



## Youth at the Crossroads

There are more youth alive today than ever before – 1.2 billion young people, 87% of whom live in developing countries. Youth are finding it more difficult than ever before to find or create jobs and are now more than three times as likely to be unemployed as adults. While youth make up 17 per cent of the global population, they make up 40 per cent of the unemployed. Across Africa, over 80 per cent! Today, half of the world's young people are out of school, unemployed and not in training. In essence, they are stuck.

The stakes couldn't be higher for the world to respond. Youth unemployment is one of the key drivers behind the waves of desperate youth migrating across the globe. It is linked with the success of extremist movements recruitment efforts, urban violence, trafficking, teen pregnancy, youth suicide, child labour and poverty. Youth are at a crossroads in their lives, looking for a place to belong and contribute, seeking an identity rooted in financial independence and an emerging adulthood.

With adequate services, opportunities and supports (SOS) they can find positive pathways forward into adulthood, economic citizenship and civic engagement. Without such, a bleak future awaits many.

One of the drivers of the youth unemployment crisis is the skills gap that has opened wide in part because of the failure of the world's education systems to not just enroll more children, but to graduate them with core basic skills and life skills. About 120 million children of primary and lower secondary school age are not in school, and another 200 million youth dropped out before completing primary school. In all, 1 in 5 youth people have not completed even their elementary education. In addition to low completion rates are alarmingly low levels of literacy learning. Globally, there are 123 million illiterate youth. Of these, 2/3rds are girls. Behind these are another 250 million children of primary school age that aren't reading and writing, whether in school or out-of-school.

# Preparing Youth for Work and Life

Youth Ready is a World Vision project model aligned with the principles of Positive Youth Development and good practice of youth workforce development. Youth Ready projects are structured around a framework called the “Viability Journey” - a two-phased sequence of learning activities and skills development for youth, who are organized into mutually supportive and accountable peer cohort groups. In the first phase – Viability Foundations – youth form a savings group and participate in a facilitated group learning experience focused on the three Ls: second chance literacy learning, life skills development and livelihood preparation. The curriculum is arranged in five modules:

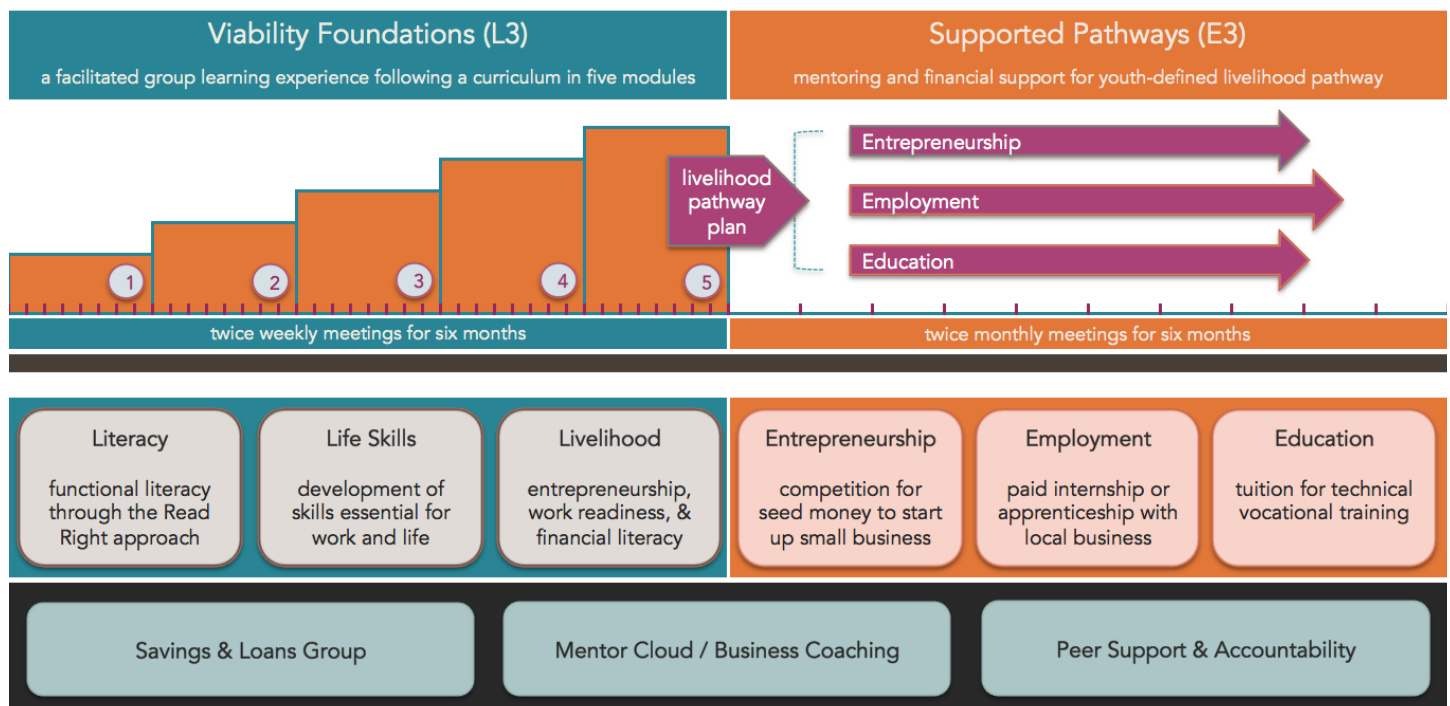
- 1 **Who I Am, Who We Are** focuses on positive self identity, building trust, group formation, developmental assets, mentor selection and leadership.
- 2 **Words and Money** focuses on literacy learning and financial literacy: budgeting, money

management, savings and spending – and trains the youth how to learn reading.

- 3 **Ready for Employment** focuses social emotional skills, appropriate workplace communication and behavior, customer service, and job acquisition.
- 4 **Ready for Entrepreneurship** focuses on business modeling, planning and pitching, cognitive analysis for decision-making, running successful enterprises, and managing debt and risk.
- 5 **Ready for Citizenship** focuses on valuing diversity and equality, being agents of change and peace, community service and the completion of individual livelihood pathway plans.

In the second phase – Supported Pathways – youth pursue their livelihood pathway plan with financial, peer and mentor support to start a new business or cooperative, attend a vocational technical center or TVET, complete a paid internship or apprenticeship, return to school or some combination of these.

## One Year Viability Journey



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