectiveness

*This section begins with an evaluation of how well CFYE's portfolio and partner activities achieve intended outputs based on the CFYE ToC (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). It reviews CFYE solutions targeting both individual youth – through skills training, job placement, career and entrepreneurship support – and small and growing businesses (SGBs), assessing whether these strategies enable valid and adaptable employment pathways as described in the ToC. The section includes an analysis of how CFYE has adapted during programme implementation and the relationship between adaptive management and the MEL system. It then discusses the focus on counting jobs and the issues with this. It ends with a presentation of CFYE-supported TA and the results of this at IP level.*

3.5.1. Theory-based assessment

The evaluation used portfolio review and case studies to assess the achievement of intended outputs as they are presented in the CFYE ToC. This presents outputs as three solutions as follows:

1. **Solutions targeting individual youth (skills training, job placement and career support, entrepreneurship support)**
2. **Solutions targeting SGBs (through intermediaries)**
3. **Solutions targeting IPs' own businesses and supply chains.**

This section presents an assessment of the validity of the different solutions proposed by CFYE. This analysis is structured by solution type. We use the case studies to examine the CFYE pathways as presented in the ToC to examine how CFYE provided support and how TA has resulted in created, improved and matched jobs. We have used the term pathway to refer to the link between a CFYE output in terms of the solutions outlined above and the CFYE outcomes in terms of created, improved and matched jobs. We have assessed the contribution of CFYE solutions towards the CFYE outcomes and provided a strength of evidence assessment based on the portfolio review and case studies in line with the methodology presented in the methodology section of the report.

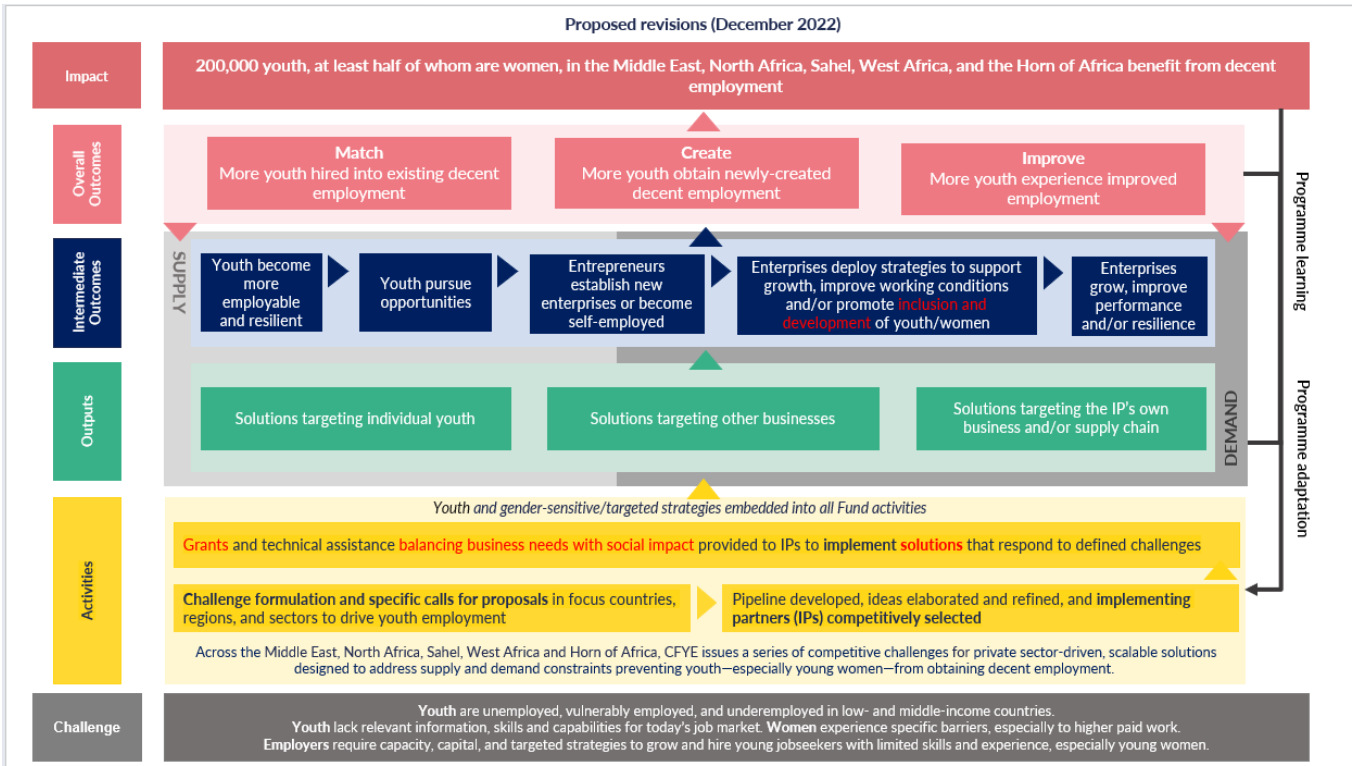


Figure 2. CFYE ToC[14]

Analysis of the CFYE portfolio shows that its employment pathways are valid and well aligned with the programme's outputs and outcomes. Evidence from country-level examples also demonstrates that the pathways (the links between the outputs and outcomes) are flexible enough to allow IPs to adapt their approaches to different labour market conditions. Evidence from across the portfolio shows that these categories capture the different ways in which jobs are being generated or enhanced. Created jobs typically involve entrepreneurship or enterprise growth; matched jobs refer to connecting youth with existing vacancies; and improved jobs refer to enhancements in the quality, stability or conditions of existing employment.

IPs appear to apply these pathways with reasonable clarity, and reporting is disaggregated accordingly. In several examples, IPs describe how they moved from one pathway to another based on operational realities, such as focusing on created jobs when waged employment was not available, or emphasising job improvement where formal sector growth was constrained. This supports the idea that the pathways are not only valid but also flexible enough to accommodate context-specific labour market conditions.

3.5.2. CFYE solutions and pathways to created, improved or matched employment

3.5.2.1. Solutions targeting individual youth directly (training and mentorship, entrepreneurship support)

This section evaluates the effectiveness of solutions directly targeting individual youth in terms of improving their employment outcomes. This is based on the CFYE ToC output 'Solutions targeting individual youth directly'. This output includes two components:

1. Training and mentorship

[14] This is a reformatted version of the CFYE ToC developed by Itad at the inception phase for evaluative purposes.

2. Entrepreneurship support (Finance and Business Development Services).

Examples of IPs that implemented this solution include FUNDIS (Kenya) and DMSI (Nigeria), which provides training services directly targeting youth to match employment, and Woord en Daad which provided training and entrepreneurship support to create and improve employment.

Targeted, context-sensitive skills training, particularly for youth in the informal sector, can significantly improve economic opportunities for youth, although addressing structural barriers remains critical for sustained success. Skills training initiatives, particularly for youth in the informal sector, have demonstrated strong positive impacts across multiple countries. A shift is evident from traditional employment models towards supporting freelance and gig work, with Kenya's IPs leading in innovative approaches to equip gig economy and informal sector workers. For example, e-commerce platforms have enabled youth to monetise their skills, and creatives have transitioned into business ownership. In Kenya, the FUNDIS app trained and certified 814 artisans across several counties, leading to improved productivity, skills, confidence and safety awareness; internal surveys revealed that 58% maintained long-term jobs and 82% could meet their basic needs comfortably. In Nigeria, DMSI successfully trained 6,440 young women in digital skills; in Egypt, Jinni trained 6,010 youth, enabling them to secure decent jobs or improve their livelihoods. Both DMSI and Jinni reported placing approximately 50% of those trained into jobs – with Jinni this was reported as achieved in the first year.

However, high dropout rates in tech training programmes, particularly among young women, highlight persistent barriers, such as a mismatch between the delivery content or format and women's skills or household needs, limited internet access, restrictive social norms, and economic instability. This indicates highlights the importance of user-informed training programmes which reflect diverse youth employment needs.

Training programmes, when combined with complementary job placement support directly linked to labour market needs or through linkages and partnerships with employers, have enabled youth to successfully access employment. In Egypt, Sprints' intensive bootcamps equipped participants with market-relevant skills that directly matched employer needs, leading to strong job placements outcomes, including roles at major companies such as Vodafone. Learners also developed niche platform expertise and adapted quickly to emerging technology tracks – reflected in high satisfaction scores of 4–5 out of 5. IPs who have considered the whole employment cycle have avoided past failures of training large numbers of youth who are unable to access employment.

Case Study: DMSI, Nigeria (Matched Employment)

DMSI demonstrates the pathway from the output solutions targeting youth to matched employment. DMSI shows how combining youth training and job placement through employer partnerships can significantly improve job matching outcomes for youth. Initially DMSI faced challenges in meeting its placement targets, owing to a delayed start in job matching, employer sensitisation delays, and youth reluctance linked to the income share agreement model. These issues limited early progress, with only 122 placements achieved in Year 1 against an expected 500.

DMSI implemented adjustments that transformed its performance by Year 3. They shifted from the income sharing model by removing barriers to participation and optimised the job-matching platform by integrating AI-powered relevance ranking and enabling employers to access candidate CVs through subscription. This reduced recruitment time and cost. Additional measures included outsourcing and digital services to create more job opportunities, early

onboarding of youth onto the platform to reduce attrition rates, and improved communication systems to secure employment verification.

The improved job placement results were strongly linked to CFYE's TA (HCD, Design Sprints, Investment Readiness), which strengthened DMSI's business capacity. As a result, DMSI placed 3,030 young women into jobs over three years, with 2,466 placements in Year 3 alone. The evaluation demonstrates a robust connection between enhanced outcomes and CFYE-provided TA, with significant improvements in job matching and employment rates, albeit recognising that other factors and adaptive management likely complemented the impact of TA.

Considering counterfactual scenarios, it is unlikely that training alone without complementary placement support and TA would have achieved equivalent results. Early programme experience showed that even with a strong training approach, job uptake remained low, owing to employer hesitancy, participants' reporting reluctance and verification challenges. Without the strategic shift in funding models, AI-enabled matching, and proactive employer engagement, many trained youth might have remained unemployed or underemployed. This suggests that the reported impact was a result not only of training volume but also of the integration of targeted TA and matching interventions that addressed systemic barriers on both the supply and demand sides of the labour market.

Table 5 below presents a strength of evidence assessment based on the portfolio review and the case studies for the link between solutions targeting youth and matched employment.

Table 5. Strength of evidence assessment – Youth and Matched Employment

Link – provision of TA and grant support	Strength of evidence – high, medium or low	Notes
Solutions supporting youth and **matched** employment outcomes	High: Very confident that CFYE made a critical contribution to the outcome	The example of DMSI is also reflected in examples such as FUNDIS and Shortlist, which highlight how effective training approaches in line with market needs and effective partnerships with employers can contribute to matching employment.

Case Study: Jinni, Egypt (Created and Improved Employment)

As an example of the pathway between solutions supporting youth and created and improved jobs, Jinni has demonstrated strong performance for Egyptian youth. In the first year, Jinni successfully trained and placed approximately 2,000 young people in decent jobs, focusing on improving their employment conditions. In the final year Jinni exceeded overall targets by training 6,010 youth and creating or improving more than 3,000 jobs.

A key achievement of the Jinni project was normalising the perception of the housekeeping service industry – traditionally undervalued, owing to cultural norms. Through elevating the status of service providers, Jinni positioned the sector as a viable and respected career path. This cultural shift was particularly significant in empowering women, because Jinni's efforts made it easier for women to access and sustain employment in the service industry, contributing to long-term gender inclusion in the workforce. Jinni also focused on enhancing job quality, and addressing cultural resistance to formal employment among blue-collar workers by demonstrating the benefits of job security, income stability and health coverage.

In terms of the counterfactual analysis, it is unlikely that similar results would have been achieved. Training alone, without efforts to shift employer and community perceptions or

address barriers to formal work, would likely have resulted in limited uptake and higher attrition rates. The cultural stigma surrounding service roles and resistance to formal employment would have persisted, restricting women's participation and reducing job quality improvements.

Entrepreneurship support, predominantly characterised by access to finance coupled with business skills training, has been effective at improving existing jobs but less effective at creating new employment opportunities. The main reasons are small business scale and sector type, often in low capital or contexts where growth beyond the individual entrepreneur is difficult. Woord en Daad acknowledge that the support they have provided improves or diversifies existing income sources for coffee farming youth, rather than providing a single source of income capable of meeting their individual needs.

Case Study: Woord en Daad, Uganda (Created and Improved Employment)

An example of an IP providing entrepreneurships support to create and improve jobs is Woord en Daad, which reported 1,821 created jobs, with most of these employment in beekeeping, including roles such as beekeepers but also as Rural Transformation Centre (RTC) staff and apiary masters. Among young coffee farmers engaged in beekeeping, 565 earned an average additional monthly income of UGX 125,252 (€30.24), and 1,153 youth (807 women and 346 men) generated UGX 257,300 (€62.13) per month on average solely through developing their beekeeping businesses. This meets the minimum salary threshold in Uganda of UGX 130,000 per month (€31.29).[15]

'This job is really supplementary to our incomes but is not going to be transformational to our lives. We can have some money to buy basics for home and probably establish some low-cost businesses, but have seen that solid income is difficult to get from beekeeping. You have to rely on the bees colonising, which is normally 50% of the hives set up, and then the volume per hive rarely goes beyond 10–12kg [kilograms] in a six-month period.'[16]

In a counterfactual scenario, these youth would have faced limited employment prospects, owing to lack of training, financial exclusion and minimal access to structured enterprise support.

As a pathway, entrepreneurship support in terms of access to financial services and mentoring/training plays a crucial role in employment creation. There is clear evidence of increased financial inclusion, improved business skills, and job generation from the case study IPs and other development initiatives, but detailed information on income adequacy and consistency remains limited and requires further investigation. Contextual factors are much more significant, with clear differences between rural and urban settings. Agriculture-focused entrepreneurship is clearly more vital in rural areas but is also more likely to provide less consistent incomes, whereas urban areas often see a broader range of opportunities for micro-enterprises and more profitable opportunities for youth with marketable skills.

Table 6 below presents a strength of evidence assessment based on the portfolio review and the case studies for the link between solutions targeting youth and created and improved employment.

[15] https://wagecentre.com/salary/africa/uganda

[16] UGWEDFGD001.

Table 6. Strength of evidence assessment – Youth and Improved and Created Employment

Link – provision of TA and grant support	Strength of evidence – high, medium or low	Notes
Solutions supporting youth and **improved** employment outcomes	High: Very confident that CFYE made a critical contribution to the outcome	The Jinni case study highlights a strong link between solutions targeting youth and improved incomes. This is also reflected in the Woord en Daad, OIUK and Eco Brixs case studies. The evidence demonstrating the link between solutions targeting youth and created employment is not as strong, mainly as incomes reported do not always meet ILO threshold criteria for decent employment.
Solutions supporting youth and **created** employment outcomes	Medium: More confident than not that CFYE made an important contribution to the outcome	

3.5.2.2. Solutions targeting other businesses (through intermediaries)

This section assesses how valid solutions targeting other businesses (through intermediaries) are in terms of improving employment outcomes for youth. This is based on the CFYE ToC output (solutions targeting SGBs (through intermediaries). This looks at IPs that provide goods and services targeted at small businesses. This includes IPs such as KEPSA (Kenya) and Balloon Ventures (Uganda).

CFYE's integrated financial and technical support has enabled IPs to scale existing enterprises they are partnering with or support the launch of new ones, resulting in stronger employment pathways. Through targeted training, coaching and access to finance, CFYE-supported IPs have strengthened SMEs across multiple sectors and geographies. See for example:

- KEPSA (Kenya) trained SMEs in eight counties using 19 coaches, improving productivity and hiring readiness, while also onboarding 201 businesses and 900 influencers to expand digital marketing reach via the Twiva platform.
- Balloon Ventures (Uganda) completed 78 investments during the CFYE contract period, complemented by extensive pre- and post-investment support to strengthen operational capacity.
- OIUK and Balloon Ventures (Uganda) leveraged financing to grow their partner networks.
- In Egypt, Al Moneer Medical Services adapted its model to include partnerships with microfinance institutions such as Erada, expanding both its network and client base.

Case Study: Balloon Ventures, Uganda (Created and Improved Employment)

Balloon Ventures reported 1,120 cumulative decent jobs created or improved through providing loans and technical support to SGBs. Balloon Ventures provide pre- and post-investment support to every business, functioning as embedded TA that strongly underpins job outcomes. Before investment, Balloon Ventures rebuilt financial records to verify affordability and growth potential, while co-spending capital with entrepreneurs to ensure proper Fund use. Post-investment, Balloon Ventures conducted a business diagnostic to outline quarterly plans to strengthen management practices such as process mapping, organisational structures, budgeting, and performance reviews.

The counterfactual argument is less clearly discerned given the external contextual factors impacting on businesses. However, providing capital without rebuilding financial systems, enforcing disciplined Fund use, and strengthening management practices all possess an increased risk of vulnerability to inefficiencies, misallocation of funds, and operational fragility,

particularly in a weak economic environment. Many SMEs in the portfolio lacked formal systems for budgeting, human resources (HR) and performance management; without these, job quality improvements such as formal contracts, health coverage and stable wages would have been minimal.

Targeting SGBs with financial services and mentoring or technical support is a highly effective strategy for creating and improving jobs. The sheer volume of micro and small enterprises in the SGB category means that their collective impact on job creation is very significant across all the countries where CFYE is working. However, challenges such as lower productivity in certain sectors can impact the quality and consistency of employment generated, and some sectors are particularly vulnerable to contextual factors. Direct and comprehensive evidence on how these efforts consistently lead to incomes meeting basic needs for SME owners and their employees can be difficult to access or can be variable (as evidenced by the IP case studies).

Table 7 below presents a strength of evidence assessment based on the portfolio review and the case studies for the link between solutions targeting other businesses (through intermediaries) and created and improved employment. There were no examples of this solution and matched employment.

Table 7. Strength of evidence assessment – Other Businesses and Improved and Created Employment

Link – provision of TA and grant support	Strength of evidence – high, medium or low	Notes
Solutions targeting other businesses (through intermediaries) and **improved** employment outcomes	Very confident that CFYE made a critical contribution to the outcome	The Balloon Ventures example provided businesses with HR manuals and supported formal contracting of employees and was therefore directly responsible for improving jobs.
Solutions targeting other businesses (through intermediaries) and **created** employment outcomes	Medium: More confident than not that CFYE made an important contribution to the outcome	CFYE support to IPs such as Balloon Ventures and OIUK resulted in the creation of jobs as supported businesses expanded, but contextual factors are also likely to be important, and there is a lack of data on income levels.

3.5.2.3. Solutions targeting IPs own business or supply chain directly

This section assesses the validity of solutions that target IPs own businesses or supply chain directly in terms of improving employment outcomes for youth. This is based on the CFYE ToC output (solutions targeting business directly).

Under new business strategies, CFYE has supported activities that have enabled IP supported enterprises to grow and improve business performance, which has enabled the creation and improvement of jobs. These activities include financial support to procure new equipment or construct new facilities. It also includes the provision of TA to develop new marketing strategies, investment strategies and business planning. It is challenging to isolate and evaluate the effectiveness of individual strategies, owing to their highly context-specific nature and the unique operational models of each IP. However, the CFYE portfolio is marked by a spectrum of interventions tailored to diverse labour market ecosystems.

Key examples from the case studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of some new business strategies supported by CFYE that enabled IPs to grow and improve employment outcomes for youth are as follows:

- Eco Brixs (Uganda) established three new buyback centres and operationalised a recycling plant. Eco Brixs reported a 300% increase in revenue and created 513 jobs for youth waste pickers, alongside improving 1,176 jobs for waste pickers.
- African Clean Energy (ACE) (Uganda) expanded into seven new sales locations in 2022, adding to one location established in 2021. The company experienced significant revenue growth, exceeding its target for 2020/21 by achieving a 224% change in annual revenue in Uganda and 121% globally.
- In Kenya, Shortlist's partner, Africa AI, has improved two existing sites and created another, leading to significant income increases for cloud workers.
- DMSI (Nigeria) pivoted to a scholarship model and optimised their job-matching platform, using AI to better match candidates with employers. It successfully trained 6,440 young women in digital skills, surpassing its target, and placed 3,030 young women into jobs:

'Business revenue outcome has improved from 30% to 60% self-sustainability, from $47,506 in 2022 to $359,869 in 2024. This has been a 300% increase since we started partnering with CFYE.'[17]

Table 8 below presents a strength of evidence assessment based on the portfolio review and the case studies for the link between solutions targeting IPs own business or supply chain directly and created and improved employment. There were no examples of this solution and matched employment.

Table 8. Strength of evidence assessment – IP own business and Created and Improved Employment

Link – provision of TA and grant support	Strength of evidence – high, medium or low	Notes
Solutions targeting Ips' own business or supply chain and **created and improved** employment outcomes	Very confident that CFYE made a critical contribution to the outcome	CFYE's contribution here is clear, with strong evidence demonstrating the growth of IP businesses and the consequent ability to provide new or improved jobs.

As part of this ToC analysis, assumptions (identified during the inception phase) underpinning the CFYE ToC were assessed as valid, particularly those related to TA, youth-focused training, and the alignment of CFYE with donor priorities and government policies.[18] For example, TA was found to effectively support projects in achieving results, and training initiatives like those led by DMSI and FUNDIS were shown to address soft skills gaps and improve employability. The TA section of this report provides further analysis. Businesses such as Balloon Ventures and Eco Brixs demonstrated strong outcomes in scaling operations, improving job quality, and creating employment opportunities. These results have been outlined earlier in this section. However, the findings also highlight assumptions of mixed or partial validity, especially regarding systemic change and gender inclusion. While CFYE made progress in shifting social norms and improving access to finance for young women, persistent cultural and structural barriers continue to limit their participation. Some assumptions, such as the replicability of business models and the willingness of employers to hire youth and women, were validated with caveats, indicating that while progress has been made, challenges remain.

Overall, our evaluation confirms strong links between CFYE's solutions and job outcomes as outlined in the CFYE Terms of Reference (ToR). These pathways are valid, flexible and well aligned with programme objectives, enabling IPs to adapt to diverse labour market conditions. Across the CFYE programme, integrated grant support combined with targeted and appropriate

[17] KII UGEKII01 and UGEKII02.

[18] See Annex II for analysis against the key assumptions underpinning the ToC identified at the inception stage.

TA has proven effective in creating, improving and matching jobs. Evidence shows that these job outcomes were strongest where interventions addressed both supply-side and demand-side barriers and where TA was embedded into business development strategies (see Section 3.5.4 for further analysis). Although entrepreneurship support improved livelihoods, its impact on job creation was more modest and context-dependent. CFYE's multi-pathway approach, underpinned by adaptive management and targeted support, has contributed significantly to employment outcomes.

3.5.3. Adaptive management and MEL

This section outlines how CFYE utilises a flexible, data-driven approach to programme implementation. This approach is illustrated through examples from Uganda, Nigeria and Egypt, highlighting the use of annual reviews, site visits and case studies to refine strategies and adopt proven practices such as tailored training or financial inclusion models. This section also details how TA is adapted to partner needs, with operational plans evolving in response to learning.

CFYE operates with an adaptive model, allowing for adjustments based on monitoring data and stakeholder input, enabling interventions to remain contextually relevant and impactful. In Uganda, annual MEL reviews, site visits and case studies allowed the programme to capture what worked, such as demand-driven models for job quality improvement, and apply these insights across the portfolio. Similarly in Nigeria, CFYE dedicated resources to collating lessons directly from IPs and other donor experiences, using them to adapt programme direction and to inform donor reporting. In Egypt, IPs such as Sprints adopted proven training methodologies from the International Labour Organization (ILO), and Aman Digital embedded financial inclusion strategies for first-time loaners validated by national youth consultations, showing the Fund's ability to absorb and adapt established good practices.

The design and delivery of TA at the country level was refined on an ongoing basis to reflect evolving good practices in capacity building and youth engagement. Adaptation is also evident in the use of differentiated TA based on emerging partner needs, such as refining income share agreement models or restructuring job tracking and placement processes. These adjustments indicate responsiveness to real-time learning and a willingness to shift operational plans based on what is and is not working.

At the IP level, annual reports provide good examples of how IPs have adjusted programming during implementation to better achieve outcomes. These are articulated clearly in annual reports, with strong evidence that it is a systematic and consistent approach, embedded in the process. The sources provide numerous examples of projects that have adjusted or changed their approach in response to challenges, learnings or evolving circumstances. These adjustments cover a wide range of areas, from operational strategies and recruitment methods to training curricula and financial models. However, implementing the system had its challenges:

'The main challenge was not in meeting the outcome target; the challenge was in collecting the evidence for the job outcomes.'[19]

Table 9. IP examples of adjustments to programming to address specific challenges

Organisation	Actions/Initiatives	Focus/Target	Challenges addressed

[1919] Sprints Call 2 AR YR1.

Balloon Ventures	Built new credit scoring system, updated post-investment process, slashed credit processing times, improved data use, split Good Jobs Survey data collection, focused on engaged and higher-risk businesses	Investment process, business selection, support, data collection	Inefficient selection and support services, turnaround times, portfolio risk management
Stutern Limited	Women-only recruitment calls, exclusive soft-skills masterclasses, engaged women mentors, planned extended soft-skills course, make-up exams, extended assignment times	Female participants in tech courses, employability	Gender-specific targets, employment-related disruptions
District Spaces	Reviewed microloan programme, hired project manager for bi-monthly counting, facilitated informal credit facilities, focused delivery centres on ready-made food, planned tailored financial education and risk management workshops	Microloan sectors, job employment tracking, operational efficiency, women and chicken/fodder providers	Incorrect assumptions about poultry farmers, women's hesitation with microloans
Jinni	Amended timeline, moved academy closer to women's areas, focused campaigns geographically, tested SaaS products, used 'Uber style' terminology changes, reallocated resources	Women, internal management, technical service jobs	Stigma with service jobs, economic crisis, operational inefficiency

The adaptive management examples drawn from Uganda, Nigeria and Egypt demonstrate how the MEL system under CFYE is designed to respond dynamically to real-world challenges and feedback.

3.5.3.1. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

CFYE has a comprehensive MEL system which enables the tracking of outcomes (jobs created, improved and matched) at portfolio, country and IP levels, although there was some variability in its application. CFYE undertakes systematic tracking of outcomes and learning, and there is evidence that implementation plans are revised accordingly. Multiple IPs describe using structured M&E systems, including dashboards, milestone tracking, and updated M&E plans. MEL capacity varied significantly across CFYE IPs, with TA playing a critical role in strengthening systems for outcome tracking, reporting and adaptive learning. Although most IPs were able to report on core outcome indicators such as the number of jobs created, improved or matched, there was considerable variation in the quality, consistency and use of MEL data across the portfolio.

Reporting was generally strongest in relation to headline job numbers and gender-disaggregated results, which were systematically collected, verified and reported through Salesforce. This reflects the emphasis on achieving job targets as part of the PbR system. Fewer IPs tracked job quality dimensions, such as wages, contracts or retention over time. This was particularly evident in models focused on self-employment or informal sector engagement, where data collection was more challenging and employment status was often fluid. In such cases, TA helped IPs define 'improved jobs' more clearly and strengthen verification systems, but real-time tracking remained a gap for many.

CFYE provided structured MEL tools, including logframes, indicator definitions, and templates for quarterly reporting, which supported some consistency across the portfolio. These tools were widely shared and discussed during onboarding, workshops and coaching sessions. However, adoption and internalisation of these tools varied. Larger partners and those with previous donor-funded experience appeared more likely to embed MEL tools into internal systems. In contrast, smaller IPs, particularly in countries with limited prior exposure to results-based funding, often required more support to understand and apply the tools effectively. In some cases, MEL capacity was strengthened through one-to-one support from CFYE advisors; in others, delays in system development or staff turnover limited progress. MEL systems and data disaggregation were particularly valued by IPs with limited prior exposure; for example, partners in Egypt noted that these tools significantly transformed how they planned, delivered and tracked their operations.

The extent to which MEL systems enabled real-time decision-making and learning depended on partner capacity, staff continuity and the operational maturity of their delivery models. Strengthening the link between outcome tracking and programme learning remains a key opportunity for sustained improvement. The integration of learning into implementation was uneven. Some partners used MEL data to inform programme adaptations, such as refining recruitment strategies, adjusting training schedules, or identifying drop-off points in employment pathways; others approached MEL primarily as a compliance function. A few examples demonstrate stronger use of learning loops: for instance, in Nigeria, MEL data on early attrition led DMSI to adjust training content and follow-up support. In Jordan, placement outcomes were used to refine employer targeting and skill matching; in Egypt, Sprints used MEL data to include more women in decent job opportunities, introducing the Digital Marketing Track:

'We didn't have a MEL system in place […] M&E was a game-changer […] helped us focus on outcomes."[20]

Learning has been a significant aspect of the CFYE programme at the portfolio level. It has a dedicated team responsible for compiling lessons, particularly from the IPs. The IPs share their insights from project implementation, events they attend, or grants they receive elsewhere with CFYE. This helps determine if project adjustments are needed or if the learning should be reported to the donor at the end of the project.

The programme integrates learning into new calls. For instance, Uganda's Call 2 changed focus from non-governmental players to focus on private sector-led companies offering digital last-mile solutions; in Nigeria, lessons from a shortage of formal waged jobs prompted a shift towards dependent self-employment models. In Egypt, Calls 5 and 6 moved away from supporting early-stage start-ups, whose limited internal operations hampered job outcomes, to concentrating on mature, well-established IPs in the digital and green sectors.

CFYE's operational design includes learning loops tailored to national policies and IP feedback. Annual MEL reviews, site visits and case studies identified effective demand-driven models to achieve CFYE outcomes, which were then applied across the portfolio. Nigeria dedicated resources to collecting lessons from IPs and other donors, using these insights to adapt programme direction and inform donor reporting. In Egypt, IPs such as Sprints adopted ILO training methodologies, and Aman Digital incorporated financial inclusion strategies validated through national youth consultations, demonstrating the Fund's capacity to absorb and adapt established good practices. Country-level scoping reports and youth action research led to adjustments in sector focus, eligibility criteria and regional priorities in subsequent calls,

[20] N01KII DMSI, CFYE IP.

ensuring that learning was integrated into programme planning. CFYE also fostered regional and cross-country exchanges: for example, Egyptian IPs participated in inclusive hiring workshops with counterparts from Jordan and Tunisia, and collaborated with incubators such as Flat6Labs and EYouth to embed entrepreneurial support practices.

Despite these positive examples, learning is not yet systematically embedded across the portfolio. In Egypt, although multiple IPs drew on external good practices, CFYE lacked a coherent mechanism to consolidate, document and disseminate these lessons across the wider ecosystem. Similarly, in contexts such as Uganda, knowledge capture occurred at the level of MEL reviews and individual case studies but was not consistently translated into sector-wide or cross-country practice. This limited the potential to fully institutionalise good practices into the Fund's model.

3.5.3.2. Counting jobs

The CFYE MEL system is strongly focused on counting the number of jobs created, improved or matched, which offers clear benefits, providing tangible, easily communicable metrics that help demonstrate progress and impact to funders and stakeholders. This results-based approach drives performance and accountability among IPs, encouraging them to be proactive and efficient. Moreover, job counts are scalable and comparable across regions and sectors, making it easier to identify successful interventions and allocate resources effectively.

Box 6. How CFYE categorises types of employment

CFYE guidance on job counts is driven broadly by ILO's definition of decent work, leaving flexibility for contextual adaptation at country level. Jobs are defined in terms of waged, temporary and self-employment, and CFYE provides guidance on what qualifies as decent work and job quality improvement.[21]

- Permanent full-time jobs require 32 or more hours each week, with contracts granting permanent employee rights. Permanent part-time roles offer similar rights but involve fewer than 32 hours weekly.
- Temporary employment provides at least 45 paid days within six months and includes seasonal, construction and agency work.
- Self-employed positions rely on income from goods or services, counted only when minimum earnings, duration or activity criteria are met in indicator definitions.

There is some variance in the verification and QA of job data within CFYE across country teams, owing to differences in autonomy, contextual factors, and the application of the CFYE guidance at the country level. CFYE provides a guidance document with recommendations on sample sizes and verification methods such as in-person visits, calls or document reviews, but its implementation can sometimes be adapted to local contexts and relationships with IPs. Country teams have the flexibility to apply verification processes differently, which can influence the consistency of reported results and payment calculations. For example, the application of guidelines with regard to verifying age differed. While age data was required for counting in all countries, in some contexts proof of age (e.g. copy of ID) was also required, whereas in other settings, age was verified (for a sample) during phone calls (without requiring IDs). Additionally, legacy practices and sector-specific factors shape how verification is carried out, as seen in the contrasting approaches of Egypt and Nigeria, which were noted for strict verification steps based on random sampling of beneficiaries (Egypt) or requiring very large sample sizes for verification

[21] Defining and Measuring Job Quality Improvements in CFYE.pdf.

(Nigeria). These variations highlight how autonomy and context can directly affect both achievement rates and financial outcomes.

The focus on counting jobs also presents some risks, particularly in PbR systems. When IPs are paid based on job numbers, it can create perverse incentives, including inflating figures, prioritising quantity over quality, or focusing on individuals who are easier to place in jobs. This could undermine the programme's integrity and can exclude vulnerable groups who require more support to achieve the same job count, though CFYE paid for outcomes based on 1) total number of jobs for youth, and 2) number of jobs for young women. Consequently, it is clear that CFYE includes strategies and guidance to mitigate against this, and it also includes verification steps to ensure data integrity. However, CFYE is also responsible for its own verification process, which can raise conflict of interest and accountability/credibility concerns.

A strong emphasis on counting jobs can also distort the programme's understanding of its results, particularly in terms of job quality. When success is measured primarily by the number of new jobs, placements or improvements, there is a risk that deeper, qualitative aspects – including longer job satisfaction or security, career progression, or working conditions – are not prioritised in the same way. There is limited evidence of this in the endline evaluation, but we also highlight how MEL systems are geared towards job counting. This can lead to a narrow interpretation of impact, where low-paid, insecure or temporary jobs are counted and reported despite potentially offering limited long-term value to some participants:

'The decent work definition followed by the IPs did not follow ILO's definition but only aspires towards it.'[22]

To some extent, the endline evaluation finds that low-paid, insecure and temporary jobs have been counted and included in the overall metrics. This often reflects the challenging socioeconomic context in which CFYE and IPs operate, but it also reflects the need for a MEL system to go beyond simple counting, which can reduce and potentially distort the real picture, homogenising the concept of a job, equating all types of employment.

To conclude, CFYE's adaptive management and MEL systems have enabled a data-driven approach to programme delivery. This flexibility has led to meaningful improvements in programme design, TA and outcome tracking, with some IPs demonstrating the ability to adjust strategies and refine operational models in response to MEL data. Although the emphasis on job counting has supported performance accountability, it also introduces some limitations and risks. The focus on quantitative outcomes, particularly within PbR systems, can incentivise superficial reporting and overlook nuanced aspects such as job quality, worker security and the needs of more vulnerable groups. Although CFYE's guidance and verification steps seek to uphold integrity and adapt to local contexts, there were indications of inconsistencies in implementation.

3.5.4. Technical assistance (TA)

CFYE's TA significantly strengthened IPs across key areas such as HR, gender inclusion, HCD, logistics, investment readiness and bespoke support. Delivered through online webinars, country-level workshops, and tailored interventions based on IP diagnostics, TA was most effective when customised to specific organisational needs. Bespoke TA was especially valued for its adaptability and context-specific solutions, enabling partners to expand operations, improve reporting and enhance strategic planning. Notable outcomes included job creation,

[22] UGCKII01, CFYE team member.

improved job quality and faster job matching, as demonstrated by Twiva's platform upgrades, which reduced matching time from 14 days to three and increased campaign fulfilment to 89%. TA impact was highest when IPs assigned dedicated focal staff to engage with providers, fostering ownership, knowledge transfer and sustainability; in contrast, where no focal point was designated,[23] TA effects could be minimal and short-lived. Some partners reported delays in assessing and receiving TA, highlighting a need for more responsive support mechanisms.

CFYE-supported TA has worked to enable IPs to improve working conditions and advance the inclusion and development of women, collectively contributing to improved terms and conditions, clearer disciplinary procedures, and strengthened trust and safety across diverse organisational contexts. Examples of HR system strengthening include: FUNDIS in Kenya, which aligned HR frameworks with fair work principles, improved terms for casual workers, and introduced disciplinary procedures; and Eco Brixs in Uganda, which restructured management systems, clarified staff roles, supported informal workers with healthcare, personal protective equipment and safety training, and introduced clearer terms and conditions for artisans. TA also optimised recruitment strategies, facilitated the issuance of contracts – particularly for casual workers – and introduced trust and safety guidelines, building on earlier lessons from the MTR. Direct interventions also improved working conditions, with District Spaces providing transportation and on-site childcare, and Jinni in Egypt offering flexible working arrangements. Indirectly, CFYE support to Balloon Ventures in Uganda supported SGBs to create HR manuals and issue formal contracts:

'We do a TA diagnostics to understand what are the needs […] then bring in consultants to strengthen gender strategy, curriculum development, sales and marketing, and monitoring and evaluation.'[24]

'All staff have open-ended contracts, and we are also given a copy for our records […] This offers us greater job security, stability, and we can use this as evidence of employment.'[25]

MEL TA has played a pivotal role in strengthening MEL systems across CFYE-supported projects by improving data collection processes, SOPs and reporting templates. This support enabled partners to enhance reporting accuracy, strategic alignment, and impact measurement. Novus Agro Limited and Stutern reported improving their MEL systems and management capacity, and Serianu Limited developed reporting templates and curriculum design. DMSI created centralised dashboards and refined reporting structures. OIUK started capturing jobs from the financial inclusion pathway – a key change that enhanced its service offering and raised its job-counting capacities. KEPSA reduced reporting delays by 60%. MEL frameworks also helped quantify job creation and quality improvements – crucial in ensuring PbR. Several partners reported increased capacity to track outcomes and make data-informed decisions, with CFYE's MEL experts and mentoring sessions highlighted as especially effective in building internal MEL capabilities:

'Monitoring and evaluation: CFYE came in with indicators that have transformed our working methods and how to trigger job created and job improved. We used to leave this work to work out organically but we were compelled to start triggering the jobs. This was really key for us. We identified gaps that could be closed and co-addressed these issues with the clients.'[26]

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[23] Kenya KII, CFYE team member.

[24] N05KII, CFYE team member.

[25] UGEKII03 and 004, CFYE IP.

[26] UGOFGD004, partner organisation of OIUK.

HCD TA significantly improved the targeting of interventions, enabling projects to better address the needs of specific groups, particularly women. Partners such as Woord en Daad demonstrated enhanced targeting and tailored solutions that were instrumental in achieving project goals. DMSI applied design sprint and HCD TA respectively to better understand their audiences and reach young women more effectively. Eco Brixs and TakaTaka Solutions customised their models to improve identification of women as target groups. Pan-African Microfinance Burkina Faso reported strengthened trust and mentoring strategies with savings groups following implementation of TA.

Gender-focused TA led to strategic shifts in recruitment, programme design and inclusivity across multiple partners. These results, building on MTR findings, helped IPs reduce barriers to women's participation, improve recruitment targeting and foster inclusive business environments. Woord en Daad and DMSI linked HCD training to improved outreach. KEPSA (Kenya) onboarded more women influencers, and Shecluded saw increased female leadership, owing to gender equality workshops. Eco Brixs created a gender action plan that resulted in 582 women accessing waste recycling work. KEPSA and Twiva redesigned recruitment and monitoring systems, doubling female participation. From a review of the non-case study reports, Mr Green Africa implemented the 'soko model' to recruit female aggregation agent parnters, significantly increasing female participation and meeting gender targets. Habitat for Humanity used gender sprints to overcome barriers in solar installation training, and Sanivation improved recruitment targeting through gender TA.

TA on specific design areas and investment and scaling informed investment strategies, business model innovation and geographic expansion, which improved business or organisational capacity and growth, leading to improved job outcomes. TA helped IPs formalise management structures, modernise systems, and transition organisational models (e.g. Eco Brixs from NGO to private limited company). Eco Brixs and TakaTaka Solutions also expanded their plastic collection base, secured contracts with recycling facilities and upgraded technology through TA. They also developed skills for pitching to investors and are now exploring further investment opportunities. FUNDIS scaled operations through refined financial modelling and sales strategies. DMSI secured external funding and adapted its business model transition from income shared agreements to payment models up front, with support from TA in investment readiness and monitoring. Novus Agro Limited gained insights into organisational positioning and management capacity. Other examples reported on include Niokobok (Senegal), who used the TA on product roadmapping to improve margins and identify new partners:[27]

'We've done two investment readiness [sessions, which] helped us raise more funds to scale our impact.'[28]

Decentralised TA decision-making, combined with the use of the IP diagnostic tool, has proven effective in pinpointing TA that delivers the greatest impact. Granting greater autonomy to country offices enables tailored interventions that are responsive to specific partner needs, as highlighted in the MTR's recommendations. The IP diagnostic tool facilitates a structured self-assessment process, allowing IPs to clearly articulate their TA requirements. Annual reports further demonstrate that this approach leads to more relevant and impactful TA provision, ensuring that resources are directed where they are most needed and can drive meaningful organisational change.

[27] Annual report, Niokobok, Senegal, Call 4.

[28] N01KII, CFYE IP.

In summary, TA under CFYE has been very effective, enabling partners to strengthen MEL, gender inclusion and organisational capacity through tailored diagnostics and decentralised decision-making. TA fostered innovation, investment readiness and more inclusive recruitment, particularly advancing opportunities for women and youth. Localised approaches and responsive tools ensured that interventions met partners' specific needs, driving impactful change.

3.6. Relevance

This section examines how the programme aligns with national priorities and demographic realities, particularly in promoting inclusive economic growth, youth employment and gender-responsive programming. It discusses how country portfolios were tailored to support green and digital jobs, highlights specific strategies and interventions in countries such as Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya and Uganda, and evaluates the extent to which gender and youth needs were addressed. The section also covers challenges in policy integration and government engagement, and details how evidence-based design and responsive adaptations helped ensure the relevance of interventions to local contexts and national strategies. It concludes with a discussion on how CFYE has engaged youth in the design and implementation of the programme.

The programme demonstrates strong alignment with MFA's emphasis on inclusive economic growth, systemic youth employment solutions and gender-responsive programming, operationalised through the focus on decent jobs, private sector–driven delivery, and deliberate gender targeting. This focus on youth employment aligns with the demographic realities across CFYE countries. In nearly all countries, over 60% of the population is under the age of 35, rising to 75% or more in countries such as Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya and Jordan.

Reflecting programme priorities, country portfolios prioritised green and digital jobs, with a strong emphasis on inclusive, gender-responsive approaches tailored to national contexts. Examples include Nigeria's concentration on private sector-led services, digital creation and tech employment, Egypt's push to digitally formalise informal work and extend social protection, and Uganda's incubation and financial inclusion models targeting women and refugees. IP-level analysis indicated that, in many cases, gender targets were exceeded (e.g. KEPSA, Kenya), female-specific pathways in IT and entrepreneurship were created (e.g. Sprints, Egypt), gender-sensitive recruitment tools were devised (e.g. Shortlist, Kenya), and women-focused finance and training models were established (e.g. Shecluded, Nigeria).

Programme design was consistently grounded in evidence from scoping studies, youth aspiration surveys and labour market analyses. These ensured responsiveness to country-specific barriers. In Kenya, findings on skills mismatches and the exclusion of women informed gender-responsive programming and the establishment of youth advisory councils. Uganda's youth-led aspiration mapping and refugee-focused financial diaries shaped targeted interventions (OIUK), and Nigeria's scoping identified skills deficits and women's economic exclusion – addressed through, for example, Shecluded's women-only finance and training for young mothers. In Egypt, context-specific measures such as Arabic LMS platforms, Upper Egypt outreach, and mobility-sensitive job designs expanded access for women and underserved youth:

'The scoping study helped us to understand the different categories of young people […] university graduates who want to work […] rural youth with farming experience […] artisanal youth […] so when a potential IP is applying […] we want to know who their target beneficiaries are.'[29]

[29] N05KII, CFYE team member.

CFYE portfolios closely echoed national development strategies, but government engagement remained uneven and often limited. In Kenya, the focus on digital jobs aligned with Ajira Digital and inclusive procurement frameworks. Uganda's support for entrepreneurship and financial inclusion is encapsulated in the Fourth National Development Plan and mirrored government initiatives such as the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), BEST entrepreneurship training, and the National Financial Inclusion Strategy II. Nigeria's portfolio aligned with the federal government's renewed emphasis on tech through the '3 Million Technical Talent' (3MTT) initiative; Egypt's programming supported national priorities around digital freelancing, entrepreneurship, and reducing informality. At the IP level, interventions reinforced these objectives: Sprints worked with Egypt's Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) under the Digital Pioneers initiative, KEPSA's surveys fed into Kenya's digital economy strategy, OIUK advanced Uganda's refugee–host integration objectives, and Shecluded implemented Nigeria's financial inclusion strategy for women entrepreneurs.

In line with national strategies, CFYE interventions responded to national employment, gender equality and sectoral targets, although the depth of policy integration varies. In Kenya, CFYE IPs explicitly referenced the National Youth Employment Strategy, Digital Economy Masterplan and Gender Policy in their design, with KEPSA and Shortlist directly embedding national priorities into their models. In Uganda, Balloon Ventures links to financial inclusion systems via the national Credit Reference Bureau, and OIUK integrates with refugee and host community livelihoods frameworks in line with government policy. In Egypt, digital sector IPs such as Jinni and Sprints advanced policy goals around tech-enabled decent work. Nigeria's Shecluded aligned with financial inclusion and women's empowerment agendas.

3.6.1. Meaningful youth participation (MYP)

CFYE mainstreamed MYP as a principle, ensuring that youth were recognised as active stakeholders in employment programming. The strongest IP-level examples were found in Kenya's KEPSA, and Uganda's OIUK who embedded youth from design through implementation and monitoring, using structured mechanisms such as co-creation labs, youth advisory groups, and regular feedback loops to inform adaptations. In Nigeria, IPs (DMSI, Shecluded) systematically ensured that youth voices were heard through consultations, surveys and online platforms, embedding them in programme design and job tailoring. Egypt's strength lay in operational responsiveness, with IPs such as Jinni and Sprints adapting tools, training and platforms in real time to reflect youth feedback.

CFYE's approach helped to shift youth from passive beneficiaries to more active participants in shaping decent work solutions. A notable cross-country strength was the way feedback mechanisms triggered real-time programme adaptations. For example, youth consultations in Nigeria informed job design and benefits packages that included childcare and medical insurance; in Egypt, feedback from young women led Jinni to strengthen app privacy features and Sprints to redesign training delivery. Across countries, youth consultations consistently identified barriers such as childcare, mobility restrictions and safety concerns, leading to solutions such as daycare provision, flexible work arrangements and the creation of safe spaces.

IP case study analysis revealed four patterns of MYP engagement across selected IPs:

- The most developed examples of MYP came where youth were embedded at every stage of the programme cycle, from design to governance. KEPSA in Kenya institutionalised youth advisory councils at both programme and partner levels, ensuring that young people influenced funding, strategy and delivery. OIUK in Uganda used participatory

financial diaries and co-creation processes to place youth at the centre of project design and monitoring, including refugee and host communities.

- The most consistent form of MYP was feedback-driven adaptation. IPs in Egypt, such as Jinni and Sprints, modified their interventions in real time: Jinni improved app privacy features after female workers raised safety concerns, and Sprints redesigned training modules and introduced gamification based on trainee feedback. Aman developed structured complaints systems, and Almouneer expanded outreach to underserved youth. In Nigeria, Shecluded tailored women-only finance and training offers, and other IPs added tangible benefits such as childcare and medical insurance or provided more flexible working hours.
- A third pattern was consultative engagement, in which youth were included in assessments or feedback mechanisms but with limited influence on strategic decisions. Balloon Ventures in Uganda involved young people in generating data on job quality but did not provide channels for them to shape intervention strategies. FUNDIS and Shortlist in Kenya and BI in Nigeria integrated youth consultations and needs assessments, but their models remained largely top-down, with youth positioned as informants, not co-creators.
- **Some IPs engaged youth superficially, relying on mobilisation or reactive monitoring**, with no structured youth involvement in design or governance. For example, Eco Brixs (Uganda) mobilised young people to work as waste sorters and franchise participants, without involving them in the franchise design, pricing and governance decisions**.** Woord en Daad (Uganda) tracked youth participation and outcomes in beekeeping projects during implementation, rather than engaging them in proactive co-creation at design stage.

Across countries, MYP demonstrated gender-responsiveness, as young women consistently raised constraints around childcare, mobility and safety. In Kenya, IPs introduced daycare services, flexible schedules and safe spaces to enable women's participation. In Nigeria, consultations shaped the introduction of benefits such as childcare and insurance for young mothers. In Egypt, Aman provided a virtual learning management app to provide financial literacy and small business management sessions for women and youth in remote and rural areas, and virtual job opportunities targeting women were provided by Sprints (tech remote jobs) and Almouneer (call centre agents). These examples show how MYP helped surface and address gendered barriers, even if structural inequities such as wage gaps and care responsibilities remained largely unresolved.

Despite notable progress, three recurring gaps constrained the transformative potential of youth participation. First, governance and strategic design remained the weakest links: although youth voices were often heard in implementation, they rarely held leadership roles or seats in governance structures. KEPSA in Kenya and OIUK in Uganda stood out for engaging youth in decision-making across the full cycle, but they were exceptions rather than a consistent practice across the portfolio. Second, inclusivity challenges persisted. Specific groups such as youth with disabilities, under-18s and women facing financial exclusion were underrepresented in participatory processes. In Uganda, legal restrictions meant that young people under 18 faced limited access to finance, which curtailed their involvement. Participation remained bounded within CFYE projects and IPs, with limited spillover into broader institutional or policy frameworks.

Box 7: IP Examples of MYP in full cycle

KEPSA (Kenya)	OIUK (Uganda)
1. Established Youth Advisory Councils at national and partner levels to influence strategy and programme delivery. 2. Integrated youth into programme governance structures as a requirement for partners. 3. Organised listening sessions and participatory research where youth defined what 'decent work' meant to them. 4. Embedded youth feedback into MEL systems to shape indicators and learning agenda.	5. Used youth researchers (four young researchers) to lead aspiration mapping and ecosystem studies with 93 participants, documenting job preferences and gender-specific constraints. 6. Included both refugee and host-community youth in consultations to capture diverse perspectives. 7. Held household financial literacy dialogues involving youth and families, enabling shared decision-making about women's participation.

In summary, the evaluation found that CFYE is relevant. The programme's close alignment with national strategies and demographic priorities is clearly demonstrated through grounding its interventions in robust evidence and adapting to local contexts. CFYE has also reinforced government initiatives and sectoral priorities across partner countries. CFYE's approach to MYP has fostered more active engagement, gender-responsive solutions and adaptive programming. Best practices emerged where youth were embedded throughout programme cycles, but challenges remain regarding leadership roles, inclusivity and structural change. Continued progress will depend on broadening youth influence beyond project boundaries and ensuring that all voices are integrated into strategic decision-making.

3.7. Coherence

This section examines the degree to which CFYE's approach to youth employment is coherent with other initiatives by focusing on skills training, job creation and SME support, and highlights the programme's strengths in complementing rather than duplicating existing efforts. It describes how CFYE integrates evidence-based design, adapts to national and sectoral contexts, and fosters coordination among stakeholders, and also notes areas where coherence with policy and good practice could be improved across countries. The section discusses the programme's commitment to learning and adaptation but points out gaps in knowledge-sharing and institutionalisation of best practices.

CFYE broadly aligns with other youth employment initiatives in its central aims, enhancing employability through skills training, job creation and SME support. Like comparable programmes led by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the United National Development Programme (UNDP), the MasterCard Foundation and Orange Corners, CFYE works through partnerships with NGOs, SMEs and sector actors to expand youth access to jobs. At the IP level, this overlap is seen in initiatives targeting digital skills (KEPSA, Kenya), creative industries (SwahiliPot, Kenya), blue-collar trades (FUNDIS, Kenya; Jinni, Egypt), or micro-enterprise finance (BI, Nigeria; Aman, Egypt). These parallels indicate that CFYE shares the global development 'baseline model' of training and finance provision linked to employment goals.

CFYE's model is firmly grounded in evidence-based programming. Scoping studies and ecosystem mapping preceded each call, helping to identify gaps and avoid duplication. In Kenya, CFYE leveraged stakeholder mapping to align with county governments and target digital/green growth sectors. In Uganda, youth-led mapping produced fresh insights, although CFYE's choice to operate independently from actors such as ILO or the Ministry of Gender limited coherence. In Egypt, mapping revealed fragmentation between training providers and employers, leading CFYE

to integrate training-to-placement pathways in IPs such as Jinni and Sprints. KEPSA in Kenya exemplified this approach by linking SME digitisation with youth job creation, and Eco Brixs in Uganda formalised informal recycling chains through micro-franchising and transaction tracking.

Table 10: CFYE additionality

Impact-focused design: CFYE prioritises a 'last-mile' approach that ensures guaranteed and gender-responsive decent jobs across its three job pathways. This is enabled by bridging youth aspirations with SME ecosystem demands more directly and efficiently. Targeting established IPs rather than start-ups strengthened its design value add for replicability and scalability. **Systems-based strategic targeting:** CFYE's calls are intentionally designed to respond to real market needs, address systemic barriers, and channel funding towards high-potential sectors through rigorous stakeholder and ecosystem mapping with governmental, youth-focused civil society organisations (CSOs), and private sector actors. **Co-investment requirement:** CFYE requires IPs – especially private sector actors – to co-invest financially, ensuring greater partner commitment and sustainability. **Integrated and continuous support package:** CFYE provides comprehensive support through tailored, business-oriented TA (e.g. technical assessments and marketing strategy), organisational development, and non-financial enablers (e.g. market access, mentoring, ecosystem facilitation). **Payment by results mechanism:** CFYE directly links payments to verified job outcomes, incentivising impact and stronger accountability. The programme also supports IPs to achieve actual job outcomes by encouraging guaranteed hiring activities and intensive post-placement tracking. **Inclusive and gender-intentional design:** CFYE requires partners to address gender barriers actively and adopt inclusive strategies such as flexible work schedules and community-based solutions. **Innovation in financial inclusion models:** CFYE stands out for advancing established microfinance models through a combined offer of microloans and tailored training, as well as catering for disadvantaged borrower groups such as first-time loaners who are considered to be high risk for other providers.

CFYE demonstrated stronger coherence when it was able to complement, not duplicate, other youth and gender initiatives by filling gaps in the employment pathway. Many IPs provide 'last-mile' solutions that connect training to verified placements and retention where other programmes typically stop at skills provision. Jinni's demand-driven cycle in Egypt ensures youth transition directly into jobs; Sprints links tech training with employment contracts. Shortlist in Kenya builds coalitions in the digital work ecosystem that extend beyond training to job matching and retention. Other IPs focus on underserved niches: Balloon Ventures addresses missing-middle finance (Uganda), Woord en Daad provided in-kind, low-barrier assets (Uganda), and BI supports nano-enterprises through cooperative models (Nigeria). Several projects also advance formalisation in informal economies by introducing tools for verified profiles, transparent transactions, and insurance (Eco Brixs, FUNDIS).

Coherence is strongest where CFYE IPs act as brokers of multistakeholder partnerships, reinforcing rather than duplicating existing systems. In Kenya, KEPSA convenes SMEs, training institutions and government stakeholders to align with the country's digital economy priorities. FUNDIS brings together NGOs, training providers and private employers through structured learning platforms that increase sectoral coherence. In Uganda, OIUK embeds itself within local economic systems by working with banks, RLOs and village savings and loan associations, working towards more durable outcomes. In Egypt, Sprints leveraged cross-sectoral linkages to bridge training and employment pipelines. In contrast, some IPs engaged only sporadically, through ad hoc workshops or occasional collaborations, and others showed little evidence of structured coordination (Eco Brixs, BI, SwahiliPot, Aman).

Coherence at policy level was not always consistent across the portfolio. In some cases, such as in Egypt, policy-level engagement was not part of CFYE's mandate. In other cases, youth employment initiatives were aligned thematically but lacked structured partnerships or clear documentation of policy integration (Shortlist, BI). In Uganda, although CFYE complied with refugee policy frameworks, its local definition of 'decent work' focused mainly on job stability and wages, falling short of ILO standards. In Nigeria, coherence with government strategies was less formalised, relying instead on coalitions such as the YES Consortium or ad hoc ecosystem linkages.

In several contexts, CFYE engages proactively with national actors and peer programmes to embed local good practices into its design. In Kenya, CFYE drew lessons from government priorities in the green and digital sectors, refining its calls and TA accordingly. It further contributed to knowledge exchange by hosting sectoral forums and publishing research, reinforcing its position as both a learner and a knowledge broker. In Nigeria, coherence with government priorities was evident where IPs aligned their projects to state-led initiatives such as the 3MTT digital skills programme, leveraging CFYE's sustainability focus to remain relevant in a shifting policy environment.

CFYE incorporates insights from peer programmes, national initiatives and thematic learning forums. This includes participation in conferences and panels on green jobs, agri-business and digital work, allowing CFYE to stay updated on sector-specific trends and challenges. CFYE gathers feedback and lessons from government actors, NGOs and development partners. These networks help validate findings, refine definitions (e.g. of 'decent work') and ensure alignment with national frameworks.

This section highlights CFYE's coherence through deliberate effort to harmonise its youth employment interventions with the broader ecosystem of national, regional and global initiatives. By focusing on evidence-based, contextually adapted programming and acting as a broker among stakeholders, CFYE complements existing efforts and fills critical gaps in employment pathways. There remain opportunities for greater policy integration, knowledge-sharing and the institutionalisation of best practices.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Across its portfolio, CFYE generated nearly 132,000 job outcomes (79% of its target[30]), with over half held by women and with a diverse mix of created, improved and matched opportunities spanning waged employment, self-employment and temporary roles. Performance varied by country and model: Egypt and Nigeria reflected more jobs created, Uganda delivered strong improvements in health and clean tech, Ethiopia achieved the highest consistency across models, and Kenya demonstrated the benefits of a balanced portfolio that combined job creation, improvement and matching. Gender inclusion was particularly strong in Burkina Faso, Senegal and Nigeria, and CFYE as a whole has expanded young women's access to employment by opening entry pathways, redesigning some roles in traditionally male-dominated sectors, and supporting women to access SME and self-employment opportunities. The programme enhanced accessibility through flexible and localised training, hybrid and remote learning, and culturally sensitive outreach that included steps to address barriers such as mobility, caregiving and digital access. Retention was supported through measures including childcare provision, mentoring, transport support and workplace safety protocols; quality was improved by linking training to market opportunities, embedding practical learning, and promoting more equitable workplace practices.

CFYE pathways for employment supporting individual youth, SGBs and IPs' operations to create, improve and match jobs were found to be valid and flexible across different contexts. Targeted training and placement linked to employer demand enabled youth to access decent work. Entrepreneurship support improved or diversified incomes, although it was less effective in creating transformational employment. Support to SGBs through financial and targeted, relevant TA strengthened operational capacity and expanded job opportunities through enabling IP growth and development. These approaches resulted in measurable job changes (create, improve and match). Evidence from case studies indicates that programme outcomes were strongest where TA, grant support and effective monitoring were combined. Counterfactual analysis indicates that training or the provision of finance alone would have been insufficient to achieve the same results.

An effective MEL system tracked job outcomes (created, improved, matched) at multiple levels using CFYE tools. Job numbers were monitored consistently, but job quality data, especially for self-employment and informal jobs, was less systematic. MEL findings shaped programme priorities and strategies, such as Nigeria's shift towards self-employment models and Kenya's focus on creative and green sectors. The PbR framework ensured accountability but sometimes prioritised job counts over quality, resulting in the inclusion of insecure or low-paid roles. Although CFYE provided guidance on verification and decent work, consistent evidence on longer-term job quality was limited.

CFYE's key contribution to global debates on youth employment and private sector-led social impact is its demonstration that a challenge fund model can drive inclusive, large-scale job creation while catalysing innovation in employment systems. CFYE incentivised delivery through its PbR structure, incentivising new approaches. It also advanced thinking and innovation on how private sector actors, particularly SMEs and social enterprises, can adopt gender-responsive and inclusive practices to address labour market exclusion. CFYE generated practical insights on adapting employment models to local realities, including in informal and rural economies. Its experience offers concrete lessons on defining and operationalising decent work, embedding

[30] At the time of this evaluation. Please see the limitations section regarding the ongoing delivery of the portfolio.

equity in delivery, and leveraging the private sector as a driver of both economic and social outcomes.

The programme delivered a significant number of jobs and supported a diverse portfolio, but several strategic and operational lessons have emerged that can strengthen future youth employment initiatives. Key areas for improvement include expanding the inclusiveness and geographic relevance of programming, ensuring that job quality is consistently defined and tracked, and enabling more systemic, coordinated approaches across stakeholders. Furthermore, the sustainability of outcomes beyond the programme life cycle will depend on more deliberate planning, stronger learning systems, and a deeper focus on transformative employment outcomes.

The following recommendations reflect these findings and offer direction for future programmes aiming to deliver more equitable, context-responsive impact.

While continuing to invest in employment pathways within urban sectors, future iterations of CFYE should consider more deliberately addressing the needs of rural youth. This may require tailored strategies that account for the distinct economic structures, infrastructure limitations and social dynamics found in rural settings. Rather than replicating urban models, IPs should be supported to adapt or develop interventions that are locally pertinent and address local economic opportunities such as agri-processing or decentralised service delivery. Strengthening geographic equity in this way will ensure that employment programming is more aligned with the realities of young people living outside formal urban economies.

To ensure credible and comparable employment results across countries, the CFYE programme should balance and align context-specific definitions of decent or improved work. Recognising that decent work is shaped by local contexts and socioeconomic conditions, standardising the concept of decent work across diverse contexts is inherently challenging. Future programmes should adopt clearer definitions for job outcomes that include contextualised understanding of what constitutes 'decent work' in each setting. This approach would balance technical consistency with local relevance, ensuring that reported outcomes are both credible and meaningful within their specific labour market environments.

Future CFYE programme design should enable IPs to balance job quantity and quality targets, tailored to national economic contexts, ensuring that employment outcomes are meaningful and achievable. Although CFYE's PbR model effectively drove delivery against quantitative targets, the emphasis on counting jobs may have offset deeper outcomes such as fair wages, formalisation or safety. Recognising that labour markets and economic drivers vary significantly across countries, IPs should propose an appropriate balance between quantity and quality targets, supported by labour market evidence and national employment trends. Such an approach would support more contextually relevant programming and incentivise more sustainable and decent employment outcomes.

CFYE should support IPs to act as ecosystem brokers, facilitating coordination across employment, training and financial sectors to facilitate system-level change. The evaluation found that systemic change was strongest where IPs engaged multiple stakeholders and worked beyond direct service delivery to address structural gaps in youth employment systems. However, this role was not consistently enabled across the portfolio, because many IPs lacked the resources or support to influence wider ecosystems. Future programmes should create clear incentives and support mechanisms for IPs, or even select IPs, to take on system-shaping roles, including flexible funding for convening activities and TA for partnership-building. Prioritising partners with strong local networks or demonstrated sector influence would further enhance the programme's capacity to catalyse sustainable, system-level change.

CFYE programme learning processes should be formalised and systematically embedded into operations to strengthen the effectiveness and responsiveness of future programmes; this can take place at programme and country levels. Many CFYE IPs demonstrated adaptive practices, but this was inconsistent across the portfolio. Some partners used data to improve recruitment, training or delivery; others saw MEL mainly as a reporting or accountability requirement. To promote consistent adaptive implementation, future programmes should establish structured learning loops that link monitoring and outcome data directly to programme decision-making. Embedding these mechanisms across the programme cycle would enable timely adjustments and encourage innovation to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Structured peer learning and portfolio coordination mechanisms should be embedded into delivery processes to avoid uneven learning. Programmes of this scale benefit from institutionalised peer learning as a deliberate, resourced function, rather than treating it as an often informal add-on. Institutionalising could include regular in-country learning workshops, thematic technical exchanges, and facilitated communities of practice focused on shared implementation challenges. Country-level learning coordinators or portfolio managers could play a key role in convening these spaces, capturing emergent practice, and fostering collaboration among IPs working in similar sectors or targeting similar populations. Coordinated learning strengthens implementation and enables faster diffusion of what works, contributing to a more coherent and adaptive programme ecosystem.

Future Challenge Fund calls could expand their inclusion strategies to reach a broader spectrum of marginalised youth – not just women. CFYE made notable progress on gender inclusion, but other underserved groups, such as youth with disabilities, were not as represented (with notable exceptions – PWD and Eco Brixs, and refugees and OIUK). Inclusion efforts tended to focus on gender parity in participation, without equivalent attention to intersecting barriers faced by these groups. To widen reach, programmes could explicitly identify and prioritise underserved youth segments during programme design and partner selection, building on the success of HCD TA and gender targeting. This could also include allocating resources for tailored outreach, accessible delivery models and data disaggregation. By moving to a broader definition of inclusion, programmes can better address the full diversity of exclusion in labour markets and support more equitable employment systems.

CFYE should actively showcase successful gender-inclusive and gender-transformative models to influence gender norms and expand the uptake of inclusive practices. Several IPs developed effective strategies to overcome cultural and socioeconomic barriers such as flexible work arrangements and safe workplace adaptations, but these practices were not widely shared beyond the project level. In many contexts, particularly where gender inequality is deeply embedded, visibility of what works is essential to reduce perceived risk and encourage broader adoption. Prioritising these lessons through in-country learning events, sector dialogues and peer exchange platforms would make these models accessible to policymakers, private sector actors and other stakeholders, and help catalyse shifts in how gender inclusion is approached and normalised.

To work towards sustainability beyond the life of the programme, the CFYE programme should require IPs to develop clear, actionable sustainability strategies at the outset, linked to the services or results of the services supported by CFYE. Although some partners achieved or exceeded their targets, these were often dependent on businesses that lacked long-term financial resilience or structured continuity plans. To address this, sustainability planning should be core to the implementation process, with explicit expectations around job retention, organisational continuity and financial modelling. This should be complemented by targeted TA to strengthen partners' ability to sustain results once external funding ends.

Annex I: Country-level job outcomes

Total outcomes per country/selected IPs.

Job totals	Jobs created	Jobs improved	Jobs matched	(All jobs)
Uganda				
Country total	9,921	8,111	75	18,107
Selected IPs	4,297	4,208	0	8,510
Kenya				
Country total	11,882	15,209	3,649	30,740
Selected IPs	2,963	1,541	286	4,790
Nigeria				
Country total	7,027	1,190	3,444	11,661
Selected IPs	1,840	923	2,660	5,423
Egypt				
Country total	9,878	3,933	1,118	14,929
Selected IPs	4,929	2,630	1,088	8,647
Overall portfolio				
Total	55,334	57,939	18,404	131,737
Selected countries	38,708	28,443	8,286	75,437[31]

[31] Based on CFYE-provided dashboard, dated 31 March 2025. Last accessed 18 August 2025.

Annex II: Theory of Change assumptions

The inception phase included the identification of 54 assumptions underpinning the CFYE Theory of Change. These are presented in the table below with a summary assessment of the degree to which the assumptions were valid or invalid, or could be tested at the end line phase.

Number	Assumption	Finding: Valid, Mixed Validity, Mixed or Invalid or not tested
1	TA supports projects in achieving their results	Valid, See the Technical Assistance section of this report for detailed analysis
2	CFYE contributes to sustainable changes in the capacity and systems of enterprises	Mixed. Supported IPs such as Balloon Ventures achieved operational sustainability, while others such as Woord en Daad are NGOs requiring on going support. A full assessment of business sustainability was not undertaken.
3	The models developed by participating businesses are replicable	Valid
4	Participating businesses are willing and able to share implementation processes and lessons regarding their models with other interested parties	Mixed validity. CFYE has largely driven processes for sharing implementation processes and lessons within the networks of the IPs they support, generally at the country level. This is not driven by IPs directly.
5	CFYE contributes to sustainable changes in the youth employment systems, such as employment policies and regulatory frameworks, the sustainable provision of services supporting youth employment, crowd-in, copying and replications of solutions and innovation promoted by the Fund	Not valid. There are some indications that CFYE support to IPs has initiated changes that go beyond the IP to their immediate ecosystem. But CFYE has not demonstrated systemic change in line with the factors listed under this assumption
6	IPs have the capacity and willingness to continue the projects	Valid for most cases. Balloon Ventures and Eco Brixs scaled operations and improved job quality. FUNDIS and KEPSA showed commitment through TA uptake and platform development.
7	CFYE is aligned – or managed to align – with donors' priorities	Partially valid. Alignment is evident in gender inclusion and youth employment goals, but DMSI faced challenges aligning with donor expectations due to economic constraints.
8	CFYE has reached sufficient scale and depth to justify further donors' investments	Valid. Balloon Ventures exceeded investment targets and job improvement outcomes. Eco Brixs expanded operations and attracted private investment.
9	Risks and opportunities of the business models are identified and understood by the players in the sector	Mixed validity. Eco Brixs and FUNDIS adapted well to risks, while others underestimated implementation challenges.
10	Solution types supported by the programme are backed by policymakers and relevant players in the sector	Not assessed
11	Social and cultural networks are willing to spread information regarding employment opportunities	Valid in some contexts. KEPSA leveraged influencer networks. SwahiliPot and FUNDIS used digital platforms and community outreach.

12	Social norms, corruptions and clientelism do not prevent youth and young women from pursuing available job opportunities	Partially invalid. DMSI and KEPSA, like many IPs, faced gender barriers and social norms limiting female participation. TA helped mitigate these but challenges persist.
13	Employers are willing to employ and develop youth and women, also working around social norms restricting women	Valid with caveats. FUNDIS and KEPSA made progress through gender TA. Sprints struggled to meet female employment targets.
14	Youth and young women find available jobs attractive to them	Mixed. For example, SwahiliPot found youth preferred gig work to formal employment. Sprints noted female graduates faced longer job searches and unmet expectations.
15	Employers perceive that youth and young women are a good fit for the roles they have available	Partially valid. KEPSA and FUNDIS reported positive employer feedback. Sprints and DMSI highlighted mismatches.
16	There is a reinforcing feedback mechanism between business growth and the creation of decent employment opportunities for youth and young women	Valid. Eco Brixs and Balloon Ventures demonstrated this through scaling and job creation.
17	Work and income opportunities created are interesting and rewarding for youth	Mixed. Some youth found roles rewarding, others preferred informal or gig work.
18	There is a reinforcing feedback loop between productivity increase, improved working conditions and job retention	Valid. Balloon Ventures and Eco Brixs showed improved retention linked to better conditions.
19	Employers have incentives and capacity to implement strategies aimed at improving job quality	Partially valid. TA helped some partners like FUNDIS and KEPSA, but others lacked internal capacity. Some indication that businesses supported by Balloon Ventures recognised the value of formal employment contracts
20	Changes in policies and practices within a firm result in youth experiencing meaningful employment quality gains	Valid. For example, Balloon Ventures and Eco Brixs implemented changes that led to measurable improvements.
21	Training is effective and relevant to match (soft) skills gaps and shortages on the demand side	Valid. DMSI and other training focused IPs demonstrated the effectiveness of training appropriate to the market needs
22	It is possible to effectively address the necessary assets for employability through training	Valid. TA-supported training improved employability in FUNDIS and KEPSA. See also DMSI.
23	Women and youth can access and benefit from training programmes (e.g. training is affordable, at suitable times, etc.)	Partially valid. Accessibility varied; KEPSA and FUNDIS made training inclusive, others faced barriers.
24	Young entrepreneurs can access financing or other resources to start new endeavours	Valid. Balloon Ventures facilitated access for businesses, and Woord en Daad facilitated access for individuals. The size and terms and conditions related to the loans and the degree to which they constitute sufficient resource to start new businesses was not tested
25	Youth receiving support will be able to start or maintain businesses	Valid. Balloon Ventures, Eco Brixs and Woord en Daad showed strong outcomes in youth-led business sustainability.

26	Specific measures put in place are effective to ensure young female entrepreneurs are also able to access finance/assets	Partially valid. Gender-focused TA helped, for example leading to the roll out of the GALS training programme with Woord en Daad, but systemic barriers remain.
27	The entrepreneurial ecosystem enables and supports youth to start up an enterprise	This was not tested
28	Finance terms are acceptable/appealing to youth (especially young women)	Partially invalid. Some youth found terms restrictive or inaccessible.
29	Youth have technical and soft skills that are suitable for the job opportunities that present themselves in the market	Mixed. Skills gaps persist in some sectors despite training. CFYE-supported IPs have demonstrated the effectiveness of market focused training in soft and technical skills for matching jobs.
30	Youth have access to information or technology to identify opportunities (e.g. Internet, newspaper, radio and/or mobile phone) and this information is made available	Valid. KEPSA and FUNDIS used digital platforms effectively.
31	Women are able to overcome barriers and pursue employment opportunities	Partially valid. TA helped reduce barriers, but cultural norms still limit access.
32	Costs/terms of service (for matching) are acceptable to youth	Mixed. Some platforms were accessible, others faced affordability issues.
33	Business development services are affordable, accessible and relevant to small and medium enterprises (SMEs)/self-employed entrepreneurs	Valid. Balloon Ventures and OIUK leveraged BDS effectively.
34	SMEs have the capacity to absorb, support and implement new strategies that will improve business performance and increase social impact	Partially valid. Capacity varied across partners, but CFYE-supported IPs provided good examples of successful adoption of new strategies. Evidence of such changes at businesses indirectly supported by CFYE was not as clear.
35	SMEs perceive the benefit of improving working conditions and investing in youth leadership, inclusion and participation, particularly with regard to women	Partially valid. Balloon Ventures demonstrated that improving contractual conditions and clearer working terms and conditions was a positive aspect of business to participating SMEs
36	Employers put forward changes in their policies and practices that embrace the principles of gender equality and youth participation	Not tested outside of CFYE-supported IPs, but valid with CFYE-supported IPs
37	There is a positive feedback loop between improving business performance, better working conditions, improved productivity, retention and/or performance of employees	Not tested
38	Adapted business models make firms more resilient by allowing them to continue operating, generating revenue and paying employees in spite of 'shocks'	Mixed. The clearest examples of adapted business models came from CFYE-supported IPs but these adaptations and the level of business resilience in the face of shocks was not tested.
39	Value chain or sector-focused interventions are effective in improving market linkages and market access, leading to improved performance	Not tested

40	Programme expenditures are in line with budgeted amounts at country and project level	Not tested
41	A participatory process for defining budget and workplan results in accurate financial forecast at country and project level	Not tested
42	Appropriate governance and management structures and processes support the efficient delivery of the programme and allow it to respond and adapt to challenges	Not tested at endline
43	IPs have the capacities for delivery and are prepared to deliver the programme and respond and adapt to contextual changes and implementation challenges	Valid.
44	The needs of different categories of youth have been taken into account by the projects, with a specific focus on gender priorities	Valid. Gender and youth segmentation was evident in KEPSA and FUNDIS.
45	The needs of different categories of youth have been taken into account in the formulation of the country calls, with a specific focus on gender priorities	Valid. Country calls reflected gender and youth priorities.
46	There is alignment between CFYE objectives and the current priorities of donors	Valid. Gender, youth employment and inclusion were aligned.
47	The Fund has conducted a valid and comprehensive mapping of stakeholders in each country	Valid. CFYE did undertake stakeholder mapping at the country level which supported targeted interventions.
48	The Fund has a thorough understanding of the systems around youth employment in each country	Mixed validity. CFYE had a solid understanding of the youth needs at the country level through research to inform the call. At the country level TA to support programme design reflected elements of systemic understanding.
49	The programme is coherent with programmes implemented by international and national donors	Valid. CFYE complemented existing donor programmes. See Relevance section of the report for further detail
50	There is alignment between CFYE and the range of government policies that regulate youth employment, education, labour laws and entrepreneurship and businesses in general	Valid. See for example, KEPSA and FUNDIS operated within aligned policy frameworks.
51	CFYE introduces changes that address barriers and social norms that prevent young women accessing decent job opportunities	Valid. TA and programme design targeted these barriers
52	CFYE contributes to shifting social norms and practices in favour of young women's decent employment	Partially valid. Progress made, but cultural shifts take time.
53	CFYE improves the capacity of young women to demand better work conditions	Not tested
54	An increase in employment opportunities for young women leads to an increase in uptake by this group, and this results in their improved social economic standing	Not tested

Annex III: List of KIIs

Name	Country	Stakeholder group	Title (if available)
Heba Ibrahim	Egypt	Sprints	
Basel Moustafa	Egypt	Sprints	
Haytham	Egypt	Sprints	
Ola Farrag	Egypt	CFYE	PM
Sara	Egypt	Sprints	Female Youth
Donia	Egypt	Sprints	Female Youth
Fatma	Egypt	Sprints	Female Youth
Hend	Egypt	Sprints	Female Youth
Mah. Ghazy	Egypt	Sprints	Male Youth
M. Abdalla	Egypt	Sprints	Male Youth
Abdel Rahman	Egypt	Sprints	Male Youth
Mah. Samy	Egypt	Sprints	Male Youth
M. Ashraf	Egypt	Sprints	Male Youth
M. Kamal	Egypt	Sprints	Male Youth
Ihab	Egypt	Sprints	Male Youth
Rania Kadry	Egypt	Al moneer	
Noha Khater	Egypt	Al moneer	
Nancy Samir	Egypt	Aman	
Youssef Mohamed	Egypt	Aman	
Donia Karash	Egypt	Jinni	
Mostafa Ghanem	Egypt	Jinni	
Elijah Kingutu	Kenya	KEPSA	Programme Specialist
Brian Lang'at	Kenya	KEPSA	KEPSA
Dorcas Kimani	Kenya	KEPSA	KEPSA
Joy Mwangi	Kenya	KEPSA	Twiva
Paul	Kenya	Fundi	
Phoebe	Kenya	Fundi	
Felix	Kenya	Fundi	Youth Artisan
Bruce Moses	Kenya	Fundi	Youth
Shayleen Njeri	Kenya	Fundi	Youth
James Ndung'u	Kenya	SwahiliPot	
Hellen Mwanzia	Kenya	SwahiliPot	
Mbugua Kinuthia	Kenya	SwahiliPot	
Nancy Moraa	Kenya	SwahiliPot	

Name	Country	Stakeholder group	Title (if available)
Jacqueline Jepkoech	Kenya	SwahiliPot	
Austen Stranahan	Kenya	Shortlist	Chief Operating Officer
Patrick Maweu	Kenya	Shortlist	Youth
Derrick	Kenya	Shortlist	Youth
Nick	Kenya	Shortlist	Youth
Kimani, Naomi	Kenya	CFYE	Staff
Amarachi Okorie	Nigeria	CFYE	Country Lead
Chinimso Ojike	Nigeria	CFYE	PM
Aigbedesi Grace	Nigeria	Industry Expert	
Mack Onoja	Nigeria	Industry Expert	
Fehintola	Nigeria	Stutern	
Jesimiel	Nigeria	Stutern	
Esther Awuze	Nigeria	Stutern	Beneficiary
Anthony Muonaka	Nigeria	Stutern	Beneficiary
Shittu Odunayo	Nigeria	Stutern	Beneficiary
Gideon Obiasor	Nigeria	Stutern	Beneficiary
Amarachi	Nigeria	Stutern	Beneficiary
Ifeoma	Nigeria	Shecluded	
Mathew	Nigeria	Shecluded	
Tobi Asehinde	Nigeria	DMSI	Staff
Oluwakemi Adele	Nigeria	DMSI	Staff
Josephine Okoma	Nigeria	DMSI	Staff
Chidinma	Nigeria	DMSI	Beneficiary
Omobolanle	Nigeria	DMSI	Beneficiary
Isaac Idowu	Nigeria	BI	
Evi	Nigeria	BI	Project-Level Staff
Andrew Magunda	Uganda	CFYE	Country Lead
Paul Nuwagaba	Uganda	Sector Lead	GROW
Nelson Mugisha Mulera	Uganda	Sector Lead	Equity Bank
Robert Mugisha	Uganda	Wood en Daad	Microfinance Advisor
Kule Edson	Uganda	Wood en Daad	Apiary Master
Okema Ronald	Uganda	Wood en Daad	Apiary Master
Muhindo Maurice	Uganda	Wood en Daad	RTC Manager
Omara Emmanuel	Uganda	Wood en Daad	Fund Manager
Mujabi Kanani	Uganda	Wood en Daad	
Nicholas Mbeta	Uganda	Wood en Daad	Secretary
Mugula George	Uganda	Wood en Daad	

Name	Country	Stakeholder group	Title (if available)
Phiona Birungi	Uganda	Wood en Daad	
Harriet Mbabazi	Uganda	Wood en Daad	
Victor Mafigi Turatsinze	Uganda	OBUL	Unleashed
Amani Joel Mafigi	Uganda	OBUL	Unleashed
Muhairwe Alex	Uganda	OBUL	Finance and Admin
Micheal Gumisiriza	Uganda	Cohere	Programme Lead
Jacques Dicas	Uganda	OBUL	Programme Operations Director
Baraka Kabyona	Uganda	OBUL	Finance Lead
Musani Mukangya	Uganda	OBUL	Agribusiness Mentor
Nyirabuntu Edith	Uganda	OBUL	Assistant Livelihood officer
Olivier Hafashimana	Uganda	OBUL	Agricultural Lead
Sheila Musherure	Uganda	Cohere	M&E
Bibishe Kenge	Uganda	OIUK	Agribusiness Mentor
Tamsin Scurfield	Uganda	OIUK	Head of Refugee Finance
Noah Ssempijja	Uganda	OBUL	Country Lead (RISE-T)
Salume Diana Aqrchet	Uganda	OBUL	Senior Refugee Associate
Salma Elias	Uganda	Eco Brixs	Chief Operations Officer
Bashira Mirembe	Uganda	Eco Brixs	MEL Manager
Elia Ssebalamu	Uganda	Eco Brixs	Data Entrant and M&E Officer
Auma Esther	Uganda	Eco Brixs	Receiving and Sorting Manager
Nanziri Doreen	Uganda	Eco Brixs	Sorter
Njeri	Uganda	Ballon Ventures	Head of Innovation and Projects
Kenneth	Uganda	Ballon Ventures	Head of Portfolio Management
Nattabi Claire	Uganda	Ballon Ventures	Head of Business Development

Annex IV: List of documents reviewed

1. CFYE Dashbord – provided by Nisar
2. CFYE Salesforce Annual Report download for all IPs/all calls
3. Scoping Report Uganda 2021
4. Scoping Report Egypt 2020
5. Scoping Report Nigeria 2020
6. Scoping Report Jordan 2021
7. Scoping Report Kenya 2022
8. Uganda Update to Country Scoping 2021
9. Embassy Learning Tunisia 2021
10. Scoping Report Morocco 2022
11. Scoping Report Ethiopia 2021
12. Senegal Review 2021
13. Scoping Report Burkina Faso 2022
14. Scoping Report Jordan 2021
15. IP specific documents included:

IP	Business case	Concept note	AR Y1	AR 2	AR 3	Other
Uganda						
Woord en Daad	X	X	X	X	X	Y4Q1 Report
Eco Brixs	X	X	X	X		Y3Q2
OIUK	X	X	X	X		Y3Q2
Balloon Ventures	X	X	X	X		
Kenya						
Shortlist	X	X	X	X		
Fundi	X	X	X	X	X	
SwahiliPot	X	X	X			
KEPSA	X	X	X	X		
Nigeria						
Stutern	X	X	X	X	X	
Shecluded	X	X	X	X		
DMSI	X	X	X	X	X	Y4Q2
BI	X	X	X	X		
Egypt						
Jinni	X	X	X	X	X	Y4Q1 Report
Sprints	X	X	X	X	YR3 Q2	AR1 Call 5
Almouneer Medical Service	X	X	X	X		Y2Q3 Report
Aman Holdings	X	X				Y1Q3 Report

Annex V: Questions from KIIs

Country team

1. Can you describe the approach and the process for conducting the needs assessment at the country level?
2. How did the needs assessment inform the design of the call and the assessment of the proposals?
3. Are you aware of what the Dutch MFA (donor) priorities are?
4. Are you aware of the CFYE definitions/strategy on:
    - 'YEER' (Youth Engagement, Empowerment and Resilience)
    - Social Impact Strategy
    - Decent Work and Job Quality
    - Meaningful Youth Participation
5. To what extent did the design of the calls take into account donor priorities (MFA) and government priorities?
6. Are there any discrepancies between the need assessment and the priorities of the calls and the selected IPs? If so, why?
7. Can you walk me through how young people were involved at each stage – design, implementation, monitoring and learning – of the CFYE programme in this country – both at the country and project level?
8. What's CFYE's approach for mapping the youth employment system (context, policies, provision) and/or the stakeholders in the country?
9. Did you identify any existing initiatives to build synergies/partner with?
10. What do you see as the key similarities and differences between the CFYE model and other interventions supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship in this country?
11. How does CFYE integrate learning from other youth and gender programmes and policies?
12. How does CFYE integrate learning from the projects within its portfolio? Are lessons shared across the portfolio? How?
13. What types of technical assistance do you provide to IPs?
14. In your opinion, which types of technical assistance that CFYE offer are most effective? Why?
15. Have you observed any positive or negative effects of impact targets on IP sustainability?
16. Have you observed any evidence of non-IP actors adopting CFYE-supported approaches?
17. What makes CFYE support additional compared with commercial finance or other donors?
18. How does the call address specific barriers faced by young women?
19. To what extent do the calls or individual projects adopt a gender-transformative approach?
20. How does CFYE tailor support to reach women?
21. Have you observed shifts in social norms favouring youth employment, especially for women?
22. To what extent do you think CFYE has contributed to these changes?
23. What were other contributing factors?
24. How are lessons from projects captured and shared with others?
25. What actionable recommendations have emerged and how were they shared?
26. How does the country team engage in national or regional conversations or forums on youth employment?

IP questions

1. Have you identified different categories of youth for your project?
2. How did you identify the needs of the youth you are targeting with your intervention?
3. Did your proposal take into account the needs of specific groups and women? In what ways?
4. Can you walk me through how young people were involved at each stage – design, implementation, monitoring and learning of this CFYE project?
5. What unique value does this project add to the existing landscape?
6. How does this project complement other youth and gender programmes in [insert country]?
7. Do you work with, or collaborate with, other organisations and/or government or donor-funded initiatives on this project?
8. To what extent do you integrate learning from other youth and gender initiatives into this intervention?
9. Has the project been adapted to respond to the needs of beneficiaries?
10. What have been the main intended outcomes of the project for both your organisation and the participating youth?
11. What have been the main unintended outcomes of the project (positive and negative) for both your organisation and the participating youth?
12. What do you think are the key contributing factors/actors had the most significant effect on un/achieved results (both intended/unintended)?
13. Did you receive technical assistance as part of your project with CFYE? Please describe.
14. Do you think your personal and/or organisational capacity improved as a result of this technical assistance? How?
15. Do you think the technical assistance improved results on the employment outcomes for youth?
16. If you received technical assistance in multiple areas, which do you think was most effective?
17. Were there elements of the initial design/proposal that didn't work in practice?
18. If you could design the intervention again, how would you change it?
19. Can you share current figures on jobs matched/created/improved?
20. Do you plan to continue or expand the initiative after CFYE funding ends?
21. What were the key intended outcomes for your organisation, in terms of institutional capacity or systems, as a result of working with CFYE?
22. What was the state of your institutional capacity or systems before receiving CFYE support?
23. To what extent has your organisational capacity or systems improved due to CFYE support?
24. How has your business performance changed during the CFYE support period?
25. Did meeting impact targets create tensions with commercial viability for this IP?
26. Have you observed any trends within the sectors that indicate other actors are replicating or adapting the CFYE-supported approach?
27. What is the evidence?
28. Have you observed shifts in your immediate value chain as a result of this project?
29. If there is change, what do you think are the main factors contribution to this change?
30. To what extent has this project contributed to this change. Please describe.
31. Without CFYE funding, would you have proceeded with this project?
32. What gender-specific challenges did you identify and how are they addressed within this project?
33. How does your project move beyond women/girls access to address structural gender barriers?

34. What changes have you observed in young women's access to decent jobs and skills as a result of this project?
35. Does the project include measures to help women balance work and domestic tasks?
36. Which strategies were most effective in including women?
37. What evidence shows improved job quality for youth?
38. Probes on job quality:
    - Job security (formal contract, long – term stability)
    - Working conditions (safety, workload, working environment)
    - Other benefits (e.g. pension, insurance, paid leave)
    - Opportunities for career progression
    - Work–life balance
39. Have you observed shifts in social norms favouring youth employment, especially for women?
40. To what extent to you think this project has contributed to these changes?
41. What were other contributing factors?
42. How do you capture and share lessons with partners or CFYE?
43. What good practices would you recommend to similar organisations?

Industry sector questions

1. What do you think are the key issues affecting youth employment and entrepreneurship in [insert country]?
2. What are the key government priorities on youth employment and entrepreneurship in [insert country]?
3. Have there been any recent changes to government priorities or the development landscape supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship in the last few years?
4. From your knowledge of CFYE, where do you think their activities align with country needs?
5. Where do you think they could improve alignment with country needs?
6. What are other government and non-governmental stakeholders doing to support youth employment and entrepreneurship in [insert country]?
7. How is this similar/different from CFYE's model?
8. Do you think CFYE complements or duplicates efforts of other programmes (governmental, donor)? Why?
9. From what you know about the CFYE projects, do you think there are trends within the youth employment landscape or the sector/s where CFYE operates that indicate other actors are replicating or adapting the approaches taken by CFYE-supported initiatives?
10. What makes CFYE support unique compared with commercial finance or other donors? Are you aware of CFYE representatives participating in industry, diplomatic and/or policy discussions on youth employment?

Youth interview/FGDs

1. What do you think are the key issues affecting youth employment and entrepreneurship in [insert country]?
2. What are the main barriers (including social norms) for employing young women and men in your industry and sector? Can you describe them?
3. What are the issues you face as an individual?

4. Does [insert name of project] address your needs? (probe for gender – to what extent does the project meet the needs of women/girls and/or men/boys?)
5. What do you find most useful? What was least useful? What was missing/can be amended/added?
6. Were you invited to share ideas or help make decisions about the project/service/training?
7. Are you familiar with other opportunities for you to access similar services/support?
8. Have you engaged with similar projects/received similar support in the past? From whom?
9. How is the CFYE services/support different from them?
10. What aspects/components/features of the service did you like the most?
11. What aspects/components/features did not work well for you?
12. Please describe any positive impacts you felt from the project.
13. Please describe any negative impacts you felt from the project.
14. Did you secure new or different work as a result of using this service?
15. When did the change happen?

a. Less than a year ago
b. More than a year ago

16. Are you still in the same role?
17. Please describe the job (industry, role, location).
18. What kind of contract do you have?

a. full – time
b. part – time
c. wage work
d. self – employment

19. Were you given a formal contract?

a. Written contract
b. Informal agreement
c. no contract
d. other

30. How fulfilling and rewarding was this job?
31.

How would you rate the following aspects of the job? (1 = low, 5 = high/positive)
Pay/income level
Job security (formal contract, long-term stability)
Working conditions (safety, workload, working environment)
Other benefits (e.g. pension, insurance, paid leave)
Opportunities for career progression
Work–life balance

32. Have you observed any trends in the sector that might indicate that other actors are replicating the project/service you received from [insert IP name]? *Probe for why/why not.*
33. What is the evidence?
34. Do you feel the project considers different needs of young men and women?
35. Are there any challenges male or female youth face in accessing or benefiting from this project?

36. Are there any family or community issues that mean it's more/less easy for either a male or female youth participate?
37. Please describe what change using this service had on your career.
38. Has participating in the project changed how you balance work and home responsibilities?
39. What helped you participate and stay in the programme?
40. Have people's attitudes toward your work changed since you joined the project?

Project staff questions

1. What do you think are the key issues affecting youth employment and entrepreneurship in [insert country]?
2. To what extent does this project meet those needs?
3. Can you walk me through how young people were involved at each stage – design, implementation, monitoring and learning of this CFYE project?
4. What unique value does this project add to the existing employment landscape?
5. How does CFYE integrate learning from other youth and gender programmes and policies? How does CFYE integrate learning from the projects within its portfolio? Are lessons shared across the portfolio? How?
6. What have been the main intended outcomes of the project?
7. What have been the main unintended outcomes of the project (positive or negative) for both your organisation and the participating youth?
8. Was technical assistance provided to this IP? Please describe.
9. Have you observed any changes to the IP capacity as a result of this technical assistance?
10. Do you think the technical assistance improved results on the employment outcomes for youth?
11. In your opinion, which types of technical assistance that CFYE offer are most effective?
12. Were there elements of the initial design/proposal that didn't work in practice?
13. If you could design the intervention again, how would you change it?
14. Are you aware of the IP's plans to continue or expand the project after CFYE support ends?
15. What were the key intended outcomes for the IP as an organisation, in terms of institutional capacity or systems, as a result of working with CFYE?
16. How would you describe the IP's capacity or systems before CFYE support?
17. Have you seen improvements in IP capacity or systems due to CFYE support (in addition to changes from technical assistance outlined above)?
18. Did meeting impact targets create tensions with commercial viability for this IP?
19. Have you observed any evidence of non-IP actors adopting the approach taken by this IP?
20. Have you observed shifts in the immediate value chain around the intervention?
21. What makes CFYE support additional compared with commercial finance or other donors?
22. What gender-specific challenges were identified and how are they addressed within this project?
23. To what extent does this project adopt a gender-transformative approach?
24. What changes have you observed in young women's access to decent jobs and skills as a result of this project?
25. Overall, did this project contribute to a more inclusive labour market for female youth?
26. Have job offers or job quality improved for young women and men?
27. Probes on job quality:
    Job security (formal contract, long-term stability)

Working conditions (safety, workload, working environment)
Other benefits (e.g. pension, insurance, paid leave)
Opportunities for career progression
Work–life balance

28.. Have you observed shifts in social norms favouring youth employment, especially for women?
29. To what extent do you think CFYE has contributed to these changes?
30. What were other contributing factors?
31. How are lessons from projects captured and shared with others?
32. Have you provided recommendations to other IPs or the CFYE team?
33. How do you or other CFYE staff engage in national or regional forums on youth employment?

Annex V: Endline Evaluation Framework

Criterion	EQ		Light-touch case study	In-depth case study	Org. review	Portfolio review	Synthesis
1. Relevance: is CFYE consistent with target youth requirements and relevant to countries' and funders' priorities?	1.1 To what extent do the Fund's selection of projects match the (i) donor priorities and (ii) youth and gender priorities of the participating countries?	1.1.1 Does the Programme match the overall (MFA) donor priorities (Fund level) and calls developed in line with in-country youth and gender needs and are in line with national government priorities (valid context and need assessment conducted by CFYE) (country level)? 1.1.2 (How) does CFYE apply the principle of Meaningful Youth Participation in youth employment programming (e.g. throughout the programming cycle)?	X (new only)			X	X
2. Coherence: to what extent is CFYE compatible with other programmes and interventions?	2.1 Is CFYE consistent with other interventions in-country implemented by other international and national donors?	2.1.1 What are the similarities and differences between the CFYE model and design of RFPs [requests for proposals] and those of other interventions, and the value add of these (valid stakeholder and/or system mapping)?	X (new only)				X
	2.2 Is CFYE aligned with related youth and gender programmes and policies in-country?	2.2.1 CFYE is coherent with other youth and gender programmes and policy actors and entities (governmental, non-governmental, private). 2.2.2 CFYE design builds on national good practices and learnings from related youth and gender programmes and policies.	X (new only)				X
4. Effectiveness: has CFYE achieved or will it achieve its outcomes?	4.1 To what extent has the programme achieved its immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes?	4.1.1 Does CFYE undertaken systematic tracking of outcomes and learnings conducted, and are implementation plans revised accordingly? 4.1.2 Were there any intended and unintended outcomes on IPs and beneficiaries (positive or negative)?	X	X		X	X

5. Impact: was the intended impact achieved?	5.1 Did the TA support the achievement of the results?	5.1.1 Is there a link between TA, improved IP capacity and matched, created or improved employment? 5.1.2 Which types of TA were most effective and why?		X		X	X
	5.2 Did the CFYE's ToC contribute to employment creation by IPs?	5.2.1 Are the employment pathways valid (match, create, improve) and are the assumptions valid? 5.2.2 Outcomes assessed against ToC pathways, assumptions reviewed and confirmed. 5.2.3 Numbers and types of job outputs based on available CFYE data.	X	X		X	X
6. Sustainability: are the delivery processes, outcomes and impact likely to continue?	6.1 What is the likelihood of supported projects to continue to grow their business models and/or sustain their support services and strategies?	6.1.1 Do IPs have a clear plan for the continuation or expansion of the project post-CFYE support with robust systems of delivery and trackable results (finance/investment and resources)? 6.1.2 Has CFYE support enabled or contributed to IPs upgrading their capacity and systems? 6.1.3 How has the requirement to meet CFYE impact targets impacted negatively on the sustainability of the IP's business model?	X	X		X	X
7. Systemic change: did CFYE contribute to systemic changes?	7.1 Did CFYE contribute towards change outside of the supported projects?	7.1.1 Is there evidence of non-IP actors adopting CFYE-supported approaches (IPs) to addressing youth employment? 7.1.2 Is there evidence of changes to the immediate supply or value chain in which the IP operates?	X	X		X	X

	7.2 Outcome additionality: results bigger, faster, more inclusive or of wider scope?	7.2.1 How has CFYE defined and realised its "additionality" to promoting market driven youth economic inclusion through (TA) investment, notably through VSO partnership to achieve youth economic inclusion/ empowerment in country/local contexts?		X		X	X
8. Inclusion: has CFYE been inclusive?	8.1 How did CFYE contribute towards inclusivity of different youth groups in the labour market and changes in their access to employment opportunities in target countries?	8.1.1 (How) did CFYE trace and focus gender concerns within youth employment projects? 8.1.2 To what extent did the programme adopt a gender-transformative approach? (Inclusion of institutions and male actors in the solutions) 8.1.3 Change in young women's access to decent job opportunities and skills training. 8.1.4 Increase in balance of work and domestic responsibilities for young women beneficiaries. 8.1.5 How did CFYE contribute towards inclusivity of women beneficiaries in the labour market and changes in their access to employment opportunities in target countries (including job opportunities, skills and job retention)?	X	X		X	X
	8.2 Any observable effects on economic and social well-being of the youth that benefited from employment opportunities supported by CFYE?	8.2.1 Improved job offers and quality for different groups of young women and men. 8.2.2 Stories of change in social norms and practices in favour of young women and men's decent employment.		X		X	X
9. Strategic lessons: what	9.1 What lessons are to be learned for the design of future challenge funds	9.1.1 Lessons documented periodically and shared with internal and external stakeholders.					X

strategic lessons can be drawn?	focusing on youth employment?						
	9.2 What operational recommendations should be considered for the delivery of similar future funds?	9.2.1 Actionable recommendations on good practices documented and shared with internal and external stakeholders.					X
	9.3 What is CFYE's added value to debates and conversations on youth employment and social impact through private sector growth?	9.3.1 CFYE country teams and IPs participate in wider conversations and forums on youth employment in-country, regionally and centrally.					X



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