

## Partnering for Progress: A Learning Event

How Private Sector, Government, & Non-Profits are Reshaping Systems to Drive Youth Economic Opportunities

### Event Summary

“Systems change is how to make things happen, and the first step is making sure we speak the same language and see the same problem” (Unami Mpofu, NEPAD)

On 25 March 2019, over 200 international stakeholders from government, private sector, training institutions, youth, and civil society, convened in Maputo, Mozambique for the International Youth Foundation’s 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Via<sup>1</sup> learning event under the theme of [Partnering for Progress: How Private Sector, Governments, and Non-Profits Are Reshaping Systems to Drive Youth Economic Opportunity](#).

The event brought together critical partners in the youth economic opportunities system to discuss how we can speak the same language, partner to address the enormous challenges, and take advantage of the significant opportunities around the number of youth entering the labor market each year in Mozambique, Tanzania, and across the region. The size of this challenge necessitates bold approaches that can only be addressed through partnership.



A key moment of the event was the signing of a memorandum of understanding between IYF and the Republic of Mozambique’s Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security ([MITESS](#)) through the Instituto de Formação Profissional e Estudos Laborais Alberto Cassimo ([IFPELAC](#)) and Instituto Nacional de Emprego Profissional ([INEP](#)). In addition to IFPELAC and INEP, other Via partners in attendance included: Gapi Sociedade de Investimento ([Gapi-SI](#)), the Vocational Education and Training Authority ([VETA Tanzania](#)) and the Tanzania Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness Centre ([TECC](#)). Participants hailed from many countries, including Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Canada, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and United States.

HE Oswaldo Petersburgo, Vice Minister of MITESS, noted youth education and training as vital national priorities. He emphasized the importance of preparing youth for two domains in life – citizenship, as active and

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<sup>1</sup> [Via: Pathways to Work](#) is a five-year initiative in partnership with the [Mastercard Foundation](#) that improves economic opportunities for underserved youth in Tanzania and Mozambique by driving sustainable changes in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and entrepreneurship systems.



influential beings in their communities, and employment, as knowledgeable and adding value to their work sectors.

Susan Reichle, IYF's President and CEO, issued a call to action for the stakeholders, stating that "real systemic change can't be one project at a time, it has to be working within the larger system....we have no time to waste: 90 percent of young people under 30 years of age are living and emerging in developing countries and 40 percent of them are unemployed. We must act! All of us together."

Rich discussions were had throughout the event, with a few key themes emerging:

### **1) We need to think at scale and be bold in taking risks**

"Before, I was quite unconfident. [Passport to Success®](#) woke something that was sleeping inside myself and helped me know I can do that." Via participant Tomas captured what other Via young people noted about the transformative nature of the Via program in their lives. Panelists discussed how the challenge ahead will involve achieving success like this at scale in order to reach millions of young people entering the labor market. Recommendations for what actions to take differed across the stakeholders, but everyone agreed that success will require working differently and being simultaneously strategic and boldly proactive. Alice Gugelev from Global Development Incubator described the need to think beyond small-scale projects, and articulated how to be strategic and effective in a systemic approach: "Because the problem is so complex, ground the solution in a place," she advised. Others emphasized how addressing systemic gaps will require leveraging the strengths of each actor (e.g., private sector can be more nimble, youth can bring new ideas, and government can address holistic needs) and being willing to explore solutions. According to Sosthenes Sambua from TECC, "Governments have the luxury of thinking in the long run. Our young people don't! We must act."

"Failure is seen as something negative. But for me, failure is an opportunity. If you do not fail enough, you do not reach what you want to achieve."  
- Thiago Coelho, UX

### **2) Pathways to work are more dynamic than ever before**

The event included panel discussions from private sector leaders and entrepreneurs who hire young people, as well as young people themselves who are navigating their careers. They each highlighted different opportunities and needs, but a common theme was that things are not what they used to be. While the parents of young people consider the ideal job being in a specific sector (e.g., formal government job or doctor/lawyer), the reality today entails a wider range of opportunities, with non-traditional training needed to get there. More than ever before, today's young people must be resilient so they can adapt to dynamic labor market changes.



As panelists noted, this increased dynamism changes how we understand the very idea of job qualifications. It is no longer just about having years of formal training to secure a job; instead, it's more about having the right soft skills. Moreover, there needs to be new pathways for receiving job training—for example, through rapid apprenticeships or on-the-job training; and a realigned approach to identifying talent, which is not always reflected in traditional CVs. This all requires stronger, more adaptable coordination between employers and education institutions, e.g., Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions aligning their offerings to the dynamic realities for the world of work in their contexts.

### **3) Partnership means different things to different stakeholders ... and that's okay**

Not surprisingly, the way a young entrepreneur, a government official, and a company executive talked about partnership varied.

Ambassador Carlos Dos Santos talked about partnering across borders by engaging successful training models from other countries, i.e., the German model for vocational training. Dr. Jennifer Adams, Mission Director at USAID Mozambique, talked about recognizing future leadership and doing explicit network building - bringing people together to exchange ideas and learn from one another. Mr. David Modiba, Deputy Director at DHET SA, talked about how in South Africa, a great success and example has been the National Treasury's Jobs Fund, which requires 50 percent investment from private sector to access funding, which forces people to work with each other and understand each other's respective restraints. Partnerships for young entrepreneurs may include finance institutions and suppliers; for young graduates starting on the job it may include mentors in the industry and training institutions.



While there was variety in examples, there were common threads. For example, the need to develop clear, consistent communication channels between stakeholders to truly understand incentives and drivers was cross-cutting, as well as the importance of staying current in an ever-changing system. Participants frequently talked about the need to get everyone around the table, but also noted that the first challenge is identifying who “everyone” is in a particular context and balancing the communication with meaningful action. Identifying the gaps and who needs to be part of what conversations to address them was also emphasized.

#### *Conclusions and Next Steps*

The event offered an opportunity to bring diverse stakeholders together, and the process does not have an end point. In fact, the Via partners continued a deep dive on the issues the next day. There was agreement that the need is for ongoing communication and interaction. Some questions remain for us all to think about and take forward: Who approaches who? Should the TVETs wait for employers or are the employers waiting for the TVETs? How do we promote local solutions while thinking about national and global challenges? How can youth receive the holistic support they need in resource constrained environments? How can other stakeholders engage in the informal markets where young people are finding the opportunities?

Read a [reflection by Mastercard Foundation's Koffi Assouan and IYF's Matthew Breman](#); to learn more about the Via: Pathways to Work program, see the [fact sheet](#) and more success stories from [Mozambique](#) and [Tanzania](#).

