



NOTICE TYPE: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)
RFI NUMBER: 7200AA22RFI00055
PROGRAM NAME: Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) 2030
RFI ISSUANCE DATE: May 26, 2022
SUBMISSION CLOSING DATE AND TIME: June 23, 2022, by 5:00 pm ET
SUBMISSIONS VIA EMAIL TO: yali@usaid.gov

TO: ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

Please note that this is an RFI and is not a Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Applications (RFA). It is not to be construed as a commitment by the U.S. Government or USAID to issue any solicitation or Notice of Funding opportunity, or ultimately award a contract or assistance agreement based on this RFI, or to pay for any information voluntarily submitted as a result of this request. At this time, a decision has not been finalized as to whether this potential activity will be acquisition or assistance. Therefore, this RFI is being posted on both Grants.Gov and Beta.Sam.Gov.

INTRODUCTION

The United States' premiere African youth leadership program, the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), launched in 2010 with what is now called the Mandela Washington Fellows (MWF) program. It invests in generations of young leaders to enhance leadership skills; bolster entrepreneurship; and connect young African leaders with one another, the United States, and peers in the global private, civic, and public sectors—resulting in a more secure and prosperous continent. With a population of 1.3 billion people whose median age is 19 years old, one of Africa's most important resources is its youth. YALI intends to work with public, private sector, and civil society partners across the continent to develop initiatives and economic opportunities to harness the innovation and energy of Africa's youth.

USAID is recognized as a leader in youth programming and the first bilateral donor to have a [Youth in Development Policy](#) that promotes an evidence-based positive youth development approach. In 2015, USAID launched four YALI Regional Leadership Centers (RLCs). The YALI RLCs builds upon the MWF program by expanding access to contextualized leadership and functional training on the continent. The YALI RLCs, located at higher education institutions in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa, have trained more than 22,000 young

leaders aged 18-35 across 49 sub-Saharan countries in three tracks: business and entrepreneurship, public management, and civic leadership. Participants come from every country in sub-Saharan Africa and represent a diversity of language, culture, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

YALI is a catalytic movement of capable young leaders who are uniquely positioned to address the crises of today while promoting resilience, innovation, competitiveness, and truly shared prosperity for the future. YALI takes advantage of the full diversity of talents required to address today's complex challenges, such as unemployment, corruption, and lack of basic services.

Every young leader is carefully and competitively selected and, as a result of completing the unique and transformative curriculum, the training provides the graduates with better potential to play a part in addressing the challenges related to transparent and accountable governance, a robust and healthy economy and solutions for community issues. The reputation of and demand for YALI remains high. More than 2,000 applicants seek one of the 100 spots available for each cohort; the five percent acceptance rate is on par with elite universities in the United States.

YALI alumni are leading the development of their communities and their countries with their own ventures and ideas. Young people who attend training at the YALI RLCs report increased business ownership, with the percentage of alumni who own a business increased from 37 percent to just under 60 percent. Among women, there has been an even greater increase. Early survey data indicates that YALI alumni business owners create nearly three jobs within about 18 months post-training. This data demonstrates YALI's impact and contribution to economic growth across the continent. In addition to their business successes, young leaders who have participated in YALI programs have been recognized by Forbes as leading social and business entrepreneurs and innovators; been appointed as Ministers; and elected to public office. As well, through their non-profit organizations, they reached more than one million beneficiaries in 2017 alone. YALI participants are civically engaged citizens who serve the public through non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, or volunteerism. 90 percent of alumni reported that YALI significantly improved their leadership roles in community work and in civic engagement.

The United States believes in young African leaders to direct and develop innovations and solutions to address needs and issues in their own communities and nations. USAID seeks to establish YALI's legacy as a multi-generational partnership with empowered, transformational youth changemakers on the continent to solidify democratic principles, and work in communities to address civil society issues and economic opportunities.

YALI 2030 REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to conduct market research to inform the range of options for an expanded Pan-African youth leadership development model that will harmonize training curriculum, serve underrepresented/underserved youth populations, build alumni network capacity and professional development opportunities, and develop new program-related partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders and donors. The request also seeks input on organizational designs and platforms that contribute to building long-term institutional sustainability for high quality youth leadership development programs. USAID envisions a future youth leadership model built around three long-term outcomes:

Scale and Sustain Leadership: Strengthen leadership skills among young African leaders to meet the needs of their communities, countries, and the continent.

Foster Alumni Impact: Empower leaders and create youth networks to shape the development of their communities to promote good governance, expand economic prosperity, peace and security, and inclusive and equitable health, education, and livelihoods.

Amplify Partner Engagement: Harness and leverage the contributions of diverse partners to harmonize development efforts, increase the impact and reach of Pan-African youth leaders, and catalyze sustainable economic growth and opportunities between the U.S. and Africa.

Through this RFI, USAID seeks ideas, comments, and information from the public that will assist us as we develop the continuation of youth leadership programming that will achieve the outcomes described above. Respondents are encouraged to review the questions and include answers to the most relevant questions in their submissions. Respondents do not need to respond to all the questions listed below.

Requested Information:

Scale and Sustain Leadership:

What major barriers prevent emerging leaders, especially in the African context, from successfully launching careers, initiatives, organizations or businesses? What existing mechanisms could be enhanced or developed to overcome those challenges?

What type of investments and/or programming is needed to support young African leaders?

Within youth leadership development training, what are the most important topics or themes the training should touch upon?

How can YALI expand and diversify recruitment of underrepresented/underserved and harder-to-reach youth (rural, women, youth with disabilities, LGBTQI+, refugees) to participate in youth leadership programming? What characteristics of training delivery and materials development will increase their inclusiveness and adaptability to diverse use?

What type of management structure is recommended for the implementation of sustainable youth leadership programming which is both coherent across the continent but also flexible to local emerging priorities and opportunities?

What types of educational associations or networks should USAID partner with to increase the scope or scale of youth leadership development training?

Foster Alumni Impact:

What are best practices for engaging alumni and building alumni network capacity in sub-Saharan Africa? What existing African professional networks and associations should YALI alumni partner with and how could YALI alumni best leverage connections with them?

How can USAID build on YALI's reputation to increase awareness of, and demand for, the leadership skills of YALI alumni? What community, private sector, or civil society organizations should USAID partner with for compensated intern/externships/on-the-job training placements?

USAID is considering establishing a fund to support alumni professional development, what are best practices for setting up such a fund, and how should USAID structure the fund to attract the broadest range of partners?

What types of continued professional development opportunities will best support YALI alumni as they navigate successful careers, initiatives, organizations or businesses? What in-person, hybrid in-person/virtual, or virtual formats have been successful? How best can USAID measure and capture the impacts of alumni?

Amplify Partner Engagement:

What Africa-based organizations or institutions that are engaged in youth leadership development and positive youth development in sub-Saharan Africa should USAID prioritize for collaboration with YALI?

How can USAID and the private sector combine resources, networks, technical expertise, and technologies to accelerate progress on the leadership challenges threatening companies and communities alike?

How can USAID best engage partners from the private sector, civil society and government, regional and continental blocs to provide transformative training, professional development, and networking opportunities to participants and alumni in the civic leadership and public management tracks?

How do we best engage and partner with the private sector and other resource partners to co-finance and co-design the YALI initiative in a sustainable way? How can the YALI leadership development model be strengthened to increase the likelihood that these institutions would be interested in co-investing?

What characteristics of partnerships are necessary to help develop the organizational capacity and financial sustainability of local institutions and systems so that they are less reliant on donor funding? How can local partners on the continent support these efforts?

How can we better engage the African diaspora to provide leadership training and long-term professional development opportunities in the country? How can diaspora communities act as advisors or thought leaders? How can USAID engage the diaspora's wealth of skills, capital, and networks? What enabling role can they best play?

What models can be used to develop new long-term relationships with YALI affiliate organizations to foster sustainable, wide scale impact, and scale their capacity to engage alumni and/or deploy leadership development programming?

How can linkages among academia, government, civil society and the private sector be supported to ensure that emerging youth leaders have opportunities to shape the development of their communities, promote good governance and human security, and catalyze sustainable economic growth?

Are there any other topics or main themes not listed above that USAID should address or consider in scaling the YALI initiative?

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Included with this document are several relevant sources of contextual and background information as a website link: <https://www.usaid.gov/yali> ; <https://yali.state.gov/about/> ; [USAID YALI RLC Dashboard Fact Sheet](#)

YALI [2030 Results Framework](#)

INSTRUCTIONS:

All responses to this RFI must be submitted via email by the date and time indicated above to: yali@usaid.gov

Submission must be in Microsoft Word format or a PDF document as a single email attachment. All pages must be numbered consecutively with a maximum of ten (10) pages. There is no guarantee that any excess pages will be read.

The email subject line must include the RFI name and the name of the submitter/organization, i.e., “YALI 2030 – Organization name”

This RFI is issued solely for information and planning purposes and does not constitute a Request for Applications (RFA), Annual Program Statement (APS), Request for Proposals (RFP) or any other type of funding opportunity. Responses to this RFI shall not be portrayed as concept papers or applications and will not be accepted by the U.S. Government (USG) to form a binding agreement. This RFI is not to be construed as a commitment by the USG to issue any funding opportunity, to conduct discussions, or ultimately make any award on the basis of this RFI, or to pay for any information submitted as a result of this request. Responders are solely responsible for all expenses associated with responding to this RFI. USAID reserves the right to modify the RFI.

It should be noted that responding to or providing comment on this RFI will not give any advantage to any organization or person in any subsequent procurement/notice of funding opportunity, nor preclude any organization from applying to any subsequent procurement/notice of funding opportunity. USAID will not provide answers to any questions submitted in response to this request for information. No basis for claims against the U.S. Government shall arise as a result of a response to this Request for Information or from the Government’s use of such information. Specific questions about this RFI should be directed only to the following email address: jraile@usaid.gov. USAID will not provide answers to any questions submitted in response to this RFI that deal with the specific content, schedule, or details of a future funding opportunity. Additional information, if any, on this RFI will be posted on both [SAM.Gov](https://www.sam.gov) and [Grants.Gov](https://www.usaid.gov/grants). USAID is not seeking technical or cost applications at this time; do not submit a full application as these will be discarded. Proprietary information should not be sent or shared.

Thank you for your time and interest. We look forward to your responses to this Request for Information.

Sincerely,

Jamie Raile
Contracting/Agreement Officer