

Youth Empowerment Program Evaluation Report

Kenya

African Center for Women, Information, and Communications Technology
(ACWICT)

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ACRONYMS

ACWICT	African Center for Women, Information and Communications Technology
CV	Curriculum Vitae
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISBI	Informal Sector Business Institute
IYF	International Youth Foundation
MOYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OMS	Outcomes Measurement System
YEP	Youth Empowerment Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The youth population in the Republic of Kenya accounts for 75% of the country's total population of over 38 million people. Of this number, 14 million are between the ages of 15 and 35, of which over 2.5 million are classified as unemployed. Employment trends in Kenya also reveal that youth make up almost 40% of underemployed workers in the country. Additionally, 37.5% of youth between the ages of 15 and 34 are classified as inactive, meaning they are neither working, looking for work, or in school. Although 500,000 youth enter the labor market from training institutions around the country each year, less than 100,000 are absorbed into the formal sector.

It is within this context that Microsoft and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) partnered to help disadvantaged youth within Kenya to unleash their potential through the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP). Launched in 2007, YEP sought to adapt to the African context the comprehensive approach to youth employability developed by IYF through its successful *entra21* program in Latin America. Focused on four target countries in Africa – Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania – the program provides demand-driven training in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), life skills, and entrepreneurship, with a goal to improve the employability of disadvantaged African youth ages 16 to 35.

The study is an independent evaluation of YEP in Kenya, managed by the International Youth Foundation (IYF), financed by Microsoft, and executed in Kenya by three implementing partners: the African Center for Women, Information, and Communications Technology (ACWICT), the Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI), and NairoBits. This report focuses on the YEP program implemented by ACWICT, a nonprofit ICT for development organization with a mission to promote women's access to and knowledge of ICT as tools for social, economic, and political advancement. The objective of the YEP program in Kenya is to provide training and services to 2,500 youth between the ages of 18 and 35 from informal settlement areas around Nairobi. ACWICT in particular focused its attention on the challenges and constraints faced by women in Kenya, particularly poor and marginalized women. The program aimed to improve the employability of women by providing them training in ICT, life skills, and entrepreneurship, as well as placement and enterprise development services. To implement the YEP program, ACWICT received a grant of \$74,080. Participants were each provided with 40 hours of life skills training, 60 hours of ICT training, and 50 hours of entrepreneurship training.

The YEP program implemented by ACWICT began in 2007 with objectives to:

- Train 1,200 young women from the informal settlements of Kibera, Kawangware, Mathare, Mukuru, Korogocho and Kangemi in ICT, life skills, and entrepreneurship.
- Place 70% of the participants in jobs, internships, self-employment, and/or voluntary community service¹.
- Create a web-based database of job seekers marketed to potential employers.

The report presents the overall results of the program, as well as the results from interviews with participants from four cohorts, for a total of 56 participants (referred to as the sample follow-up cohort). In this regard, a questionnaire was developed by adapting an IYF *entra21* program questionnaire so as to

¹ Per terms of the Microsoft-IYF Youth Empowerment Program agreement and overall program objectives of empowering youth by enhancing employability as well as engagement/citizenship, placement is defined as dependent or self-employment or participation in an internship or voluntary community service activity. If a youth beneficiary has been employed in one or more jobs, has been self-employed, or has participated in an internship or community service activity since completing the program, the beneficiary is counted in the program's overall placement rate. In addition, the evaluation provides specific information on employment and self-employment placement rates and outcomes.

gather the opinions and suggestions of participants and employers. A focus group was also organized with program participants in order to gather their views on the program and on their overall environment. As of December 2009, the program had trained 1,105 participants. The average age of participants is 24 years of age, with over 75% of them having completed secondary school.

The evaluation revealed the following findings for the sample follow-up cohort:

- **The evaluation of the 56 participants in the sample follow-up cohort reveals a placement rate of 51.85%.²** Participants who were placed after the training stated that they were either involved in an internship (5.13%), worked in a job (41.03%) or independently (15.38%), performed community service (30.77%) or, in many cases, a combination of these. Another 25.93% (14 respondents) of the participants from the sample follow-up cohort had continued with their studies or participated in another training program since completing the YEP program. All together, 72.22% of the respondents were employed, self-employed, participated in an internship or community service, or continued their studies after the training.
- At the time of the evaluation, **25.93% of the participants from the sample follow-up cohort were employed compared to only 14.29% at baseline.** This reveals that the YEP contributed to improving the employment status of beneficiaries.
- **Of those that were employed (25.93%) at the time of the evaluation, 64.29% were working as employees and 35.71% were self-employed.** An analysis of the status of participants who were not working at the time of the evaluation (74.07%) was also conducted, and found that 37.5% of the participants stated employers were asking for more experience than they had. Participants believe that the skills needed by employers revolve more around technical skills than soft skills. Also, 22.50% were in school while 17.50% were awaiting responses from employers.
- Some of the reasons for the employment rate at the time of the evaluation are due to the current labor trends in Kenya, particularly in regards to the inability of the labor market to absorb youth into the formal sector. Other reasons also include a lack of knowledge on the part of youth interested in self-employment on how to follow through in creating new businesses.
- The participants' perceptions of their competencies in life skills increased from baseline to exit, demonstrating that youth believe the program has had a great effect on them, thus providing them with the necessary tools and skills to better face the employment market. It is important to note that **70% of the participants stated that the life skills training helped them the most in their self-improvement.** Participants also stated that the life skills courses gave them the courage and confidence to excel in the other training courses.
- An analysis of the program database reveals that there is significant statistical change in both the program population and the sample follow-up cohort's self-assessments in life skills, particularly from baseline to exit. An analysis of the sample follow-up cohort's self-evaluations at the time of the evaluation compared to baseline reveals that:
 - There is a significant statistical change in ten out of the twelve life skills attributes;
 - Participants' ability to organize their thoughts increased by 33.60 percentage points with a margin of error of 1.49%;

² The placement rate is comprised of respondents who were engaged in an activity 'after the training and before the evaluation' and 'at the time of the evaluation'. If a participant was employed after the training and before the evaluation and was also employed at the time of the evaluation, he or she was counted only once. Participants who continued with their studies 'after the training and before the evaluation' and 'at the time of the evaluation' are not included in the placement rate.

- Personal presentation saw an increase of 34.9 percentage points with a margin of error of 0%;
- The evaluation found that **96.30% of the sample follow-up cohort believed that the life skills training has positively affected their employment prospects**, while 3.7% did not believe their employment prospects were affected by the same training. Those that replied they were not affected by the training stated that they were already familiar with how to relate to people, communicate with others, and present themselves during interviews.
- Also, **92.31% of the sample follow-up cohort stated that the ICT training has had a positive effect on their employment prospects**, while 7.69% felt that the ICT training did not affect their employment prospects. Those who believed they were not affected stated that it was because they had not yet found a job that had allowed them to use their ICT skills. However, these participants stated they were still optimistic and believed they would find employment in the near-term.
- **88.68% of the sample follow-up cohort stated the entrepreneurship training affected their employment prospects**. As compared to the life skills and ICT training, there were more participants who believed they were not affected by the entrepreneurship training (11.32% of the respondents). Those that were not affected stated they were either not interested in business or entrepreneurship or they simply had not had an opportunity to apply what they had learned from the training. Participants that were affected by the program stated that they had more options for employment as a result of having learned how to create their own business plan.
- The evaluation noted that **96.30% of the participants rated the quality of the training positively** showing great appreciation for the program and of the quality of the training.
- **All of the participants in the sample follow-up cohort rated the quality of their life as better at the time of the evaluation compared to before the program**, either “much better” (74.07%) or “better” (25.93%).
- **All of the participants in the sample follow-up cohort stated that they would definitely recommend the program to other young people**.
- Concerning the **implementation of the program**, interviews with employers revealed a lack of sufficient information on the program. Suggestions were made to **improve the marketing of the program to potential employers and partners in order to increase the visibility of the program’s offerings**.
- Also in regards to the **implementation of the program**, the follow-up has not been sufficient in the eyes of the participants. Over half (51.41%) of the respondents stated there was either no follow up or gave it a poor rating.

In order to strengthen the implementation and outcomes of future YEP programs, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Increase the depth of courses by expanding the training duration particularly for ICT and entrepreneurship** so as to give students more time to better grasp content, techniques, and practices in order to increase their technical skills. This includes giving participants the opportunity to leverage other programs within the Center, which provide more training in developing technical skills in ICT and business. Although this would require additional funds for the program, participants in the focus group noted a willingness to pay for courses as long as program fees were reasonable, clearly defined, and payment programs were available.

- **Strengthen follow-up after the training program to all students by encouraging a network or alumni association**, which will assist the Center in having an organized system for keeping track of participants. Although ACWICT has made efforts to bring alumni together and keep track of program graduates, these efforts should be organized in a more comprehensive manner by incorporating alumni who are willing to manage the alumni association, student databases, and to keep track of program graduates.
- **Strengthen the placement services for participants** by leveraging existing partnerships to create an internship program for students. This will allow students to gain more work experience and will provide them with opportunities to enter full-time, paid employment following internships.
- The Center would also gain by **creating partnerships with placement agencies** so as to provide participants other options and avenues in their search for a job.

Overall, the program has had a tremendous effect on the participants and has made some dramatic changes to the lives of the women who have participated in the program. ACWICT was close to meeting its objective of training 1,200 young women and had placed 51.85% of the sample cohort in jobs, internships, self-employment, and/or voluntary community service by the time of the evaluation. An additional 25.93% continued their studies, participating in further training following YEP. The young women who benefited from the program indicated that the program has changed their self-perception of their worth, which has set them on a path to realize that there is a place for them in this world.

A. SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

The youth population in the Republic of Kenya accounts for 75% of the country's total population³ of over 38 million people⁴. Of this number, 14 million are between the ages of 15 and 35⁵, of which over 2.5 million are classified as unemployed⁶. Employment trends in Kenya also reveal that youth make up almost 40% of underemployed workers in the country⁷. In addition to this, 37.5% of youth between the ages of 15 and 34 are classified as inactive, meaning they are neither working, looking for work, nor in school⁸. Although 500,000 youth enter the labor market from training institutions around the country each year⁹, less than 100,000 are absorbed into the formal sector¹⁰.

These disheartening figures are a reflection of the underlying issues facing the youth population. The educational system in Kenya has yet to answer to the real needs of a continually growing labor market, as well as the need for a workforce that is not only technically competent, but is also equipped with developed soft skills in time management, communication skills, problem solving, and adaptability.

The challenges facing Kenyan youth led the Government of Kenya to create a ministry to address the various needs of the youth population. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MOYAS) was created in 2005 to 'represent and address youth concerns in Kenya'¹¹. Despite MOYAS's attempts to promote employment through programs such as Youth Learning Resources Centers and the Youth Economic and Social Empowerment Project, along with the Government of Kenya's programs such as Kazi Kwa Vijana and the Marshall Plan for Youth, youth unemployment in Kenya is still at staggering levels as job creation has not been rapid enough to meet the needs of yearly entrants into the labor market. According to MOYAS, 'one of the greatest challenges in youth empowerment and participation is how to ensure that young people are passionate about causing transformation in Kenya'. Youth empowerment, according to the Ministry, is 'the quintessential force for causing such transformation'¹².

It is within this context that Microsoft and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) are contributing to helping disadvantaged youth within Kenya to unleash their potential through the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP). Launched in 2007, YEP sought to adapt to the African context the comprehensive approach to youth employability developed by IYF through its successful *entra21* program in Latin America. Focusing on four target countries in Africa – Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tanzania – the program provides demand-driven training in information and communications technology (ICT), life skills, and entrepreneurship, with a goal to improve the employability of disadvantaged African youth ages 16 to 35. The specific objectives of this two-year program are to improve the employability of young people in the four target countries by:

- Strengthening the capacity of at least six implementing organizations to deliver high quality employability programs to reach at least 40,000 individuals, with 10,000 young people benefiting directly from ICT, life skills, entrepreneurship, and marketable job skills training; and

³ Figure provided by the Republic of Kenya Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

⁴ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.knbs.or.ke/#>

⁵ UN Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <http://esa.un.org/unpp/p2k0data.asp>.

⁶ Daily Nation, 'High Unemployment Rate Could Evolve Into Revolution, Experts Warn', May 2, 2009. Statement made by Isaac Kamande, Chief Economist at the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

⁷ World Bank Kenya Poverty and Inequality Assessment Executive Summary and Synthesis Report, p. 93. Underemployment, as defined by the World Bank, are those that work less than 28 hours per week.

⁸ International Labor Organization, Department of Statistics, Key Indicators of the Labor Market Database (KILM) 2008.

⁹ International Labor Organization Decent Work Country Program: Kenya 2007 – 2011, p. 10.

¹⁰ World Bank Kenya Poverty and Inequality Assessment Executive Summary and Synthesis Report, p. 90.

¹¹ Daily Nation, 'High Unemployment Rate Could Evolve Into Revolution, Experts Warn', May 2, 2009. Statement made by Isaac Kamande, Chief Economist at the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

¹² Ibid.

- Achieving at least 70% placement¹³ of those who receive training under the program through internships, jobs, self-employment, and/or voluntary community service¹⁴.

The program provides assistance with job placement in the formal and informal sectors, and enterprise development services including access to credit through alliances with other providers. The program also seeks to encourage continuing education and training.

The YEP program in Kenya was implemented by three nongovernmental organizations in Nairobi: the African Center for Women, Information and Communications Technology (ACWICT), the Informal Sector Business Institute (ISBI), and NairoBits. The overall goal of the three organizations combined was to train 2,500 youth in ICT, life skills, and entrepreneurship.

In order to measure the outcomes of the program on the participants, an independent, follow-up evaluation has been conducted in each of the four countries of the program. This report will focus on the evaluation of the YEP program implemented by ACWICT. The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Review the implementation process for the program pilot and its outcomes;
- Assess the outcomes of the training on the youth in terms of acquisition of skills, placement, and creation of businesses or income-generating self-employment;
- Gather the opinions of employers on the performances of trainees and employees, as well as gaps to be filled;
- Gather recommendations from employers and stakeholders in order to improve the implementation of the program.

Subsequent sections of the report describe the YEP program implemented by ACWICT, the evaluation methodology, the profile of the trained participants, and findings based on both an analysis of the participant database for the program and that of participants who were interviewed in person to assess the outcomes of the program on their employability. Following this analysis, the report provides feedback from the participants and various stakeholders on the administration of the program. The report concludes with proposed recommendations to strengthen the program.

¹³ Per terms of the Microsoft-IYF Youth Empowerment Program agreement and overall program objectives of empowering youth by enhancing employability as well as engagement/citizenship, placement is defined as dependent or self-employment or participation in an internship or voluntary community service activity. If a youth beneficiary has been employed in one or more jobs, has been self-employed, or has participated in an internship or community service activity since completing the program, the beneficiary is counted in the program's overall placement rate. In addition, the evaluation provides specific information on employment and self-employment placement rates and outcomes.

¹⁴ The placement rate is comprised of respondents who were engaged in an activity 'after the training and before the evaluation' and 'at the time of the evaluation'. If a participant was employed after the training and before the evaluation and was also employed at the time of the evaluation, he or she was counted only once. Participants who continued with their studies 'after the training and before the evaluation' and 'at the time of the evaluation' are not included in the placement rate.

B. SECTION II: DESCRIPTION OF THE ACWICT YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM IN KENYA

A. Program description

The African Center for Women, Information and Communications Technology (ACWICT) is a Kenya-based organization with a mission to promote women's access to and knowledge of ICT as tools for social, economic, and political advancement. ACWICT's mission is based on the belief that by gaining ICT skills, women can be empowered to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of those in their surroundings. Founded in 1998, the organization has been engaged in various thematic initiatives focused on women's issues primarily by integrating ICT with gender and governance, entrepreneurship, agriculture, health, and education.

In the sphere of improving the lives of women in Kenya, ACWICT has been cognizant of the realities faced by poor and marginalized women in Kenya and their isolation from the rest of the world, particularly with regards to the increasing gap in knowledge and information between those who have access to the technology and those who don't. As such, the organization has focused its efforts in decreasing these gaps by identifying areas in which these women are in need of support. These include:

- **Literacy and education** – many poor and marginalized women in Kenya have not had the opportunity to complete their primary or secondary schooling. A lack of ICT skills plays a major role in women's literacy and education as well. Additionally, language barriers have also caused many to continually be disconnected from the rest of society.
- **Lack of awareness** – many poor and marginalized women have a general lack of awareness about the opportunities brought by ICTs. This lack of awareness continually prevents women from tapping into available resources and information that would allow them to improve the quality of their lives. There is also a cost factor associated with this lack of awareness as many do not have the means to access necessary information.
- **Social and cultural constraints** – the geographical location of facilities, lack of privacy and security, along with ICT policies that are not responsive to gender issues continually constrain women's access to and control over ICTs in Kenya.¹⁵

By focusing on these key areas of need, ACWICT created the 'Reaching the Unreached' Project – a community-based capacity building initiative that 'aims to equip women and women entrepreneurs in rural and urban communities in Kenya with ICT and entrepreneurship skills'. With support from Microsoft and the International Youth Foundation (IYF), ACWICT was able to reinforce the 'Reaching the Unreached' program by including an ICT, entrepreneurship, and life skills component to aid the women to enhance their employment prospects. Through the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP), the organization aimed to provide employment opportunities to 1,200 young women aged 18 to 35 in the informal settlements of Nairobi.

The YEP program implemented by ACWICT began in 2007 with a budget of \$74,080. The objectives of the program are to:

- Train 1,200 young women from the informal settlements of Kibera, Kawangware, Mathare, Mukuru, Korogocho and Kangemi in ICT, life skills, and entrepreneurship;
- Place 70% of the participants in jobs, internships, self-employment, or voluntary community service;

¹⁵ ACWICT website, Rationale Behind ACWICT: profile description <http://www.acwict.org/profile.htm>

- Create a web-based database of job seekers marketed to potential employers.

An underlying goal of the program has also been to empower women to have the ability and confidence to improve their lives and seize the opportunities provided by the ever-growing Information and Communications Technology sector. Technical skills in computing is a main component of the program, as well as entrepreneurship training to provide young women with skills and knowledge on how to start and run a business. In addition, the life skills component emphasizes building confidence, empowering young women, and providing them with the necessary soft skills such as communication, assertiveness, and team building, which assists them in their work, personal, and social environments.

B. Training curriculum

ACWICT's curriculum is comprised of 60 hours of ICT training, 50 hours of entrepreneurship training, and 40 hours of life skills training. Participants are given the option to choose between the ICT and entrepreneurship training or take both courses. The life skills course is mandatory for participants as it forms the basis of providing participants with the skills necessary to successfully complete ICT and entrepreneurship training.

The ICT training is intended to provide youth with the basic skills necessary to function in the 21st century. Upon completion of the ICT program, students are awarded a certificate. The ICT courses provide basic computer training using the Microsoft Unlimited Potential Curriculum and cover:

- Computer Fundamentals;
- Word Processing;
- Spreadsheets;
- Presentation;
- Database; and
- Internet and World Wide Web.

The entrepreneurship course provides participants with knowledge on how to develop a potential business idea into a plan of action. This includes teaching students how to write a business plan, manage a business, and calculate the capital required to finance a venture. The topics covered in the business training include:

- Role of entrepreneurs;
- Qualities of successful entrepreneurs;
- Communication skills;
- Record keeping for small businesses;
- Causes of failure in business; and
- Characteristics of business opportunities.

The life skills training provides participants with the skills necessary to succeed in the program as well as in other training institutions and schools, find gainful employment, and increase their participation in their communities. With a few modifications to an IYF life skills manual to reflect the Kenyan context, youth are provided training in:

- Creative and critical thinking;
- Decision making and problem solving;

- Self-confidence;
- Communication and interpersonal skills;
- Teamwork;
- Managing one’s emotions;
- Civic values;
- Responsibility;
- Worth ethics;
- Job search strategies and interviews; and
- Respect.

Training for all three courses was provided monthly with a maximum of 50 students per month. Training was conducted primarily in ACWICT’s facilities. Training schedules, cohort sizes, and number of training hours are included in the annex to this report.

C. Recruitment and selection

Recruitment for the YEP program was first conducted via print and audio advertisements. This system, however, was not very sustainable as the cost for advertisement weighed heavily on the Center. ACWICT was able to leverage its relationship with the Ministry of Youth to help promote the program in the various informal settlements where the Ministry has been active. The organization also leveraged its relationship with beneficiaries and alumni by printing fliers for them to hand out in their communities.

ACWICT also used an SMS system to send messages to past and present beneficiaries to spread the word on the YEP program. ACWICT was also able to leverage its existing relationships with various partners such as nongovernmental organizations, donors, and social workers for them to communicate about the program to their respective beneficiaries.

The selection process for participants to enter the program included specific criteria and completion of an interview form. ACWICT’s selection criteria for the YEP Program are detailed below.

- *Age (between 18-35 years)*
- *Be a Kenyan citizen*
- *Have basic literacy skills (basic understanding of English is a must)*
- *Be unemployed*
- *Have demonstrable ability to complete the training*
- *Resident of Nairobi's informal settlements*

Candidates were required to complete an interview summary form as a basis for determining if they met the basic criteria. A few initial participants were turned down due to their stable employment status or lack of basic literacy skills. As a women’s organization, the courses were extended only to women. There were 1,969 registered participants for the program which was launched in July 2007. However, due to the political instability and violence in Kenya after the general election of December 2007, many of the qualified participants did not attend the training.

D. Placement

Participants who completed the program were invited to submit their CV to ACWICT, who would forward them to their various partners for job opportunities. In addition, ACWICT organized career fairs for participants on a quarterly basis in an effort to connect participants with potential employers. The organization also provided beneficiaries with a number of options for placement services. These include:

- **Offering one-on-one career counseling.** The program provides participants with one-on-one sessions to discuss career plans and offers participants assistance in writing their CVs. ACWICT maintains a database of these CVs as well.
- **Posting of job opportunities.** ACWICT informs program participants of job opportunities by sending out announcements via email and SMS.
- **Recommendations to employers.** The program also provides participants with letters of recommendation to various employers. Employers who contacted ACWICT for reference checks were also provided with information on participants in question.
- **Preparation of business plans.** Beneficiaries who took part in the entrepreneurship training were encouraged by ACWICT to prepare business plans and submit copies to the organization. The objective was for ACWICT to market the plans to microfinance institutions for possible funding support. A database of business plans submitted to ACWICT are kept on file for easy access to financiers and investors.
- **Incubation of new businesses.** The YEP program incubated twelve new and promising businesses by providing support services such as printing of publicity materials, Internet access, office space and telephone services.

The sections below present the results of the program, including descriptions of the target participant population, the outcome of the training, an assessment of the management of the program, and recommendations. The data analysis is focused on the total participant database as made available by the implementing agency, as well as an analysis of the specific data from the target cohort that was interviewed at the time of the evaluation (sample follow-up cohort).

C. SECTION III: METHODOLOGY

A. Sampling methodology

The evaluation selected to focus on a sample cohort for direct interviews. The choice of the target cohort was guided by the requirement for a post-training period of approximately six months in all countries at the time of the evaluation to account for sufficient time for placement, as well as sufficient time for the participants to apply what they had learned. For ACWICT, the participants in the sample follow-up cohort were trained by the 18th and 30th of April 2009 – cohorts 38 and 39. However, due to the challenges of maintaining current contact information and in reaching program graduates, cohorts 37 and 40, which completed their training as of June 2009, were included in the sample in order to reach the target number of interviews.

A total of 141 youth were registered to participate in the training during the timeframe noted above. Of the 141 registrants, 95 youth actually took part in the courses. Of the 95 youth, interviews were conducted with a total of 56 participants from the program (referred to as sample follow-up cohort in this report). Those who were not interviewed either had scheduling conflicts, were not in Nairobi, were unreachable, or unavailable.

It is important to note that the cohorts that were selected for the evaluation are in fact not a structured group and the youth beneficiaries who were interviewed were selected randomly. Baseline and exit forms from the organization's entire database of participants were used to draw comparisons between the sample follow-up cohort and overall participants. Therefore the results of this analysis are assumed to be representative of all the trained youth from the YEP program implemented by ACWICT.

B. Data collections tools

Document review

The evaluation was initiated by a review of various documentation and discussions with IYF and the implementing agency, ACWICT. The review provided the evaluation team with a better understanding of the program's objectives, and served to modify the sample questionnaire provided by IYF to address the specificities of each of the country and agency programs. The key documents that were reviewed for the Kenya ACWICT YEP include the following:

- Entra21 report;
- IYF quarterly "Africa Citizenship Project Status Reports" to Microsoft;
- ACWICT Project Proposal;
- ACWICT Project Description;
- Grant Agreement between Microsoft Community Affairs for West, East, Central Africa and Indian Ocean Islands and IYF;
- ACWICT Quarterly Reports to IYF.

Participant database

The program used an outcomes measurement system in which participants were surveyed at three points as they moved through the program — at baseline, at program completion, and approximately six months after completion of the program. IYF and ACWICT adapted the baseline and exit surveys to specific program/country circumstances based on tested models IYF developed in its *Entra21* program. Program participants complete a baseline survey upon entering the program and an exit survey upon

completion. Each survey includes the participant's unique identification number (assigned at baseline), personal and contact information, demographic and socioeconomic data, and self-assessments of participants' abilities in life skills. Capturing this data at baseline and exit enables the program to assess changes from a participant's entry into the program to the time of program completion. The information from both surveys is captured in a participant database created by IYF.

A sample of the contents of the participant database was reviewed against the forms which were filled out by participants (hard copies). Based on this assessment, the database was analyzed. The sections below detail the results of this analysis.

Participant questionnaire

The evaluation included face-to-face interviews with participants from the sample follow-up cohort from January 29 to February 2, 2010 at ACWICT's training center, using an adapted version of the validated and tested survey questionnaire from the Entra21 program. The objectives of the questionnaire were to assess the training and placement outcomes of the program, assess the outcomes of the program in terms of employment including work, internship, voluntary work, and entrepreneurship, as well as to gauge participants' overall perception of the program's achievements.

The questionnaire was structured as follows:

- Socio-demographic and background information about the participant;
- Quality of life;
- Educational attainment;
- Training outcomes;
- Employment profile;
- Perception of self;
- Evaluation of the program.

Employer questionnaire

Employers of program participants were also interviewed to gauge their perception of the program, and to assess the skills of program participants from their perspective. An employer questionnaire also based on the entra21 survey was used to this effect and addressed the following:

- General information about the employer organization;
- How the participant was recruited, mainly focusing on the mechanisms used to attract participants;
- The performance of the program participants who had interned or were employed within the organization;
- The willingness of the employer to continue and recruit participants from the program;
- Recommendations from the employer to strengthen the program.

The purpose is mainly to collect opinions and suggestions from the employers in regards to the performance of trainees or recruits and recommendations for the training center to improve the training. The employer questionnaires were administered both face-to-face and via telecommunications due to time constraints. Three employers were interviewed for the ACWICT program.

Focus group

In addition to the interviews with the participants, one focus group was held to gain further insights into the effects of the program on the participants, and gather participants' general impressions on the program, and potential areas of growth. Focus group participants were selected by FocusAfrica based on their level of engagement during individual interviews. The comments and findings from the focus group are highlighted throughout the report.

Meetings with key stakeholders

The evaluation included face-to-face meetings with ACWICT to understand their experiences, perspectives, and the challenges they faced in implementing the program, as well as areas of improvement and strengths. The team also met with Microsoft Kenya to understand their assessment of the program and gather recommendations on how it can be strengthened; their views on youth employment in Kenya; and Microsoft's current and potential role in improving employability of youth in Kenya.

C. Data capture and analysis approach

The data was captured using a commercial online database. The data capture phase included three levels of quality control: (1) a review of the completed questionnaires prior to data entry; (2) a cross check of the hardcopies with the data entered in the database before transposing the data onto Excel; and finally, (3) a gap analysis using a statistical analysis software after the data was transferred from the data capture software. The data analysis included two types of statistical analysis - univariate and bivariate descriptive analysis methods - as well as an analysis of correlations between two or more variables.

The sections below present the results of the program, including descriptions of the target participant population, the outcome of the training, an assessment of the implementation of the program, and recommendations. The data analysis is focused on the participant database, as well as specific data from the sample cohort that was interviewed.

D. SECTION V: GENERAL FINDINGS

The following section provides an in-depth analysis of the ACWICT participants who participated in the training program. This analysis is of the 1,105 students using the baseline and exit surveys, which were synthesized into a comprehensive database. As stated earlier, information in the database was verified by crosschecking it with participants' responses on hardcopy baseline and exit surveys filled out prior to and after the program respectively. The database provided by ACWICT proved to be analogous for this evaluation.

The findings on the 1,105 students are followed by an analysis of the 56 participants in the target follow-up cohort based on their responses to the evaluation questionnaire. The results are all based on the specific number of respondents (n), which varies across tables and graphics. Discussions held with employers, stakeholders, and the focus group are presented throughout the report.

A. Overall profile of program participants

Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

An analysis of ACWICT's entire database was made to determine the general characteristics of program participants including socio-demographic breakdown, age grouping, employment status, and area of residence. The table below outlines participants' socio-demographic profile.

Table 1: Socio-demographic distribution of program participants

Age group	%
[18 – 24]	79.70
[25 – 30]	14.20
[31– 35]	6.10
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>
Average age	24
Social status	%
Married	15.10
Single	83.70
Other	1.20
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>
Area of Residence	%
Urban	3.00
Suburban	96.90
Rural	0.01
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>

The socio-demographic makeup of the participants, as demonstrated by the table, shows that 79.70% of the program participants are between the ages of 18 and 25, while 14.20% are between the ages of 25 and 30. Only a small percentage of the programs participants fall between the ages of 31 and 35 (6.10%). Additionally, over 83% of program participants are single, as only 15.10% are married while 1.2% classify themselves as other.

In regards to participants' area of residence, over 96% of program participants reside in suburban areas while only 3% live in urban areas and 0% live in rural areas. These characteristics show that ACWICT was successful in enrolling its target population with regards to age and residence in an informal settlement.

Educational attainment

One of the main criteria to join the program pertains to the level of English language skills and literacy of participants. Table 2 provides a breakdown of participants' educational attainment using the information provided in ACWICT's main database.

Table 2: Educational level of all program participants based on baseline data

Highest level of education	%
Less than secondary school	5.00
Secondary school completed	75.40
Some university/tertiary institute studies	2.50
University/tertiary institute studies completed	17.10
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>

As the table shows, the educational attainment of participants is concentrated mainly within those that completed their secondary education. Indeed, 75.40% of participants completed secondary school while 5% had not completed secondary school; also 2.5% had some university or tertiary training while 17.1% completed their studies at the university or tertiary level. These characteristics show that ACWICT ensured that participants were within the program criteria to have a working knowledge of English and basic literacy skills.

Table 3: Employment status of program participants based on baseline data

Employment status at baseline (entire database population)	%
Unemployed	92.8
Employed	7.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>

The analysis of the entire database also reveals that 92.8% of program participants were not employed prior to the program, while 7.2% were employed, as displayed in Table 3. Although being unemployed is one of the criteria for being accepted into the program, it was not as stringently imposed as program administrators noted that some participants needed to work in order to provide for their families or have funds for transportation to and from the Center to attend the training sessions. Additionally, the program also aimed to help youth get better or more decent jobs, as compared to their current circumstances. Those employed before the program generally held petty jobs.

The analysis of the database also revealed that only 43.25% of program participants provided information on household salaries. Within the 43.25%:

- 22.59% of participant households earned between 500 Kenya Shillings and 5,000 Kenya Shillings per month;
- 53.35% of participant households earned between 5,000 Kenya Shillings and 10,000 Kenya Shillings per month;
- 16.94% of participant households earned between 10,000 Kenya Shillings and 20,000 Kenya Shillings per month;
- 7.12% of participant households earned over 20,000 Kenya Shillings per month.

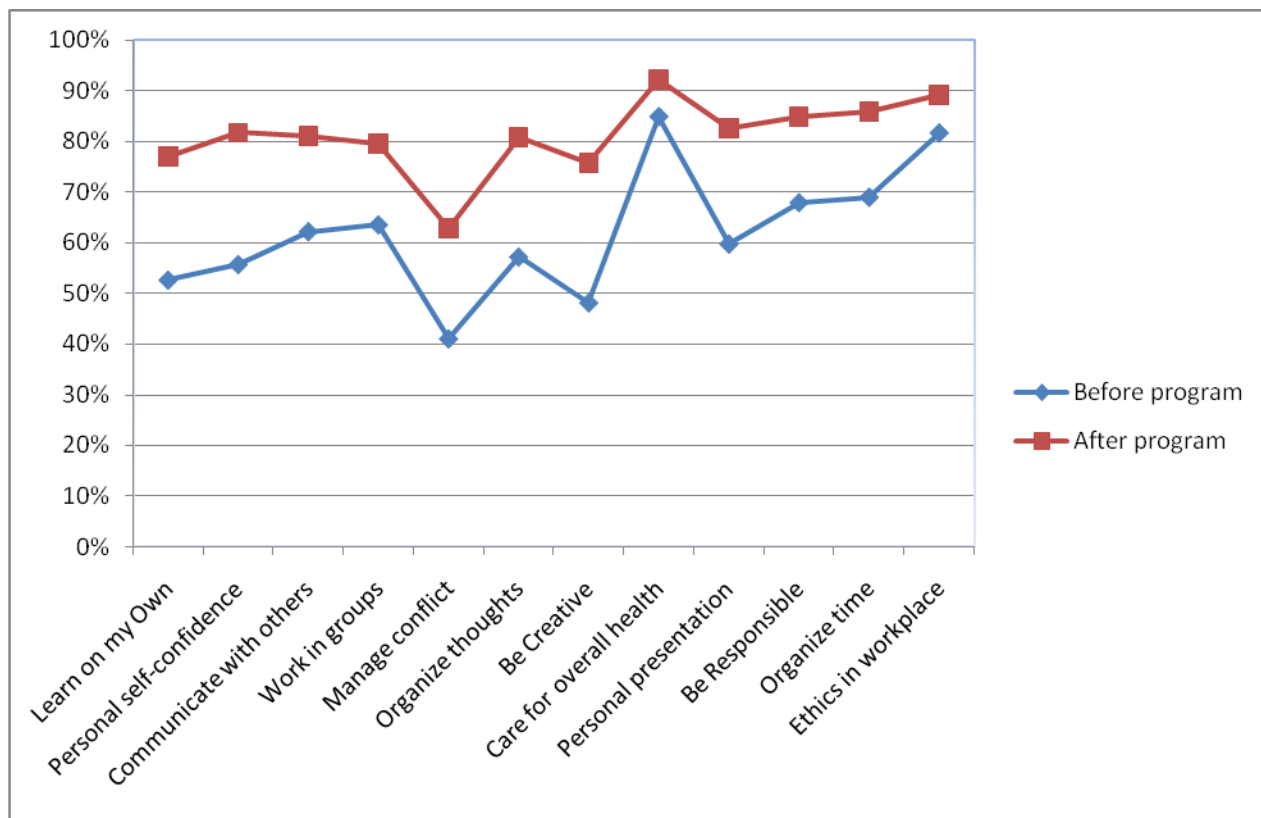
The minimum wage in Kenya, according to the Ministry of Labor, is 3,043 Kenya Shillings for an unskilled employee¹⁶, which, according to the Ministry, is the minimum amount needed for each person to live sufficiently in Nairobi. At an estimated average of four members per household, who would require 12,172 Kenya Shillings for the entire household to meet the minimum wage, most of the program participants would be considered to earn below the minimum wage.

Analysis of the outcomes of the program for participants

Participants completed baseline and exit surveys to assess their perceptions of themselves in specific life skills. For each program implemented by IYF and its partners (local nongovernmental organizations), a set of life skills are selected for the beneficiaries based on locally identified needs. Taking into consideration the subjective nature of self-assessments, the challenges associated with measuring skill changes include a lack of a control group which would provide for a comparative analysis along with a lack of measured behavioral changes of program participants. The self-assessments were, therefore, corroborated through employer interviews, participant anecdotes, and conversations with ACWICT’s management team. This increased the validity of the life skills data collected through the Program.

Graph 1 below presents the outcomes and changes in program participants’ perceptions of their life skills based on the baseline and exit surveys.

Graph 1: Evaluation of life skills of program population at baseline (before) and at exit (after the program)



Note: The percentages on the y-axis are the proportion of the evaluations that are evaluated as excellent and very good.

¹⁶ Government of Kenya Ministry of Labor 2009 Regulation Wage Order, minimum wage for unskilled workers in Nairobi. Minimum wage for skilled workers in Kenya are categorized by city, sector of activity, and occupation. The minimum wage for a junior clerk, for example, is 7,931 Kenya Shillings per month. For a telephone clerk or receptionist, it is over 9,000 Kenya Shillings per month.

In comparison to participants’ self-assessments of life skills prior to the program, there was a noteworthy improvement after the program. More specifically,

- Participant self-assessments after the program increased in all life skill attributes by an average of **19.1 percentage points**.
- The largest improvement in participants’ perceptions of themselves has been in the area of creativity. Participant self-assessments increased by **27.5 percentage points**.
- Personal self-confidence also increased dramatically by **26 percentage points**.
- The smallest increases in program participant self-assessments before and after the program have been in care for overall health and ethics in the workplace increasing by 7.2 and 7.3 percentage points respectively.

The statistical analysis of the same data reveals that there are in fact significant changes in participants’ perceptions of their life skills before (at baseline) and after the program (at exit). Table 4 below outlines the statistical changes in self-assessments of the program population.

Table 4: Statistical analysis of program population life skills assessments at baseline and at exit

Variable	p
Learn on my own	0.0000
Personal self-confidence	0.0000
Communicate with others	0.0000
Work in groups	0.0000
Manage conflict	0.0000
Organize thoughts	0.0000
Be creative	0.0000
Care for overall health	0.0002
Personal presentation	0.0000
Be responsible	0.0000
Organize time	0.0000
Ethics in workplace	0.0010

Note: Statistical analysis if $p \leq 0.05$ based on a marginal error of 5%.

The table shows that there are in fact significant statistical changes in participants’ self-assessments in life skills. The results from Graph 1 and Table 4 demonstrate the effects the YEP program has had on participants’ self-assessments, particularly with regards to creativity and personal self-confidence. Anecdotal evidence is also demonstrated in the comments participants shared with the evaluators, especially in regards to having more self-esteem and confidence in themselves.

B. Findings regarding the sample follow-up cohort

The interviews conducted with the 56 participants revealed a number of observations on how the program was able to affect participants. Focus group discussions also allowed participants to openly express themselves and provide insights on how they viewed the implementation of the program, the courses, placement services, and overall impressions of the program. Employers also contributed to the analysis in order to broaden the perceptions on the program and gather objective suggestions to render the training even more responsive to labor market demands. This section will mainly focus on the following points:

- Socio-demographic analysis;
- Quality of life;
- Placement analysis;
- Activities since training including employment status;
- Outcome of training on respondents;
- Quality of training;
- Participants’ perception of their future; and
- Employer feedback on the program.

Socio-demographic profile of the sample follow-up cohort

As stated in previous sections, the evaluation was conducted on cohorts 37 to 40, with 56 participants who were interviewed by the FocusAfrica evaluation team (referred to as the sample follow-up cohort). Of the 56 respondents, two did not complete their training program, resulting in a dropout rate of 3.57% within the sample follow-up cohort. The following table outlines the socio-demographic characteristics of the 56 interviewed participants that were trained by ACWICT.

Table 5: Socio-demographic description of sample follow-up cohort

Age group	Overall program participants	Sample follow-up cohort
	%	%
[18 - 20]	79.70	26.79
[21 -35]	14.20	71.43
[35 and above]	6.10	01.79
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>
Average age	24	23
Social Status	%	%
Single	83.70	91.07
Married	15.10	8.93
Other	1.20	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>
Area of Residence	%	%
Urban	3.00	42.59
Suburban	96.90	51.85
Rural	0.01	5.56
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>

As the table shows, 71.43% of the trained participants in the target cohorts fall between the ages of 21 and 35. Also, 26.79% of the participants are between the ages of 18 and 20, while 1.79% are over the age of 35. For the participants over the age of 35, they had registered for the training prior to reaching the age limit. The average age of the sample follow-up cohort is 23 years old, which is approximately the same as the average age of the overall program population (24 years old). The social status of the sample follow-up cohort is also comparable to the overall population as 91.07% of the participants in the sample follow-up cohort are single (83.70% for the overall participant population). The only notable difference between the overall program population and the sample follow-up cohort is in regards to the

area of residence: 51.85% of the sample follow-up cohort live in suburban areas (96.90% for the overall participant population), 42.59% live in urban areas (3.00% of the overall participant population), while 5.56% live in rural areas (0.01% of the overall participant population). This is mainly due to the fact that settlement areas are generally considered urban or suburban. Based on this consideration, the sample follow-up cohort is reflective of the residence areas of the overall participant population.

Overall, the age, marital status, and area of residence characteristics of the sample follow-up cohort are representative of the characteristics of the overall program participant population.

Educational attainment

Acceptance into ACWICT’s program requires a basic knowledge of English along with basic literacy skills to ensure that participant have the requisite level to grasp the contents of the training.

Table 6: Educational level of the sample follow-up cohort

Highest level of education	Overall program participants	Sample follow-up cohort
Less than secondary school	5.00	7.41
Secondary school completed	75.40	72.22
Some university/tertiary studies	2.50	16.67
University/tertiary institute studies completed	17.10	3.70
Total	100.00	100.00

The analysis of the sample follow-up cohort shows that the sample is representative of the entire program population. The characteristics of the sample show that:

- **7.41%** of the participants had less than secondary school, which is similar to the program population as displayed in Table 2 where 5% of the participants had less than a secondary education.
- **72.22%** of the participants had completed secondary school. This is also representative of the program population where 75.40% of the participants had completed secondary education:
- **16.67%** of the participants had some university or tertiary education, compared to 2.50% for the total program population.
- Only **3.70%** completed university training, compared to 17.10% for the total program population.

Those that had some university training were asked why they participated in ACWICT. They responded that they chose the program because they either were not computer literate before, which was a hindrance to their educational aspirations, or could not afford to pay for courses at the college or university level for the skills they wanted to acquire. Participants that had completed university training chose the ACWICT program because they wanted to strengthen their ICT skills and take part in the life skills courses. **Overall, the educational characteristics of the sample follow-up cohort are representative of the characteristics of all the program participants.**

Apart from YEP and formal education, 31.48% of the participants in the sample follow-up cohort received certificates from other training institutions or programs. The types of certificates participants received are mainly in HIV/AIDS, typing, first aid, and peer counseling.

Table 7: Employment status of the sample follow-up cohort at baseline

Employment status at baseline	Overall program population (%)	Sample follow-up cohort (%)
Unemployed	92.8	85.71
Employed	7.2	14.29
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>

In regards to the employment status of respondents at baseline, 85.71% were unemployed while 14.29% were employed. This is similar to the overall program population as the majority of the program participants were unemployed when beginning the program.

Quality of life

During the interviews, participants were also asked to provide information on their economic status including household income and household status. Table 8 below outlines the economic conditions of interviewed participants.

Table 8: Household information of the sample follow-up cohort

Household status	%
Head of household or spouse	16.07
Child	73.21
Extended family or other	10.71
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>
Average monthly income in Kenyan Shillings	%
2,000 to 10,000	46.34
10,000 to 20,000	34.15
20,000 or more	19.51
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>
People in household	%
[0 to 4]	35.19
[5 to 9]	57.41
[10 or more]	07.40
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>

“Coming from the slums, it’s hard for women to realize their potential and gain confidence. I was one of the lucky ones; I gained so much from ACWICT and want other women to know what I know. That is why I wanted to volunteer.”

As the table demonstrates, only **16.07%** of the participants are either the head of their household or a spouse, while **73.21%** classify themselves as a child within the household. These figures are reflective of the average age of participants, which is 23 years old.

The monthly income of participants is important to note in regards to understanding participants’ economic situation. As Table 8 demonstrates, **46.34%** of the households have a monthly income between 2,000 and 10,000 Kenya Shillings¹⁷, while **34.15%** bring in between 10,000 and 20,000 Kenyan Shillings per month. Additionally, **over 57%** of the participants live in households of 5 to 9 people. The minimum wage in Kenya, according to the Ministry of Labor, is 3,043 Kenyan Shillings for an unskilled employee¹⁸, as noted above. With a salary of 20,000 Kenyan Shillings per month providing for nine

¹⁷ Equivalent to USD 130.46 - USD 1 = 76.6500 Kenya Shillings as of March 15, 2010

¹⁸ Government of Kenya Ministry of Labor 2009 Regulation Wage Order, minimum wage for unskilled workers in Nairobi. Minimum wage for skilled workers in Kenya are categorized by city, sector of activity, and occupation. Looking at the minimum

people within a household, the average amount of Kenyan Shillings that is dedicated for each member of the household is 2,777 Kenyan Shillings per month. This is well below the required national minimum wage. The data shows that the majority of the participants in the sample follow-up cohort live below the national poverty line.

Box 1: Improvements in English Language Skills

During the interviews conducted with ACWICT participants, many of the students noted that though they had the minimum English language proficiency, their speaking and writing skills improved dramatically due to the training at ACWICT. Students noted this improvement was due to ACWICT’s open and encouraging learning environment that improved their self-esteem and gave them the confidence to strengthen their language skills.

Placement analysis

Under the YEP program, placement is defined according to the target placement outcomes set by the Microsoft-IYF Youth Empowerment Program agreement at the outset of the program. Placement includes participation in an internship, a job, self-employment (including enterprise creation), and voluntary community service, as the program sought to empower youth both in employability and employment outcomes as well as in youth engagement / productive activity following training. In addition, the YEP program sought to encourage further education and training as appropriate (based on youth needs and interests), so the evaluation has also assessed whether youth have continued their education or pursued further training following the program. The report therefore provides information both on these general placement outcomes and on specific placement outcomes, including detailed information on employment and self-employment outcomes.

Interviews with ACWICT participants focused on four cohorts as per the sampling methodology described in previous sections. The analysis below highlights overall placement along with the types of placement of participants.

Participant activities since the training

Participants were asked to describe their activities since the end of the program. Table 9 provides a breakdown of the percentage of participants who were placed since the end of training, while Table 10 outlines the types of activities participants were engaged in.

Table 9: Placement rate of participants in the sample follow-up cohort

Engaged in an activity since training (excluding continuing with their studies)	n	%
Yes	28	51.85
No	26	48.15
Total	54	100.00

As exhibited in the table, the evaluation of the sample follow-up cohort showed that **51.85% of respondents were employed or self-employed, or participated in an internship or community service**

wage for a junior clerk, for example, is 7,931 Kenyan Shillings per month. However, for a telephone clerk or receptionist is over 9,000 Kenyan Shillings per month.

after the training¹⁹. Participants who were engaged in an activity after the training stated they either participated in an internship, worked in a job or independently, or performed community service or, in many cases, a combination of these. In addition, a total of 14 respondents, or 25.93%, continued their studies after the training, including three respondents who worked at the same time. In total, 72.22% of the respondents were employed, self-employed, participated in an internship or community service, or continued their studies after the training.

The participants in the sample cohort (14 respondents) who continued with their studies stated that the training at ACWICT enabled them to not only have the technical capacity to go to school – meaning gaining proficiency in ICT to be able to write papers and produce tables for assignments, for example – but also to gain the courage to continue with their studies.

Table 10: Activities since the end of the training for participants in the sample follow-up cohort

Activity	<i>n</i>	%
Internship	2	5.13
Worked in a job	16	41.03
Volunteered	12	30.77
Worked independently	6	15.38

It must be noted that respondents did not engage in one single activity therefore the percentages in the table do not total to 100%. For example, some participants continued their studies while simultaneously working in a job or volunteering in their communities or a range of other activities.

As the table notes:

- **5.13%** of the participants participated in an internship.
- **41.03%** of the participants **worked in a job** while **15.38% worked independently**. These jobs, as noted by participants, were held after the training and not all were at the same job at the time of the evaluation. Of the 41.03% that worked in a job, 76% were still working in the same job at the time of the evaluation.
- **30.77%** of the participants volunteered.

As the table shows, **more participants “worked in a job” compared to the other activities**. Volunteering is also a major activity, as participants stated that they preferred to volunteer within their communities rather than being idle. Participants who volunteered in their communities also stated that they wanted to share with others the skills they acquired from ACWICT, particularly how to communicate with and relate to others, which they learned from the life skills courses.

Use of program placement services

Table 11 outlines the percentage of participants who used ACWICT’s placement services, which were not consistently provided to all participants due to budgetary constraints.

¹⁹ The placement rate is comprised of respondents who were engaged in an activity ‘after the training and before the evaluation’ and ‘at the time of the evaluation’. If a participant was employed after the training and before the evaluation and was also employed at the time of the evaluation, he or she was counted only once. Participants who continued with their studies ‘after the training and before the evaluation’ and ‘at the time of the evaluation’ are not included in the placement rate.

Table 11: Use of placement services by the sample follow-up cohort

Use of placement services	%
No	75.93
Yes	24.07
Total	100.00
Rating of placement services	
Excellent	7.69
Good	92.31
Average	0.00
Worse than average	0.00
Bad	0.00
Total	100.00

“I am now at the university because of ACWICT and the skills I learnt here are helping me in doing my assignments. I am now able to use the computer to my advantage.”

The table shows that the placement services provided by the program were not used by many participants. Only 24.07% of the participants interviewed used the program’s placement services while 75.9% did not. Of those that did, 92.31% rated the services as good while 7.69% rated them as excellent.

Within the 75.93% that did not use the placement services, 65.85% stated that they did not use the services because there was not enough information on how to access the services; 2.4% stated that they did not use the services because they were studying, while 9.76% did not use the services because they were either waiting for the program to contact them or assumed they would have to pay for the services.

It is important to note that out of the 24.07% who used the placement services, 46% did not become gainfully employed. The analysis did not find a significant statistical correlation between participants who used the placement services and being gainfully employed.

Employment analysis

Interviewed participants were asked to classify their work status at the time of the follow-up evaluation. Table 12 below outlines the work status of the sample follow-up cohort.

Table 12: Sample follow-up cohort’s work status at the time of the evaluation

Employment status	n	%
Working	14	25.93
Not working	40	74.07
Total	54	100.00
Reasons why not currently working		%
No openings in occupational field	2	5.00
Employers are asking for more experience/skills	15	37.50
Has not found a job that interests her	2	5.00
Caring for children	1	2.50
Has submitted application forms and is awaiting outcomes	7	17.50
Other reasons	4	10.00
Currently in school	9	22.50
Total	40	100.00

As the table shows, **74.07%** of the participants were not working while **25.93%** were working at the time of the evaluation. In comparison to respondents' employment status at baseline (before the program), 85.71% were not working while 14.29% were working. With over an 11 percentage point increase in the percentage of respondents working at the time of the evaluation compared to before the program, this shows that the YEP contributed to improving the employment status of its beneficiaries. Those not employed at the time of the evaluation were asked the reasons why they were not employed:

- **37.5%** stated that employers are asking for more skills or experience than the applicants had.
- **22.50%** were not working because they were in school. These respondents stated that they preferred to focus their efforts on their education and will look for a job once they complete their studies.
- **17.5%** had submitted applications to various employers and were awaiting outcomes, but continued to search for employment.
- Only **5%** of the applicants were unable to find jobs that interested them or found no openings in their occupational fields.
- **2%** of the participants were caring for children.

The participants who stated employers were asking for more skills or experience than they had were asked to elaborate on the types of skills employers were looking for. Participants responded that they are in need of more technical skills now that they have the soft skills necessary to work such as time management, personal confidence, communication skills, and how to relate to others, which they acquired from the life skills training. The additional skills which participants identified as necessary to finding a job include: additional ICT skills other than basic computer skills, in-depth training in computer applications such as Microsoft Office, and deeper training in entrepreneurship including accounting, marketing, and secretarial skills. Participants noted that although they received basic training in these topics, it has not been enough for them to secure a job. It must be noted that although the entrepreneurship training was optional for participants, 51 out of the 54 participants in the sample follow-up cohort participated in both the ICT *and* entrepreneurship training.

Despite participants' optimism about finding jobs in the future, there are underlying issues as to why placement has been difficult for some participants, particularly when viewed in the sphere of the challenges currently facing Kenyan youth today. These challenges may include:

- ***A high unemployment rate for youth between 18 and 35 years of age*** – statistically, the unemployment rate is much higher for Kenyan youth compared to the rest of the population. With over 2.5 million youth classified as unemployed and with an additional 400,000 from training institutions around the country who are not being absorbed into the labor market, participants are faced with the daunting task of competing with their peers that in many cases have some of the technical skills required by employers but no job opportunities, as explained by respondents in the sample follow-up cohort;
- ***Lack of knowledge on how to follow through*** – participants stated that although they have business ideas and are equipped with the skills on how to write a business plan, there continues to be a lack of knowledge on how to follow through to the next level. As such, the number of enterprises created by participants in the sample follow-up cohort has been minimal. Moreover, participants are not entirely familiar with how to access financial opportunities;
- ***Lack of opportunities created through the organization*** – participants in the focus group stated that ACWICT should provide more placement support. Participants suggest that ACWICT should make more consistent efforts in using its existing partnerships to create more opportunities for

students. This may be partly attributable to budgetary issues to be able to strengthen the program’s placement services.

Working participants

The participants who were gainfully employed at the time of the follow-up evaluation were asked to classify their current work status. Table 13 below outlines the types of positions held by interviewed participants.

Table 13: Employment status of participants in the sample follow-up cohort at the time of the evaluation

Position	n	%
Self-employed	5	35.71
Employee	9	64.29
Total	14	100

As the table demonstrates, **out of the 25.93% working participants, 35.71% were self-employed while 64.29% were employees working for someone else.** Within the 64.29% that are employees, 11.11% stated they held permanent staff positions while 88.89% stated they worked in temporary and fixed duration positions, or ‘whenever they are needed’ as explained by participants. This figure is a direct reflection of the realities within Kenya’s employment market. Only 1.2 million people are employed in the formal sector²⁰, whereas 6.4 million people are primarily employed in the informal sector. Considering the employment trends in Kenya, the employment breakdown of participants primarily in temporary or occasional employment is reflective of the local environment.

Along with job placement of participants, the evaluation also analyzed the quality of jobs participants were able to obtain after the training. The quality of jobs is measured by participants’ salaries, and the types of employee benefits received by participants. Table 14 gives a breakdown of respondents’ salary ranges.

Table 14: Salaries of employed participants in the sample follow-up cohort

Salaries of respondents	n	%
2,000 – 6,000	8	60
6,001 – 10,000	3	20
10,001 and more	3	20
Total	14	100
Average salary	8,200 Kenyan Shillings	

As the table indicates, 60% of the employed respondents in the sample follow-up cohort earned between 2,000 and 6,000 Kenyan Shillings per month, while 20% earned between 6,001 and 10,000 Kenyan Shillings per month, and 20% earned 10,001 Kenyan Shillings per month and more. The average monthly salary of participants is 8,200 Kenyan Shillings²¹. It is important to note that these incomes revealed that participants are on average earning almost three times more than the national minimum wage (3,043 Kenyan Shillings); and indicates that the program may have helped improve the living conditions of its beneficiaries.

²⁰ US Department of State, Kenya Overview on Economy

²¹ Equivalent to USD \$106.97; USD\$1 equals 1 USD = 76.65 KES as of March 15 2010

Along with salaries, the types of employee benefits received by participants are an indication of the quality of jobs they hold. Table 15 outlines the types of benefits received by participants who work.

Table 15: Employment benefits or bonuses of employed participants in the follow-up sample cohort

Benefits or bonuses	<i>n</i>	%
No benefits or bonuses	1	77.78
Vacation	7	11.11
Health insurance	1	11.11
<i>Total</i>	9	100.00

As highlighted in the table, **77.78%** of the participants receive no benefits or bonuses from their employers. In contrast, **11.11%** of the employed participants received vacation and the same percentage receive health insurance. Participants that did receive some form of employee benefits are only those that had secured full-time positions with an employer.

Table 16: Job satisfaction of employed participants in the sample follow-up cohort

Are you satisfied with your current position?	<i>n</i>	%
Yes	5	55.56
No	4	44.44
<i>Total</i>	9	100.00

The evaluation revealed that **55.56% of the participants who were employed at the time of the follow-up evaluation stated that they were satisfied with their current position.** Some participants stated that the reason why they were satisfied with their jobs was because they had the ability to use the skills they acquired from ACWICT. Some participants also stated that they were happy in their jobs for the simple reason that they had a job and were not sitting idle at home. The **44.44%** participants who responded that they were not satisfied with their current position stated this was primarily due to their pay which does not meet their personal needs.

Self-employed participants

As noted in **Table 13** above, **35.71%** of currently employed participants are self-employed. Of the 35.71% participants who are self-employed (a total of five participants from the sample follow-up cohort), only one had registered her business with the Chamber of Commerce. Additionally,

- Four of the five participants are involved in trade or commerce while one has her business classified under the services sector.
- One participant received a loan of 45,000 Kenyan Shillings to start her business.
- Two of the participants stated they set up their businesses with help from someone who knew about their business idea while one received training on the topic and purchased materials and supplies to start her business. One of the participants who had her own business did not provide information on how she set it up.
- Participants created their businesses on average 3.8 months *after* the training program.

The two participants who responded that they received training or help from someone who knew about their business idea stated that it was due to the training they received from ACWICT, which allowed them to begin their business. Participants noted that knowing how to write a business plan with a

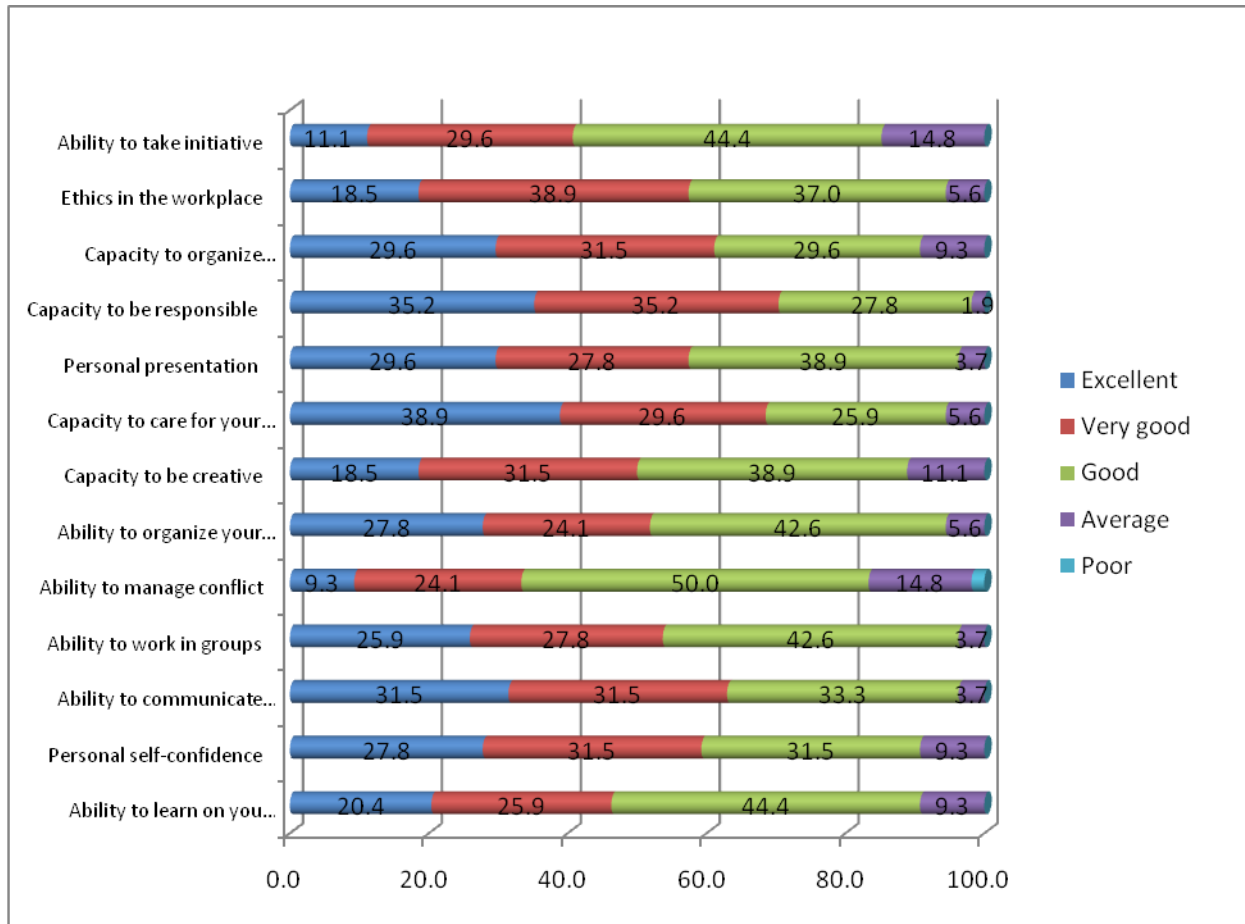
financial plan was key in setting up their enterprises, skills which were acquired through the YEP program.

Program’s effect on participants’ perceptions of their life skills

The YEP program implemented by ACWICT was designed to equip participants with skills that would increase their employability in the labor market. These skills also include soft skills such as communicating with others, personal confidence, and time management. As mentioned above, taking into consideration the subjective nature of self-assessments, the challenges associated with measuring life skill changes include a lack of a control group which would provide for a quantifiable analysis along with a lack of measured behavioral changes of program participants. The self-assessments were, therefore, corroborated through employer interviews, participant anecdotes, and conversations with ACWICT’s management team. This increased the validity of the life skills data collected through the Program.

Graph 2 outlines the perceptions on their life skills of participants in the sample follow-up cohort during the evaluation.

Graph 2: Life skills self-assessment of sample follow-up cohort at the time of the evaluation



The analysis of this graph shows that at least **90%** of the participants rated themselves as good or higher in 10 out of the 13 attributes listed above. Additionally:

- 68.5% of the participants rated themselves as excellent or very good in caring for their overall and reproductive health. Although there isn't a significant statistical change in the sample follow-up cohort's perception of their life skills in this area, *the effect on participants is important to note as many of the women in the focus group spoke extensively of peer pressure, particularly in regards to their sexuality and unplanned pregnancies. Focus group participants stated that through the life skills training, they learned how to adequately calculate their menstrual cycles.*
- 64.8% of the participants rated themselves as excellent or very good in their capacity to be responsible. Participants' comments regarding being more responsible for their own lives is reflected in their appreciation of the program, and how they learned to take charge of their own lives. Participants stated:

'The program helped me to gain confidence in myself and to move from the dark places I was into a better place. I now know how to rely on myself.'

'I now know that I can depend on myself to do anything.'

'The training taught me not to just rely on a job for employment but on myself and my skills to find that job and do well in it. I know how to take care of myself now.'

- 63% rated themselves as excellent or very good in communicating with others. Again, this is an important attribute in terms of life skills development and confidence as many of the participants talked about the importance of finally having a **voice** and having learned how to use it properly. This includes being able to express oneself, listen openly, and communicate one's ideas coherently to others.
- Only 1.9% rated themselves poorly in managing conflict.

This graph shows that the young women's perceptions of themselves in regards to life skills is strong with regard to self-confidence and motivation to search for jobs. It is important to note that **70%** of the participants stated that the life skills training helped them the most in their self-improvement. This figure also resonates with the comments made during the focus group, where participants also stated that the life skills courses helped them the most but also gave them the courage and confidence to excel in the other courses.

Further analysis of the effects of the life skills training on the participants is demonstrated in their perception of themselves before and after the program. Graph 3 below outlines participants' perception of themselves at baseline (before the program), at exit (after the training), and also at follow-up (during the evaluation).

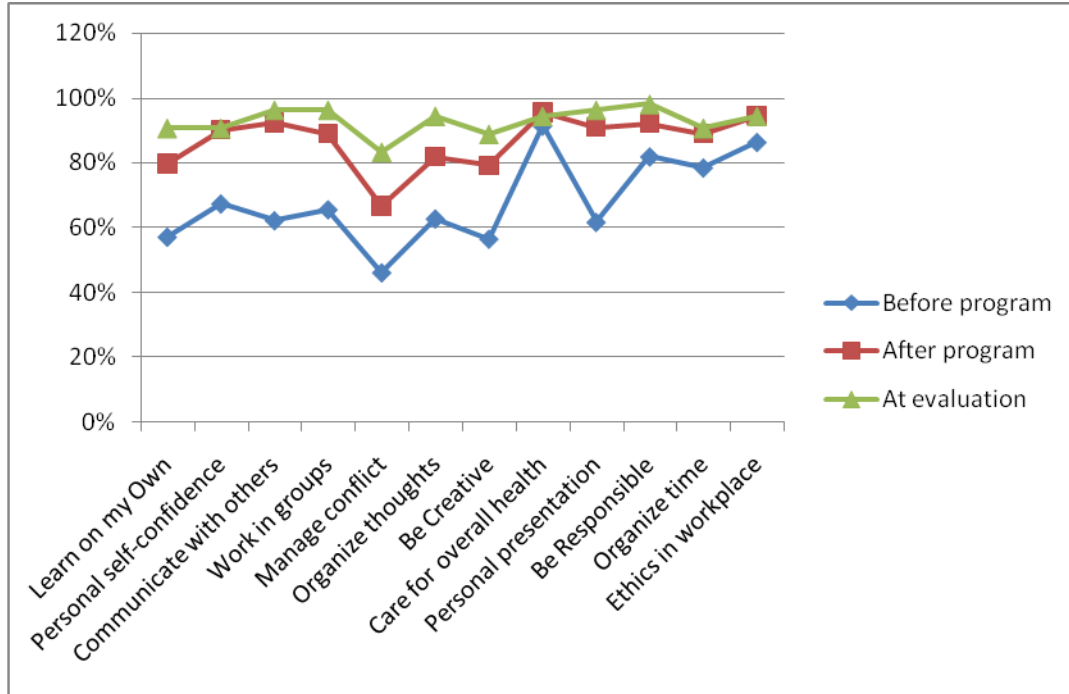
As the graph demonstrates, participants' self-confidence has increased dramatically from the start of the program to the end of the training. The data below confirms that the program has had a positive effect on participants, particularly in regards to improving their self-confidence. Overall, participants' assessments of themselves increased by an average of 24.76 percentage points from the start of the program (at baseline) compared to the self-assessment during the follow-up (at evaluation). Additional outcomes include:

- Participants' ratings of their ability to organize their thoughts increased by 33.60 percentage points;
- Personal presentation also saw a dramatic increase of 34.9 percentage points;

- Participants also increased their assessment of their personal presentation by 34.59 percentage points.

‘The life skills training gave me courage and more confidence in myself. I now know how to relate better to others.’ – Focus group participant

Graph 3: Self-assessment of life skills at baseline, exit, and evaluation for the sample follow-up cohort



Note: The percentages on the Y-axis are the proportion of the evaluations that are evaluated as excellent and very good.

Table 17 below outlines the statistical significance of changes in the sample follow-up cohort’s self-assessments of life skills using baseline information and assessments during the follow-up evaluation.

Table 17: Statistical analysis of the sample follow-up cohort life skills assessment at baseline and at follow-up evaluation

Variable	Probability
Learn on my own	0.0009*
Personal self-confidence	0.0000*
Communicate with others	0.0000*
Work in groups	0.0001*
Manage conflict	0.0013*
Organize thoughts	0.0149*
Be creative	0.0003*
Care for overall health	0.0958
Personal presentation	0.0000*
Be responsible	0.0200*
Organize time	0.0490*
Ethics in workplace	0.1669

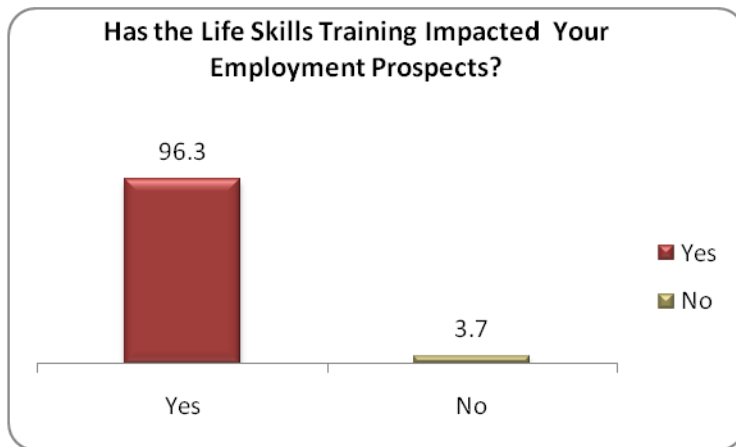
*Note: Statistical significance if $p \leq 0.05$ based on a marginal error of 5%.

As the table demonstrates, there is a significant statistical change in 10 out of 12 life skills attributes. These changes are particularly present in participants’ personal self-confidence, ability to communicate with others, and personal presentation. This analysis indicates that the program has contributed to a positive effect on the self-assessments of life skills of the respondents in the sample follow-up cohort.

Effects of life skills training on employment prospects

Interviewee responses on whether they believe that the life skills training has had an effect on their *employment prospects* further support the program’s positive outcomes for participants, particularly the life skills training. Graph 4 provides the results of this question, to which there were 54 respondents.

Graph 4: Effects of the life skills training on sample follow-up cohort’s perceptions of their employment prospects



The graph shows that **96.30% of the participants believed that the life skills training had a positive outcome relative to their employment prospects, while 3.7% of the participants did not believe they were affected by the life skills training.** Those that replied they were not affected by the training stated that they were already familiar with how to relate to other people, communicate with others, and present themselves during interviews.

The 96.3% who stated that their employment prospects were affected by the life skills training stated that it helped them better interact with and relate to other people, better present themselves especially during interviews, and more importantly, it increased their confidence and self-esteem. Focus group participants also noted that the life skills training empowered them to the extent that they *‘now realize that they can do much more in their lives and that they have more respect within themselves and can face life’*.

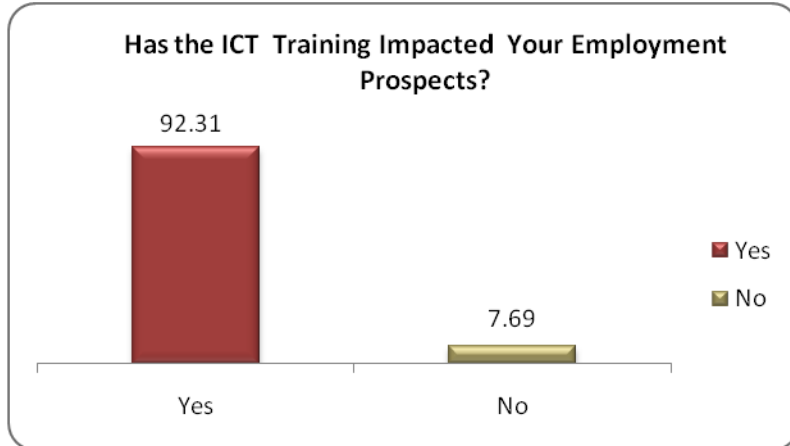
Anecdotes provided by participants also reveal that there has been an emotional outcome on participants that is not captured in statistical analysis. This emotional outcome is evident based on participants’ expressed gratitude for the program and its administrators, and their patience with and support provided to the students, along with the friendships participants have established through the program.

“The life skills training taught me that the way you see yourself is how people see you. I used to see myself as worthless. But now, I know how to present myself better and now have the motivation not to give up on life.”

Effects of ICT skills training on employment prospects

Participants were also asked whether the ICT training has had an effect on their employment prospects. Graph 5 provides the results of this question, to which there were 52 respondents.

Graph 5: Effects of the ICT training on sample follow-up cohort’s perceptions of their employment prospects



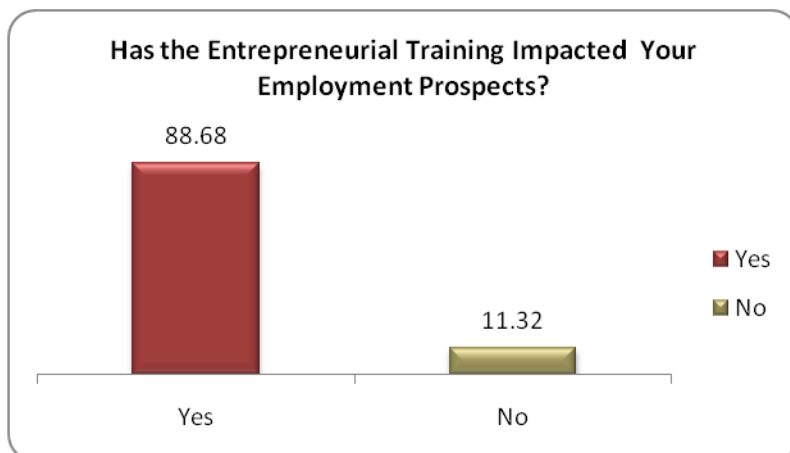
As shown in the graph, **92.31% of the participants stated that the ICT training has had an effect on their employment prospects** while 7.69% felt that the ICT training did not affect their employment prospects. Those who believed they were not affected stated that they had not yet found a job that had allowed them to use their ICT skills. However, these participants stated that they were still optimistic and believed they would find employment soon.

The 92.31% that were affected by the ICT training stated that it was because they had acquired valuable skills. Participants stated that *'the emerging world is using computers and we can now relate to them more'*. Participants also stated that as a result of the ICT training, they had become computer literate and could confidently apply for jobs with more companies in Nairobi.

Effects of entrepreneurship skills training on employment prospects

In regards to the entrepreneurship training, participants were also asked whether they had been affected by it. Graph 6 provides the results of this question, to which there were 53 respondents.

Graph 6: Effects of the entrepreneurship training on sample follow-up cohort’s perceptions of their employment prospects



With regards to the entrepreneurship training, **88.68% of the participants in the sample follow-up cohort believe the training has positively impacted their employment prospects.** As compared to the life skills and ICT training, there were more participants who believed their employment prospects were not affected by the entrepreneurship training (**11.32%** of the participants). Those who were not affected stated they were either not interested in business or entrepreneurship or they simply had not had an opportunity to apply what they had learned from the training. Participants that were affected by the entrepreneurship training stated that they had more options for employment as a result of having learned how to create their own business plan. Focus group participants confirmed this sentiment by stating that the most important skill they learned from the entrepreneurship training was that *'you can transform your ideas into a business by starting small and following a good business plan.'*

Self-assessments of skills at follow-up evaluation

During the evaluation, participants in the sample follow-up cohort were also asked to rate their technical skills in ICT and entrepreneurship. Table 18 below shows how participants rate themselves in their ICT skills as a result of the training they received.

Table 18: Sample follow-up cohort’s self-assessments of ICT skills at follow-up evaluation

In %	Computer	Web design	Internet	Digital Media	Word Processing	Presentation	Database	Spreadsheets
Excellent	13.46	5.77	13.46	5.77	25.00	21.15	7.69	11.54
Very good	21.15	46.15	28.85	7.69	34.62	23.08	32.69	26.92
Good	51.92	40.38	42.31	32.69	30.77	48.08	48.08	42.31
Average	13.46	7.69	15.38	28.85	7.69	5.77	11.54	15.38
Poor	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	1.92	1.92	0.00	3.85
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

As the table shows, participants’ perceptions of their ICT skills demonstrate a level of comfort in using the skills they acquired at the Center. Moreover:

- **59.62%** of the respondents rated themselves as excellent or very good in their word processing skills.
- **51.92%** of the respondents rated themselves as excellent or very good in their ability to design websites. As noted by focus group participants, this is in part due to the fact that it was an area that was very new to participants. Respondents noted that they are much more comfortable with web designing after the program compared to before starting the program;
- Participants also noted that they were more comfortable using a computer in general, though many did not feel they have advanced ICT skills relative to market and employer needs. This is reflective in their self-assessments, where 51% of the respondents rated their use of computers as good;
- **25%** of the participants rated themselves poorly on digital media. This, as stated by the participants, is mainly due to the fact that those who were new to computers were trained in basic computing and did not have the opportunity to delve deeply into more complex applications such as digital media.
- Participants also noted that they were comfortable with their ability to use the Internet. More than **84%** of the participants rated themselves fairly highly in this ability.

Participants’ perceptions of their entrepreneurial skills acquired through the training are also fairly high. The table below outlines their self-ratings in various entrepreneurial skills.

Table 19: Sample follow-up cohort’s self-assessments in entrepreneurship skills at follow-up evaluation

In %	How to develop a business plan	Record keeping for small businesses	Roles of an entrepreneur	Communication skills	Characteristics of business opportunities
Excellent	13.21	18.87	22.64	37.74	16.98
Very good	32.08	33.96	33.96	32.08	33.96
Good	50.94	43.40	35.85	30.19	35.85
Average	1.89	3.77	7.55	0.00	13.21
Poor	1.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>

As the table demonstrates, **69.82%** of the participants view their ability to communicate as a strong skill they have acquired. As noted in Graph 4, **63%** of the participants rated themselves as excellent or very good in communicating with others from the life skills training. Additionally, only **3.78%** rated themselves poorly or average in how to develop a business plan. This rating is reflective of the participants who stated they were not affected by the entrepreneurship training (Graph 7) because they were not interested in starting their own enterprise.

Participants’ perception of their future and quality of life

During the follow-up evaluation, participants were asked to rate their perception of their future after the training in comparison to their perception of their future before they started the YEP program at ACWICT. Table 20 summarizes the feedback from this question.

Table 20: Sample follow-up cohort’s perception of future for themselves and their families

Rating	<i>n</i>	How the future will be for participants and families in %
Better	53	98.15
Worse	1	1.85
The same	0	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>100</i>

The analysis shows that all but one of the respondents see a better future for themselves after the training as compared to before they stated the training program. Indeed, **98.15%** believe that their future will be better after the program. This opinion was also confirmed by focus group participants who noted that before the program, they were not hopeful of their futures. However, after the program, they believe that their lives will be better as a result of the skills they acquired through ACWICT. One respondent believed her future would be worse after the training compared to before the training, but did not specify the reason.

Table 21: Perception of quality of life between employed and non-employed participants in the sample follow-up cohort

Compared to when you started the training program, how would you now rate the quality of your life?	Currently employed (%)	Not employed (%)	Aggregate (%)
Much better	64.29	77.50	74.07
Better	35.71	22.50	25.93
The same	0.00	0.00	0.00
Worse	0.00	0.00	0.00
Much worse	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>

Also, a parallel was drawn between participants who are currently employed and participants who are not employed. It was expected that a higher number of participants who are employed would rate the quality of their life much better than those that are not working. However, the analysis reveals that non-employed participants actually rate the quality of their life higher compared to employed participants. As noted in Table 21, **77.50%** non-employed participants stated that they believe the quality of their life is much better compared to **64.29%** for employed participants. Non-employed participants believed the quality of their life is better because they finally had tangible skills that made them employable. Participants stated that before the program, they believed their future was not promising. However, because of the training, they have something to look forward to and they are confident they will find jobs because of the skills they have acquired through the ACWICT training.

Quality of training

As a measure to analyze the quality of the YEP Program, participants were asked to rate the individual courses along with certain aspects of the quality of the training as a whole. Table 22 below outlines participants’ ratings of the ICT, entrepreneurship, and life skills training courses.

Table 22: Sample follow-up cohort’s ratings of individual programs

In %	ICT training	Entrepreneurship training	Life skills training
Excellent	32.69	43.40	31.48
Very good	63.46	54.72	66.67
Average	1.92	1.89	1.85
Poor	1.92	0.00	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>

As the table demonstrates, **43.4%** of the participants rated the entrepreneurship training as excellent while **32.69%** rated the ICT training as excellent, and **31.48%** gave the life skills training an excellent rating. Additionally, 1.92% of the participants rated the ICT training as poor while the same percentage of respondents gave the ICT training a rating of average. This is because some respondents believed that the ICT training only gave them a general background on computing and did not provide them with sufficient skills to find a job.

The life skills training received the highest rating out of the three courses. Indeed, **98.15%** of the participants rated the life skills training as very good or higher. This is because of the emotional outcome that the life skills training has had on participants, which is due primarily to the soft skills they were able to acquire during the training, particularly how to present oneself and talk to people. Many of the women interviewed stated that before the program, they were not very sure of themselves and

admittedly had very low self-esteem due to their negative surroundings, economic situation, and gloomy perspective of the future. The life skills training, as described by the focus group, gave the women a platform to exchange their stories, appreciate each other’s lives, and learn from one another’s experiences.

Participants were also asked to rate the quality of the teaching tools used during the training courses. Table 23 gives a breakdown of the ratings of the materials such as workbooks, instructions, exercises, methodology (such as combination of lecture and group exercises), and the teaching quality.

Table 23: Sample follow-up cohort’s ratings of tools used during the training

Rating	The materials	The rules and regulations	The exercises	The methodology	The teaching quality
Excellent	35.19	24.07	27.78	29.63	38.89
Very good	40.74	57.41	51.85	46.30	37.04
Good	18.52	18.52	16.67	14.81	20.37
Average	5.56	0.00	3.70	9.26	3.70
Poor	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>	<i>100.00</i>

As the table demonstrates, there is a strong appreciation for the tools used during the training, particularly:

- 79.93% of the sample follow-up cohort rated the teaching quality as excellent or very good while 20.37% rated it as good;
- 78.48% of the sample follow-up cohort rated the rules and regulations as excellent or very good stating that ACWICT was very thorough in explaining what the expectations were of students.

Only 5.56% of the participants scored the materials as average, stating that some of the computers were becoming outdated, hence the rating. Also, 9.26% of the participants rated the methodology as average stating that some of the training was, in their view, a bit rushed, preventing them from fully grasping some of the technical aspects of the courses. Overall, participants were content with the materials used as there are no participants that rated the materials as poor.

Participants were also asked to comment on the duration of the entire training program. Table 24 below outlines participants’ ratings on the length of the training program.

Table 24: Sample follow-up cohort’s ratings of training duration

Training duration	<i>n</i>	%
Too long	0	0.00
The right duration	31	57.41
Not long enough	23	42.59
<i>Total</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>100.00</i>

As the table shows, the majority of the participants believed that the training was just the right duration (57.41%). However, 42.59% of them stated that they would have liked more training, particularly in ICT and entrepreneurship. For the ICT courses, participants stated they were taught basic computer skills, which, in their opinion, have not been enough to become gainfully employed. Focus group participants stressed this opinion by stating that it was the first time that many were seeing or using a computer. An extra month of training would have allowed them the time to be more familiar with computers and how

to use them. More importantly, participants stated that employers do not have confidence in people who have only done a few weeks of ICT training, particularly when compared to applicants from other programs who have had training for several months.

Participants also believe that the entrepreneurial training did not allow them enough time to fully grasp how to translate a business idea or plan into an income-generating activity. The women stated that though they are now equipped with the skills to come up with a business idea and prepare a business plan, they do not fully know how or where to locate financing for the plan nor how to actually run a business. *Furthermore, students stated that many of their ideas for starting a business were primarily developed in life skills courses as they were given the opportunity to share with each other different ideas to advance their lives.* In their opinion, these ideas did not flourish because the entrepreneurship courses concentrated mainly on how to develop a business plan.

Despite the short duration of the program, participants’ overall ratings of the Youth Empowerment Program have been positive. Table 25 below summarizes the evaluation of the quality of the training by program participants.

Table 25: Sample follow-up cohort’s overall ratings of the training

Training in general	n	%
Excellent	15	27.78
Good	37	68.52
Average	2	3.70
Worse than average	0	0.00
Bad	0	0.00
Total	54	100.00

Overall, 96.30% of the participants gave the training a high rating: 27.78% of the respondents in the sample follow-up cohort rated the overall training as excellent while 68.52% rated it as good. Only 3.7% of the participants gave the program an average rating.

This opinion is also reaffirmed in participants’ responses to whether they would recommend the program to other youth. All, or **100%, of the participants who were interviewed stated that they would definitely recommend the program to other youth without any reservations.** Participants stated that they would recommend the program to other youth because it has changed their lives and they would want others to learn how to change their lives as well. Overall, the feedback received by participants is that the program has been an important stepping stone for them and has changed their lives, opening them to the enormous possibilities they have yet to grab.

Employers' feedback on the program

Many of the participants did not want the evaluation team to meet with their employer due to fears of being reprimanded. Many of the participants that secured jobs also stated that their employers were not aware of the program, and that they did not find the job through ACWICT.

Of the three employers met by the evaluation team, only one was fairly familiar with the program. One was not very well informed and had heard about the program when they had first interviewed the participant for their job. The other employer only heard of the program when evaluators called him for an interview.

Despite the employers' lack of knowledge of the program, they were eager to give feedback primarily due to the fact that there were notable differences between the employees who participated in the program and those who did not. Two of the employers stated that compared to their other employees, participants from the program generally performed better at their jobs. Two of the employers marked participants' life skills very highly, particularly in motivation, interpersonal communication, and ability to learn. Each of the employers rated their respective employees highly in life skills and various basic skills, while office and ICT skills varied from employee to employee.

All of the employers stated that the program should be advertised more to potential employers. One employer who was fairly familiar with the program suggested partnerships be formed with potential employers so that they are more aware of the program and provide support in terms of employment for their students. The employer also stated that although it is good to provide the young women with basic ICT skills, it is not enough: the center needs to look at labor demands and *'train students on those necessary skills for the labor market'*.

Although there are varying views on employees' potential for professional advancement, all of the employers interviewed responded positively when asked if they would hire other young people trained by the program in the future.

Box 3: Spotlight on life skills training

Interviews held with the participants revealed that though the life skills training has had a tremendous positive effect on their employment prospects, the emotional outcome was even greater. This outcome has been in the form of empowering women to realize the strengths within themselves, providing them the opportunity to learn more about themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, and that their lives do have meaning. These realizations, as expressed by the women, have improved their general views on life, made them cognizant of the negative mentality they were living in, and have, in their words, empowered them to respect themselves as strong women who have finally come to the realization that they are sitting on a treasure that has yet to be opened: themselves.

E. SECTION VI: OBSERVATIONS ON PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

General observations concern the program’s implementation in regards to the selection and recruitment strategies, the program’s visibility, as well as on the follow up on participants after the training. These are detailed below:

- **Positive support from the administration** - Focus group participants noted that one of the most important aspects of the training is the support they received from the administration of ACWICT. This support ranged from financial support for participants who received funds for transportation to and from the center to emotional support in which the administration took the time to talk to participants about their advancement in their courses.
- **Visibility of the program.** Participants in the focus group noted that they first learned of the program through friends who were in the program or through others who were familiar with the center through other programs. According to the focus group participants and some of the interviewees, the program is not very well known by the population. Participants stressed a need to reach out more to youth within the informal settlement areas of Nairobi by using graduates to spread the word about the program. Participants’ suggestion to reach out to more students was in line with the belief that the program helped them tremendously and they wanted to see it help other young women. It was also suggested that participants be used as marketers for the program; this would be a form of employment particularly for those that are unable to find jobs.

Despite these opinions, ACWICT has in actuality been able to reach 92% of their target number of youth to train. The center would have most likely reached its target had the violence of the 2007 presidential elections not caused disruption. The administration has been successful in effectively advertising the program enough to reach a large number of youth. However, the visibility of the program needs to be extended to employers to share the benefits of the program. ACWICT should develop a more substantial and practical advertising strategy towards employers for the benefit of program participants – this would include low-cost strategies such as leveraging their partnerships and tapping into the alumni, reaching out to potential employers through networking and referring to alumni’s employers for potential contacts and partners. Employers that were interviewed were also unaware of the program and wanted to learn more about YEP.

- **Increase follow-up after the training.** Of the 54 participants interviewed, 57.41% believed that the follow up was either nonexistent or poor: 41.51% stated there was no follow up after the training while 15.09% rated the follow up as poor. Also, 43.51% of the sample follow-up cohort rated the follow up as excellent, good, or average. Table 26 demonstrates participant views on follow-up after the training.

Table 26: Sample follow-up cohort’s ratings of follow-up

How was the follow up after the training?	%
Excellent	11.32
Good	24.53
Average	7.55
Poor	15.09
There were none	41.51
Total	100.00

Focus group participants also noted that the rate of follow up after the program was poor. Participants stated they received SMS messages or emails from ACWICT on other programs they were offering. Yet, participants did not receive any follow up in regards to how they were doing, if they found a job, or what they were currently involved in. However, of those who received follow up, 11% rated the follow up as excellent while 24.53% rated it as good. When asked to elaborate, these participants noted that the center was very active in keeping participants informed on other activities via SMS or email messages. However, these messages – as noted by the participants that gave the follow up a positive rating – were more advertisement for other programs as opposed to assessing how the participants were advancing, whether they found a job, or how they were doing in general.

F. SECTION VII: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section outlines the recommendations based on the findings in the previous sections. The recommendations are presented with the intention of providing feedback on how to improve the Youth Empowerment Program implemented by ACWICT in the future:

Increase depth of course

Most of the participants who were interviewed during the evaluation commented that the training program was not as deep as they would have liked. As stated earlier, it was the first time for many to see or use a computer. Others were appreciative of the opportunity to learn more about how to use applications and certain software. However, gaining a general knowledge on how to use a computer is not sufficient enough for students to secure a job. Participants also stated that entrepreneurial courses were not deep enough for them to grasp the entire concept of entrepreneurship or running a business. This sentiment was also expressed in the focus group discussions: participants stated that though they are able to write a business plan, they are not fully knowledgeable about how to run a business. As such, the technical courses at ACWICT should:

- **Expand the training duration for the ICT and entrepreneurship courses.** Increasing the time dedicated to ICT and entrepreneurship training will allow participants the opportunity to better grasp content, techniques, and practices. This is especially true for the ICT courses where many of the participants are being introduced to computers for the first time. Participants are very aware of the need for advanced computer skills for the job market. Although this would require additional funds for the program, participants in the focus group noted a willingness to pay for courses as long as program fees were reasonable, clearly defined, and payment programs were available.
- **ACWICT's other ICT programs should be linked to YEP in order for participants to take part in the 'next' stage of their ICT training.** Students are not fully aware of all of the opportunities available to them. A Samsung program, which targets women ages 18-35 from the settlement areas of Kenya, also seeks to improve the employability of youth along with their economic prospects and skills. Although ACWICT has started to recruit a few YEP participants into the Samsung program, the program to date is only targeting 360 participants, compared to that of YEP which targeted 1,200. ACWICT has been able to leverage its relationship with IYF for this program; however, students should also be given the opportunity to leverage different ACWICT programs that can improve their skills and employability prospects.
- For the entrepreneurship program, students stated that they had gained knowledge in writing business plans from the training. However, they are still in **need of training on how to put ideas into action**. Participants need additional training in accounting, management, and marketing. All other current programs should be leveraged for the participants. They should be made aware of options for additional training through ACWICT's other programs. As cost is a factor, again, participants from the focus group expressed a strong willingness to pay for more courses. Additionally, ACWICT could create an exchange program for students where they are hired as volunteer marketers and promoters for the various programs in return for additional training at the center. This would not only provide participants with an activity, but also allow the center to increase its reach in informal settlement areas.

Provide follow up after the training to all participants

Participants stated that the follow up after the training was not on par with what they had expected. As the analysis shows, **41.51% stated there was no follow up after training while 15.09% rated the follow up as poor**. Understandably, there are resource constraints associated with following up with over 1,000 students. However, ACWICT should leverage the tools and resources they already have to create a network in which students can provide follow up services for all the participants. This can be accomplished by ***strengthening and encouraging a network or alumni association*** – this will relieve the center of a financial burden in following up on its participants. Although ACWICT has made efforts to bring alumni together and keep track of students, these efforts should be organized in a more comprehensive manner by incorporating alumni who are willing to provide their time in managing the alumni association, student databases, and keeping track of program graduates. ACWICT already has the resources to teach students how to network, however that skill should be extended to teach participants how to network with *each other*. Each class should have an alumni representative who would act as a connector between participants and the administration. This will also permit the center to have a more organized system in keeping track of their students and their activities.

Develop a comprehensive placement service for participants

As noted by the analysis, only **24.07%** of the participants that were interviewed used the program's placement services while **75.93%** did not use the placement services. It is recommended that the Center develop a comprehensive placement service for the participants. One way in which this can be developed is by also using the alumni, where students can contact each other for job opportunities or inquiries. Other areas of focus, which will assist the center in creating this service, include:

- ***Extending existing relationships with partners in the public and private sector for the creation of an internship program through ACWICT.*** Many of the participants stated that their main constraint has been that employers ask for more experience which they currently do not have. In order to overcome this issue, ACWICT should enhance its efforts in creating internships for participants in conjunction with its existing partners so as to provide participants with the experience they need in securing jobs in the future.
- ***Creating partnerships with placement agencies.*** This will allow the organization to offer this option to participants if they are not able to place participants in positions with existing partners. This will allow the center to offer participants another option when searching for jobs.

Overall, the program has had a tremendous effect on the participants and has made some dramatic changes to the lives of the women who have participated in the program. ACWICT was close to meeting its objective of training 1,200 young women and had placed 51.85% of the sample cohort in jobs, internships, self-employment, and/or voluntary community service by the time of the evaluation. An additional 25.93% continued their studies or participating in further training following YEP. The young women who benefited from the program indicated that the program has changed their self-perception of their worth, which has set them on a path to realize that there is a place for them in this world.

G. APPENDIX: YEP TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR ACWICT

Cohort No.	Training Start Date	Training End Date	No. of Youth	Location	Contact Hours		
					Life Skills	ICT	Entrepreneurship
1	19-Jun-07	20-Jul-07	34	Nairobi	40	60	50
2	22-Jul-07	10-Aug-07	16	Nairobi	40	60	50
3	13-Aug-07	24-Aug-07	25	Nairobi	40	60	50
4	27-Aug-07	7-Sep-07	23	Nairobi	40	60	50
5	10-Sep-07	21-Sep-07	20	Nairobi	40	60	50
6	24-Sep-07	19-Oct-07	27	Nairobi	40	60	50
7	22-Oct-07	16-Nov-07	33	Nairobi	40	60	50
8	19-Nov-07	14-Dec-07	28	Nairobi	40	60	50
9	17-Dec-07	8-Feb-08	19	Nairobi	40	60	50
10	11-Feb-08	2-Mar-08	29	Nairobi	40	60	50
11	3-Mar-08	28-Mar-08	18	Nairobi	40	60	50
12	18-Mar-08	11-Apr-08	11	Nairobi	40	60	50
13	3-Apr-08	2-May-08	25	Nairobi	40	60	50
14	21-Apr-08	16-May-08	36	Nairobi	40	60	50
15	5-May-08	30-May-08	37	Nairobi	40	60	50
16	4-Jun-08	27-Jun-08	12	Nairobi	40	60	50
17	10-Jun-08	27-Jun-08	14	Nairobi	40	60	50
18	19-Jun-08	11-Jul-08	45	Nairobi	40	60	50
19	23-Jun-08	11-Jul-08	30	Nairobi	40	60	50
20	1-Jul-08	25-Jul-08	22	Nairobi	40	60	50
21	14-Jul-08	8-Aug-08	25	Nairobi	40	60	50
22	28-Jul-08	22-Aug-08	32	Nairobi	40	60	50
23	11-Aug-08	5-Sep-08	27	Nairobi	40	60	50
24	25-Aug-08	26-Sep-08	22	Nairobi	40	60	50
25	8-Sep-08	3-Oct-08	28	Nairobi	40	60	50
26	22-Sep-08	17-Oct-08	27	Nairobi	40	60	50
27	6-Oct-08	31-Oct-08	22	Nairobi	40	60	50
28	21-Oct-08	14-Nov-08	22	Nairobi	40	60	50
29	3-Nov-08	28-Nov-08	25	Nairobi	40	60	50
30	17-Nov-08	16-Dec-08	35	Nairobi	40	60	50
31	1-Dec-08	16-Jan-09	36	Nairobi	40	60	50
33	7-Jan-09	30-Jan-09	32	Nairobi	40	60	50
34	19-Jan-09	13-Feb-09	31	Nairobi	40	60	50
35	16-Feb-09	13-Mar-09	32	Nairobi	40	60	50

Cohort No.	Training Start Date	Training End Date	No. of Youth	Location	Contact Hours		
					Life Skills	ICT	Entrepreneurship
36	2-Mar-09	27-Mar-09	34	Nairobi	40	60	50
37	16-Mar-09	18-Apr-09	33	Nairobi	40	60	50
38	30-Mar-09	30-Apr-09	20	Nairobi	40	60	50
39	20-Apr-09	15-May-09	54	Nairobi	40	60	50
40	19-May-09	5-Jun-09	31	Nairobi	40	60	50
TOTAL			1105		1600	2400	2000

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