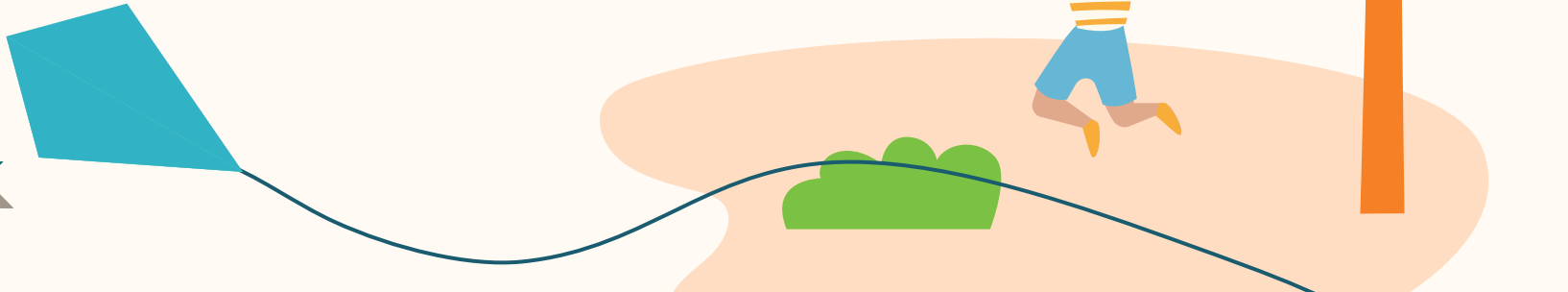


URI Youth Seed Grants 2024 - Project Summaries



Summary

64 applications were received for the 2023/24 round of Youth Seed Grants.

A selection committee was established to make the selection.

8 Seed Grants of \$500 were awarded to CC projects that were youth-led and collaborative initiatives to advance the URI Purpose.

Awarded projects were in South Africa, Malawi, Uganda, Jordan and Nigeria.

In total projects reached approximately 400 people engaging in interfaith changemaking efforts in their communities.

Because of the grants, 5 young people joined the URI Youth Month Challenge and members of recipient CCs have been more actively participating in URI Global calls.

Each project was unique in its focus, but all gave opportunity for youth leadership, interfaith collaboration and the advancement URI's Purpose.

Overview of Selected Projects

Angels Nest Southern Africa CC	South Africa	<i>Youth Cafe</i> - A dialogue event with 40 young people in Gauteng, raising awareness on issues of human rights, peace, security and climate change
URI Individual Member Grace Chilongo and YEEM - Youth Empowerment and Environmental Management, Malawi.	Malawi	<i>Sustainable Cooking Solutions for Interfaith Harmony and Environmental Conservation</i> , engaging community members in T/A Sitola, Machinga district for a series of impactful activities aimed at promoting interfaith harmony, gender equality and environmental conservation through sustainable cooking solutions.
ASHED CC	Malawi	<i>Youth Action in Climate Change, Response in Interfaith Perspectives</i> - Empowering youth in the Lunzu area regardless of their faith to take action in response to climate change through tree planting, and to bridge the gap between religious differences in climate change work.
AFODE CC	Uganda	<i>Youth Peace Building Project</i> - Establish a youth district network of peacebuilders, by training 25 young people in conflict mediation and peacebuilding, as well as equipping them with practical soap making skills.

Overview of Projects continued

URI Individual Member Bikeke Saimon with the Global Youth CC	Uganda	<i>Peace Labs Uganda</i> - The aim of the project was to conduct interfaith dialogues and inclusive meetings with young people and religious leaders in Nyamwamba Division Kasese Municipality.
CASS Educational Foundation CC	Nigeria	<i>Interfaith Alliance SDG Action Plan</i> - Interfaith Clubs in schools training young people in implementing community led projects related to the SDGs
URI Individual Member Nkechika Ibe, with Impact Her World Foundation	Nigeria	<i>Peace to the Girl Child through Period Kits</i> - Training young girls from low-income communities and slum areas in public school on their sexual and reproductive health and rights while creating access to sanitary product for a dignified menstrual experience through our period kits.
Ecopeace Middle East CC	Jordan	<i>Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Training</i> - Empowering 10 young people with the knowledge and skills needed to comprehend the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for the youth to become proactive leaders and advocate for Sustainable Development.

ANSA Youth Cafe - South Africa

Angels Nest Southern Africa CC

The purpose of the project was to host a **dialogue event with 40 young people in Gauteng**, raising awareness on issues of human rights, peace, security and climate change.



Successes

On March 23, 2024, Angel's Nest Southern Africa's youth forum (Youth Café) hosted a dialogue aimed at empowering young people through discussions on critical global issues. **The conversation focused on Fostering Social Unity, Healing as a Prerequisite for Peace, Climate Change and Human Rights, Religious and Belief Diversity and the Impact of Forced Displacement on Youth.**

The event successfully facilitated meaningful exchanges, fostered understanding across generations, and inspired participants to continue the dialogue beyond the event.

Learnings

Overall, the feedback from participants highlighted a shift in perspective towards **prioritizing community-driven initiatives and understanding the pivotal role of local action in addressing global challenges effectively.**

Learnings from the planning team involved ensuring clear and early communication with panelists to mitigate any unexpected withdrawals and including virtual participation or pre-recorded contributions to maintain continuity.



Photos from the day



Impact and Outcomes

Feedback from participants highlighted a strong impact and reflection on community-focused change:

Many participants expressed a realization about the importance of starting change at the community level before aiming to impact the world at large. One participant noted, "We often talk about changing the world but forget that it starts from transforming our own communities first."

There was a consensus that effective information sharing and grassroots initiatives are essential for creating meaningful change. A participant emphasized, "Information sharing begins from our communities. Only when our communities are informed and empowered can we think of impacting the world."

Other outcomes included:

- **Awareness and Reflection:** Participants identified areas needing urgent attention and emphasized personal responsibility in initiating change.
- **Action Points:** Commitment was made to disseminate gained knowledge and experiences to others, fostering a ripple effect of awareness and action.
- **Healing and Personal Growth:** Acknowledgment of the need for personal healing and growth before impacting communities positively was underscored.
- **Networking and Community Building:** Contact details were exchanged, friendships formed, and a group was established to sustain ongoing dialogue, share information, and plan future events.



Sustainable Cooking Solutions for Interfaith Harmony and Environmental Conservation - Malawi

With Grace Chilongo (IM) and YƎEM -
Youth Empowerment and
Environmental Management

The initiative brought together diverse community members in T/A Sitola, Machinga district for a series of impactful activities aimed at promoting **interfaith harmony, gender equality and environmental conservation through sustainable cooking solutions.**



Project Aim

To address pressing environmental and social challenges within the communities surrounding Liwonde National Park, through an interfaith collaborative environmental initiative of using eco-friendly cookstoves.

In addition, ensuring equal participation of women and men in all aspects of the project, breaking down traditional gender roles and fostering a more inclusive and empowered community.

Initiatives

- Interfaith workshop with URI and 15 members of YEEM team
- Training Day on World Environment Day with community members which included:
 - An interfaith training session led by Chiyembekezo Wilson
 - A cooking stove demonstrations and briquette production workshops led by Aunty Flora and Chrispine Paul
 - Green business skills workshop led by Fred Mukhori
- YEEM team presented the project learnings as part of URI Intergenerational Call in April



Pictures from the Training Day on World Environment Day with community members which included:

- An interfaith training session led by Chiyembekezo Wilson
- A cooking stove demonstrations and briquette production workshops led by Aunty Flora and Chrispine Paul
- Green business skills workshop led by Fred Mukhori

Project Successes

Community Engagement: The project successfully engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including chiefs, mother groups, Mgoza wildlife club members, and teachers. This inclusivity ensured broad support and participation.

Interfaith Harmony: The interfaith training sessions effectively fostered understanding and cooperation among different religious groups, enhancing social cohesion.

Skill Development: The cooking stove demonstrations and briquette production workshops provided practical, hands-on skills that the community could immediately apply, promoting self-reliance and entrepreneurship.

Youth Empowerment: The focus on green business empowered young people with the knowledge and tools to start their own environmentally friendly businesses, creating sustainable livelihoods.



Impact and Outcomes

The ongoing impact of this project has been seen at an organizational and community level:

- **Land for Tree Nursery and Community Initiatives:**

The enthusiasm and support from Chief Bell have provided the team with a valuable resource: land for a tree nursery or other community development initiatives. This opportunity will enable them to further their environmental conservation efforts and promote community harmony through joint activities.

- **Increased Advocacy and Awareness:**

Presenting the project to the United Religious Initiative (URI) community has heightened awareness and advocacy for sustainable practices and interfaith harmony.

The success of the project was also shared with students at ShareWORLD University, significantly increasing advocacy and engagement among young people. YEEM members' presentations have inspired students to participate in and support similar initiatives.

- **Future Projects and Partnerships:**

The positive feedback and demonstrated success has positioned Grace and YEEM well for future projects. The skills and knowledge gained from this project can be applied to other areas in need of sustainable solutions. *"We are now better equipped to form new partnerships with stakeholders, including local leaders, educational institutions, and environmental organizations, to expand our impact."*

- **Enhanced Organizational Capacity:**

The experience and insights gained from this project have strengthened their organizational capacity. *"We are better prepared to design, implement, and evaluate future projects, ensuring they meet the needs and priorities of the communities we serve."*





“Successful collaboration is built on a foundation of trust and mutual respect. By engaging with local leaders and community members, we ensured that everyone felt valued and heard, which fostered a positive and productive working environment.” - Grace Chilongo, Malawi



Grace was also selected for the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) to represent the AWARD Policy Fellows at the 2024 summit of the African Food Systems Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, in September.

“Empowering women to make informed choices around nutrition and agriculture will accelerate progress towards sustainable food security. I made a resolution to invest in sustainable agriculture”
Grace Chilongo, URI Individual Member



Youth Action in Climate Change, Response in Interfaith Perspectives - Malawi

ASHED CC - Action for Sustainable of Humanitarian and Environmental Development

Empowering youth in Lunzu area regardless of their faith to **take action in response to climate change through tree planting, and to bridge the gap between religious differences in climate change work.**



Project Aim

ASHED implemented the Youth Action in Climate Change response in interfaith Perspectives (YACRIP), project which focused on empowering youth in Lunzu area regardless of their faith to take action in response to climate change through tree planting. At the same time, ASHED wanted to bridge the gap between religious differences in climate change work. Lastly, the project aimed to raise awareness about URI among communities in Lunzu, Blantyre and beyond.

Initiatives

- Orientation meeting with ASHED Staff (5 people)
- Orientation meeting with selected community representatives - traditional leaders, church representatives, CC members (10 people)
- A tree planting day with 40 households and along Maoni River - 4500 trees were planted
- Community celebration event with traditional dance and interfaith dialogues



ASHED Team and Community
Members at planting site



Site clean up and preparation



Stakeholder Meeting



Interfaith Dialogue Meeting



Learnings and Impact

The project promoted cooperation in the fight against climate change between youth and 100 community members from different religious background. ASHED achieved this by organizing the tree planting initiative, interfaith dialogue and traditional dances.

As a project learning, the team noted: “Out of these activities, we observed that, starting with orientation meetings with both staff and stakeholders is the key for full participation in project activities.”

The **lasting impact of the project** included:

- **New site for our tree nursery.** We have a new site for our nursery and also new partners for free and high demand for tree among the community. Not only from Lunzu but beyond too.
- **Market for our trees.** After sharing with people and other partners, we had great demand for trees.
- **Networking.** ASHED had created networks with different individuals and faith communities. These network are great value in sustaining the project activities.

ASHED TEAM



Youth peace building project - Uganda

Alliance For
Development (AFODE)
CC, Uganda

Empowering 25 youth in
Kasese District, western
Uganda, with **conflict
prevention skills** and to
act as agents of peace in
their communities.



Project Aim

In a context where conflict takes different forms from cross border conflicts, ago-pastoral area conflicts, land conflicts, to political forms of violence that also arises from political crisis, AFODE is working to support young people as agents of peace.

“Such violent conflict situations are always ethnic based and tend to be fed with narratives such as historical marginalization, political party zoning and exclusion which form the basis for the mobilization of the youth to engage in violence as a means to an economic end.”

Through the Youth Peacebuilding Project, AFODE sought to establish district wide youth consultations whose objective would be to empower and strengthen their networking in conflict prevention and peace building initiatives and mainstream their participation at all levels of engagement.

The project trained 25 youth as community-based peace agents and workers in areas of peace building, human rights, community mobilization and conflict prevention, conflict resolution, mediation and negotiations.



Project Launch with Community Stakeholders

Training sessions with 25 selected youth



Project Activities

- One-day launch of the YOUTH PEACE BUILDING project held on the 4th April 2024 at Mpondwe Lhubiriha town council in Bukonjo west, kasese district - Attended by approx. 30 people.
- One day Training Event of selected 25 youth held on 2nd May
 - *The training was very successful as most of the youth turned up for the training, they participated fully by answering the asked questions, telling their own experiences and asking for more understanding The youth requested AFODE and URI to support their clubs both in schools and communities to ensure the gospel about peace is spread widely.*
- One day Forum / Meditation Workshop held on 7th May with training group
 - *The main objectives was to enable the youth find a sense of calm and peace mentally and physically, expanding their conscious awareness because it helps them live their lives with a powerful sense of contentment and appreciation especially looking at the niche of our peace building project.*
- One-day training of the YOUTH PEACE BUILDING project on soap production held on the 28th May 2024

AFODE's Youth Peace Building Project Group



Learnings

During the project period, AFODE undertook a learning activity to assess the youth's inclusion in conflict resolution and their role in peace building. It was noted that peace building becomes strategic when it works over the long run and at all levels of society to establish and sustain relationships among people locally and globally.

In addition the following learnings were noted:

1. By involving youth in decision-making processes, governments and other stakeholders can leverage their energy and creativity in developing solutions to prevent conflict and promote peace.
2. Involvement of in school youths during the project plays a crucial role in developing a peaceful society by promoting tolerance, understanding, and open-mindedness.
3. Responsive youth are advocates for peace, actively promoting dialogue and understanding between different cultures and nations.
4. By forming of the district youth peace building advocacy network, it makes sense of the fact that the youth are the engine of growth and development in any society, providing the labor force for production and being the critical masses whose actions can shape the fabric of society.
5. Based on training of the youth in soap production, it was noted that providing opportunities for youth to participate in economic activities, governments and other stakeholders can address the root causes of conflict and promote peace

Impact

- Increased understanding of the local leaders on the importance and need of youth inclusion in both planning and development spaces.
- 25 youth trained as community based peace agents and also trained in soap making business skill.
- Kasese youth peace building network formed
- One-day youth storytelling and experience sharing session done about challenges of youth radicalization and this came with healing to the traumatized youth.
- Some of the youth trained on peace building have started reaching out to fellow youth in communities to share with them the same knowledge about peace building and this puts both AFODE and URI on map.
- The relationship between URI CCs has improved as we continuously share with them about peace building unlike before when we were working as standalone organizations. *In fact we are now working on a consortium proposal to be submitted to Child Rights Violent Prevention Fund, all this as a result of this project.*
- The youth network that was created will help to sustain the project, and this will help the organization to reach more youth if granted another opportunity support by URI.
- The introduction of soap making skills to the youth has created an opportunity of energizing the staff to continuously fundraise for soap production funds as it has been proven as changing initiatives to the lives of the youth.



Soap Making
Workshop



Training
Sessions

Peace Labs - Uganda

With Bikeke Saimon, from the URI
Global Youth CC

The aim of the project was to conduct
interfaith dialogues and **inclusive meetings
with young people and religious leaders in
Nyamwamba Division Kasese Municipality.**



Project Impact and Opportunities

Through the dialogues the communities and leaders appreciated the need to avoid conflicts and better ways of conflict management.

There was an increased understanding among youth and interfaith leaders on the need for peaceful co-existence through the community dialogues.

“The project has created enormous opportunities for our organizations by strengthening linkages with the religious leaders and the youth on driving the peace agenda in the community. We have documented the lessons learned through the implementation that include the power of community dialogues in engaging the communities for peace. We are working out collaborations with the community based organizations to leverage on these opportunities and scale up the model.”

Interfaith Alliance SDG Action Plan - Nigeria

CASS Educational Foundation CC,
Nigeria

Initiating Interfaith Clubs in schools training
young people in implementing community
led projects related to the SDGs



Peace to the Girl Child through Period Kits

With Nkechika Ibe (URI
Individual Member) and
Impact Her World Foundation

Training young girls from low-income communities and slum areas in public school **on their sexual and reproductive health and rights while creating access to sanitary product** for a dignified menstrual experience through our period kits.



Project Overview

The 'Peace to the Girl Child through Period Kits' project is targeted at training the girl child on their sexual and reproductive health and rights and distributing period kits to indigent girls in a public school.

The aim of the training was to educate beneficiaries on their sexual and reproductive health, as well as enhance their knowledge on how to promote their health and wellbeing while building their self-esteem and self-awareness. It was also targeted at tackling period poverty and increasing awareness on how young girls can peacefully demand their rights to a peaceful and dignified menstrual journey.

The period kits enabled the beneficiaries to have access to quality sanitary products that will increase their school attendance, school performance and improved inclusion in their social, and educational life.



Project Activities

What happened?

- We received approval for the implementation of the project from the Lagos State Ministry of Education District IV
- We partnered/collaborated with two CCs and other organization for the project.
- An invitation and award was given to a media personality in Nigeria – Ms Ayo Mairo Ese – whose attendance and participation further encouraged the participants.
- There was active participation of the students through recitation of poems and dance.
- **Leveraging our partnerships, we were able to increase the number of participants from 50 to 200.**

What went really well?

- The mobilization of the schools for the project was a huge success
- The partnership with other organizations was instrumental to the successful implementation of the project.
- The collation of names of indigent students with the schools by our team and the school officials was properly executed.

Moments from the Training - World Menstrual Hygiene Awareness Day



Impact

- 200 young girls were educated and trained on well curated topics.
- 50 indigent girls received our period kits while 150 sanitary pads were shared to the other participating girls.
- The participants also received additional training on goal mapping and making healthy life choices by one of our facilitators and CC.
- One of the participating organization pledges to join the URI community and a follow up has been done to ensure fulfillment.
- One of the teachers by name – Oriowo Samuel Oluwademilade – indicated interest to become an individual member. Therefore, the link to join have been forwarded to him.
- There was a participation of 10 different schools from the education district which covers 20% of the total school under the district.



New Opportunities

“Given the interesting feedback of the participants, we are developing a unique training plan on sexual and reproductive health and rights for young girls that can be implemented across Africa and also the Middle East. The plan will also include a DIY training on how to make reusable cloth pads especially for young girls and women in conflict settings.

Also, we are looking forward to assessing start-up funding for setting up a social enterprise that can enable the sustainability of the period kit distribution as well as other activities of our organization.”

Nkechika Ibe, Impact her World Foundation





Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Training

Ecopeace Middle East, Jordan

Empowering **10 young people with the knowledge and skills** needed to comprehend the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for the youth to become **proactive leaders and advocate for Sustainable Development.**

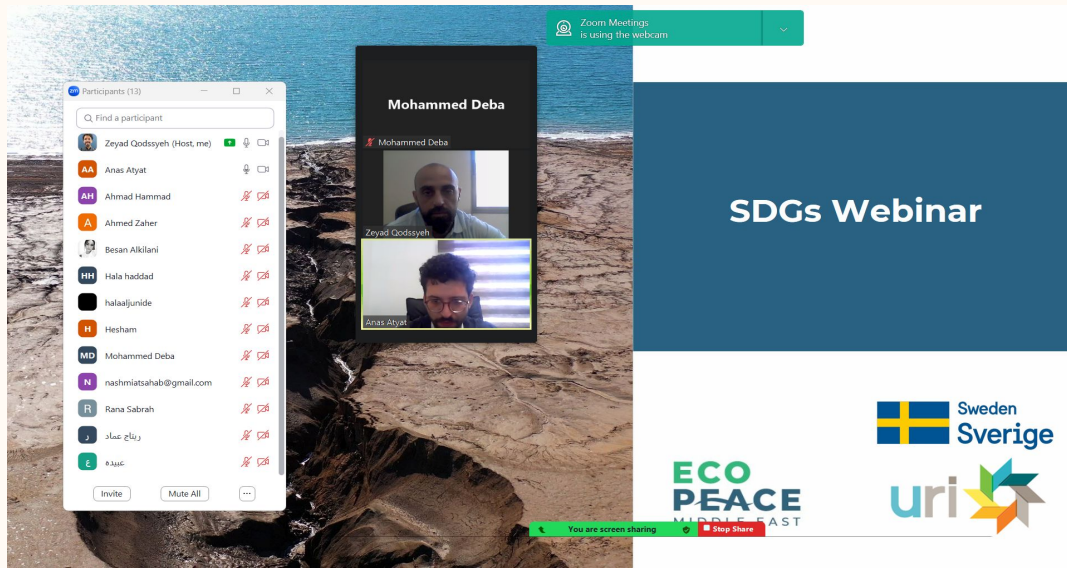


Project Overview

The project aimed to conduct a training program for 10 youth participants, focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The program covered essential topics such as environmental sustainability, transboundary cooperation, community engagement, and advocacy. The project consisted of both a webinar and a face-to-face workshop, ensuring a comprehensive learning experience.

Project Activities

- An Introduction Webinar took place on 16 May 2024, allowing participants to get to know one another
- A Face-to-face SDG Training, 25 May 2024 at Eco-park Jordan, for one day, the number of participants will be 10 participants.



Introduction Webinar



Successes

- **Participant Engagement:** Interactive activities, such as the EcoPark tour, the Ideal World activity, and the SDG Treasure Hunt, successfully engaged participants and reinforced their understanding of the SDGs.
- **Networking and Collaboration:** Group activities fostered a sense of collaboration among participants and facilitated the exchange of knowledge between them.
- **Practical Learning:** The hands-on approach, particularly through the EcoPark tour, provided practical insights into sustainable practices and demonstrated the real-world application of the SDGs.
- **Local Context:** Highlighting Jordan's contributions to the SDGs helped participants connect global goals to their local context, inspiring them to consider their own roles in these efforts.

Training Day at Jordan EcoPark



Project Impact and Opportunities

Participants demonstrated increased knowledge of the SDGs, greater engagement in community sustainability initiatives, and improved teamwork and collaboration skills.

Feedback from Participants:

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive. They appreciated the comprehensive and interactive nature of the training, the practical applications demonstrated during the EcoPark tour, and the engaging activities that facilitated a deeper understanding of the SDGs. Participants also reported increased confidence and motivation to contribute to sustainable development efforts.

New Opportunities:

The training materials and resources developed for this project, including presentations, activities, and handouts, will serve as a valuable foundation for future youth training events. We will adapt and refine these materials to suit specific themes and target audiences for upcoming events scheduled for this year.