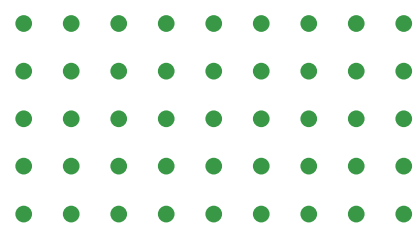


Digital Skills for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship

Insights from the Tanzania Youth Digital Summit 2021





This report and the Tanzania Youth Digital Summit 2021 were made possible through the financial support and partnership of the European Union Delegation to Tanzania.

TYDS is an annual event organized by Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Tanzania in collaboration with the ICT Commission. Sponsorship funding also came from the Government of Canada, UNICEF, and the Segal Family Foundation, our thematic sponsors for Digital Innovation in Academia and Digital Skills for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship, respectively.

Video recordings of TYDS sessions can be found on [DOT Tanzania's YouTube channel](#).

DOT has championed digital inclusion for more than 15 years through empowerment in technology for livelihoods, reaching millions of youth in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. DOT Tanzania trains youth to become digital ambassadors, social innovators, and community leaders who provide digital skills programming that covers digital jobs and digital business training to their peers through youth learning hubs and directly in their communities.

<http://dotrust.org> | <https://www.youthdigitalsummit.org/>

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A MESSAGE FROM DOT TANZANIA



I think we can all agree that this year has been a wild ride.

Amidst COVID-19, young people have been leading the shift toward the digital economy, showing us how digital tools can be used to stay connected, pass messages of hope, and continue their studies and professional work.

When we sat down with the ICT Commission to first imagine the Tanzanian Youth Digital Summit in 2019, we conceived of a platform to address the gap in ICT skills and awareness among young people. We also wanted to hear from youth: what big ideas do they have, what learning barriers do they face, and how can we as an ecosystem support them in reaching their goals?

Our first two summits got to the heart of the matter as we learned how to enable youth to succeed in the digital economy and, most importantly, how to step out of the way to let them lead. Those events also demonstrated we have a long way to go—when our 2020 summit went 100% online, we found that half of youth who had registered were unable to connect or be fully participative, in part because of their lack of access to digital tools and skills.

Building on these lessons, we are proud to share that TYDS 2021 was our largest and most inclusive event to date. In partnership with the ICT Commission and with the generous sponsorship of the European Union, the Government of Canada, UNICEF, and Segal Family Foundation, we reached 2,716 young people across Tanzania.

Beyond university graduates in major cities, a goal this year was to include more youth from rural communities as well as those earning their livelihood in the informal sector—the majority of whom we know are young women. From software engineers to salon owners to students, TYDS participants are a talented, diverse group. This report amplifies their voices.

As the world emerges from the pandemic, we face tremendous opportunity. Now more than ever we know what digital can do, and the potential it has for youth and for our society. Young people are our world's best hope, and it is our job as partners to double down on our investment and support.

Sincerely,
Diana Ninsiima
Country Director, DOT Tanzania



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: DIGITAL INCLUSION FOR ALL

Imagine yourself at Kariakoo market, one of Dar es Salaam's bustling commercial hubs. There's the beauty salon owner offering manicures; a young woman selling cashews and jars of homemade nut butter; a dozen wakala agents advertising phone vouchers and punching money transfers into their feature phones.

Less visible are the ways in which digital skills are permeating this scene: behind her sewing machine, a tailor browses photos of dresses on Instagram; a business owner buys purses in wholesale so he can sell them via WhatsApp status back home in Morogoro; a mobile phone fundi learns how to fix the latest iPhone from a YouTube video.

For youth in Tanzania, two truths emerge from this description. The first is that mobile phones remain the entry point into the digital economy; second is the reality that digital skills are no longer optional.

“Everyone needs digital skills to thrive and succeed in today's world.”

- ICT Commission Director General Eng. Samson Mwela

And yet, the question remains: how can we ensure we leave no one behind?

Mobile phone usage and internet connectivity rates in Tanzania continue to rise, but access to technology is just one piece of the puzzle. TYDS participants identified internet cost, a lack of skills, and pervasive cultural norms as just a few of the challenges to securing digital livelihood opportunities. These issues are greater for women and girls and the digital gender divide has grown during COVID-19.

It is in the spirit of digital inclusion that DOT Tanzania set forth to host the third annual TYDS. This year's event took us to 10 regions across Tanzania where farmers, boda boda drivers, students, informal sector workers, and university graduates in big cities and small towns shared what they would need to feel supported in digital spaces and in online business ownership.

Their recommendations come at a crucial time. The Government of Tanzania will soon open five zonal soft centres where youth can enroll in training and register their software innovations and ICT product solutions. This report aspires to support the ICT Commission to be as effective as possible in its goal of sparking growth in Tanzania's technology and entrepreneurship sectors.

This report is divided into three sections, each meant to illustrate the diversity of experience and opinion held by TYDS participants:

START

How young people take the first steps into digital business. This section shares young people's perceptions towards online business, reveals the skills that are most useful at the start of their journey, and introduces the new generation of free online tools that support young people to bring their creative visions to life.

SELL

E-commerce is a tremendous opportunity for small business owners and national GDP growth. While it's an agenda priority for the Government of Tanzania, the sector remains largely untapped. This section examines the unique nature of e-commerce transactions in Tanzania and explores the positive and negative perceptions youth have of these opportunities.

SUPPORT

What should come next for Tanzania's entrepreneurship ecosystem? This section details the challenges and barriers still faced by young people when it comes to engaging with the digital economy.

In his remarks at TYDS, Tanzanian tech entrepreneur Given Edward said he and his fellow young innovators were like sharks in a fish tank—only able to grow as far as the outer limits of their surroundings.

As government stakeholders, ecosystem partners, and champions of youth development, let's take Given's words to heart and ensure we do all we can to eliminate these barriers and provide youth the space to grow, lead, and change the world.

MISSED TYDS?

Check out this visual overview of two key sessions! Click each image to see the full-sized version.

TYDS2021 # Digital Skills # Ujuzi Dijitali

TANZANIA YOUTH DIGITAL SUMMIT

WELCOME EVERYONE! AN IDEA BORN IN 2019 THIS YEAR IS REGIONAL

ARE WE READY? RESEARCH IS A KEY AREA OF FOCUS FOR US

THE YOUNG GENERATION IS THE WORLD'S BEST HOPE

AT SH, WE ARE COMMITTED TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

AS WELL AS INNOVATION + ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WE NEED YOUTH TO BE AWARE AND HAVE THE CORRECT SKILLS

HOW PREPARED ARE WE AS A COUNTRY? AS INDIVIDUALS?

WE URGE ALL YOUTH TO REGISTER PARTICIPATE DIGITAL

SHIFTING TO A DIGITAL ECONOMY IS NOT CHOICE ANY MORE

SOFT CENTRE PROGRAM TO REACH AS MANY YOUTH AS POSSIBLE

ICT COM SAMSON MWELA

TYDS BUILDING DIGITAL RESILIENCE FOR YOUTH

DIANA NINJIMA DOT TZ

MR. EMILIO ROSETTI

MR. FRANCIS GORIOSE

IRISH AID

PRINCIPLE GLORIOUS

WE ENGAGE ALL YOUTH AS: BENEFICIARIES PARTNERS LEADERS

WE ENGAGE YOUTH AS: BENEFICIARIES PARTNERS LEADERS

SO, WHICH APPROACH SHOULD WE FAVOUR?

WE NEED PROGRAMS THAT CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH YOUTH BY YOUTH

NOW, MORE THAN EVER THE YOUTH NEED DIGITAL SKILLS

THE SOCIAL FAMILY FOUNDATION

IT'S ABOUT ALIGNING OUR GOALS WITH THE GOALS OF OUR GREAT NEIGHBOUR

THE SOCIAL FAMILY FOUNDATION SHARON ROSE MSAKI

CANADA IS PRAISE TO SUPPORT THE "PARK WHEEL" EMPLOYERS YOUTH + IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN + GIRLS

WITH CHANGE COMES OPPORTUNITY

YOUTH AMBASSADORS COMING UP WITH IDEAS TO ADDRESS REAL PROBLEMS

LET US CREATE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS FOR THEM TO DO SO

THE COVID PANDEMIC HAS SHOWN US THAT... ROBUST + RESILIENT BROADBAND NETWORKS MUST BE CONSIDERED A BASIC NECESSITY

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NATURALLY ADOPTERS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES... LET US CREATE THE ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS FOR THEM TO DO SO

THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS + INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING YOUTH + DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION THROUGH

IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICE DELIVERY TRAINING PROGRAMS

YOU CAN NOT OVERTHROW YOUR ENVIRONMENT

YOUTH, YOU HAVE A BETTER ENVIRONMENT NOW... SO MAKE USE OF IT

WHAT SHOULD WE DO TO ENSURE THAT WE DON'T LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND (ON THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY)?

WE NEED TO CARE FOR/SEGMENT OUR PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF OUR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF DIGITAL SKILL (TECH) WE MUST HELP YOUNG PEOPLE TO DREAM BIG + SHOW THEM THE BIGGER PICTURE

WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF OUR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF DIGITAL SKILL (TECH) WE MUST HELP YOUNG PEOPLE TO DREAM BIG + SHOW THEM THE BIGGER PICTURE

WE SHOULD FIGURE OUT WHAT OTHER PARTNERS WE CAN WORK WITH

CO-HOSTED + FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPONSORS: Canada unicef for every child Segal IMAGE BY: SMO.FAWCETT@GMAIL.COM

DIGITAL SKILLS for YOUTH EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

TANZANIA YOUTH DIGITAL SUMMIT

MODERATOR: CAROL MDOZI GOOD AFTERNOON TO YOU! WOMEN AT WEB TANZANIA

PANELISTS: ANNE RITA SSEMBOGA IT4U, EBARADA SRINIVASAN WORLD BANK, SAMSON MWELA ICT COMMISSION, EUNICE BALL AFRICA TECHNOLOGY BUSINESS NETWORK

HOST: DIANA NINJIMA DOT TANZANIA

ACCELERATING TECHNOLOGY + INNOVATION for GENDER EQUALITY

BRIDGING the GENDER GAP in DIGITAL ACCESS + COMPETENCIES

IT IS DUBILING AND EFFORTS TO BRIDGE THE GENDER DIVIDE THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS BY DOT TZ

WOMEN ACCOUNT FOR ONLY 12% OF PROFESSIONALS REGISTERED WITH ICT COMMISSION!

IT IS ALARMING THAT THE MEN/WOMEN DIVIDITY IS GROWING SINCE THE ONSET OF COVID-19

WORLD BANK IS GATHERING GENDER-SEGREGATED DATA TO AID IN DECISION-MAKING

GATHERING + EVALUATING DATA IS KEY

NO ACCESS TO INTERNET AT HOME

RELEVANCE

ECOSYSTEM BIASED

MAJORITY OF WOMEN ARE IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

DIGITAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS

ACTIVE OUTREACH + DESIGNING PROGRAMS THAT MEET THE REAL NEEDS OF WOMEN

DIGITAL SKILLING IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO INCREASE WOMEN'S INCLUSION

HOW DO WE BUILD THE SYSTEM?

LOCAL SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS

TRANSFORMATIVE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

NEED TO ENGAGE LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

CO-CREATION INNOVATION REALIZATION (WHO IS DOING WHAT?)

ENSURE POLICIES ARE ALL-INCLUSIVE

RATED ON DATA

HOW DO WE CREATE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE?

HOW DO WE HAVE OPEN-SOURCE INFORMATION/KNOWLEDGE?

WE NEED SOLUTIONS THAT MEET THE REAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

COLLABORATION IS KEY!

ICT ANAHEZ FOR BOTH MEN + WOMEN

SOFT CENTRES (INCLUDING BOTH GENDERS)

WE ARE HERE TO COLLABORATE WITH YOU AND REVIEW/ADAPT OUR POLICIES TO HELP TACKLE YOUR CHALLENGES

WE ARE ENGAGING WITH THE START-UP COMMUNITIES WITH GENDER-INCLUSION A PRIORITY

WE ARE REVIEWING OUR STRATEGY TO FOCUS MORE ON WOMEN'S INCLUSION

ICT HUBS

PREVENTING + ELIMINATING ONLINE TECH-FACILITATED GBV + DISCRIMINATION

EMENDING

THE WAY YOU FUND CAN CREATE A COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

HOW ARE WE TRACKING INCIDENTS OF GBV?

NEED TO GATHER + EVALUATE THE DATA

THIS IS NOT OK

WE NEED TO ADDRESS SOCIAL NORMS AROUND GBV

WE NEED TO COLLABORATIVELY DESIGN A SPACE THAT IS SAFE FOR WOMEN

FEAR OF GBV AND DISCRIMINATION BY PARENTS MEANS THAT MANY YOUTH ARE PROHIBITED FROM GOING ONLINE

PLATFORM ACCOUNTABILITY

ICT ORGANISERS DISCLOSED TO ADDRESS ISSUES AND GET FEEDBACK FROM STAKEHOLDERS, SO THAT WE CAN REVIEW OUR POLICIES ACCORDINGLY

CLOSING ICT

LET US ALIGN THE GOALS OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SUMMIT SO THAT WE CAN REVIEW OUR POLICIES TO BETTER SUPPORT YOU

CO-HOSTED + FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPONSORS: Canada unicef for every child Segal IMAGE BY: SMO.FAWCETT@GMAIL.COM

OUR ECOSYSTEM PARTNERS



A group photo from Projekt Inspire, our ecosystem partner in Tanga

TYDS 2021 saw an unprecedented level of engagement from youth and partners across Tanzania.

Bringing together a dynamic network of ecosystem partners has been in the summit's DNA since the beginning. This year, TYDS was pleased to partner with 15 universities, innovation hubs, incubators, and youth support organizations from across 10 regions.

As well as delivering sessions that best met the needs of youth in their communities, our partners were integral in supporting the research goals of TYDS and conducting in-person and virtual evaluations.

This partnership continues beyond TYDS! DOT Tanzania is signing a Memorandum of Understanding to have all 10 partners serve as host centres for DOT's Daring to Shift project. This will enable us to reach TYDS participants and other youth on an ongoing basis.

It will also help DOT Tanzania to recruit a more diverse group of daring young social entrepreneurs and upskill more than 10,000 youth with digital skills for jobs and businesses within those regions.

THE 10 TYDS REGIONS



Dar es Salaam

Empower, Deloitte,
Funguo, Ndoto Hub

Arusha

Obuntu Hub

Dodoma

University of Dodoma

Iringa

RLabs Tanzania

Kigoma

Nyakitonto Youth for
Development Tanzania

Morogoro

TAOTIC Launchpad

Mwanza

St. Augustine University of
Tanzania (SAUT) Mwanza

Tabora

The Archbishop Mihayo University
College of Tabora (AMUCTA)

Tanga

Projekt Inspire (STEM Park)

Zanzibar

Cube Hub, Zanzibar Technology
and Business Incubator (ZTBI)

Partner Spotlight: St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) Mwanza

Mwanza is one of the fastest growing cities in Tanzania. For young entrepreneurs, this means a larger customer base—but also increased competition. Digital marketing is one way that business owners can get ahead.

It's for this reason that the St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) Mwanza partnered with TYDS to deliver a session titled "How to digitize your business and thrive in the Mwanza market." Over 150 youth attended the session virtually, with 47 young people participating in person on the SAUT Mwanza campus.

"Putting youth together to discuss the use of digital platforms in business is very important," says Living Joseph Komu, Public Relations Officer with SAUT. "[TYDS] was an opportunity to engage with youth from different fields and backgrounds to share their experiences in entrepreneurial careers."

Entrepreneurship is a core subject taught to students at SAUT, and the institution's Ennovate Hub encourages and supports youth to develop a business plan and apply for seed funding.

The SAUT Mwanza campus is ripe with youth-led small businesses: stationary shops, restaurants, cinemas, mobile money transfer centres, and more. Living explains that the most successful are those businesses where students are using digital platforms to reach their customers—a smart strategy since many customers are students who are regularly online.

Bolstering on-campus business, the digital economy also plays a critical role in connecting business owners with customers across Tanzania. Living offers the example of youth who sell Tilapia and other fish caught in Lake Victoria: "Those who digitalize their business are more successful because customers are not likely to visit Mwanza to purchase the products. Now customers can check online, select their order, make a payment, and wait for delivery."



Thanks to SAUT Mwanza for these photos from their in-person event.

Partner Spotlight: RLabs Tanzania (Iringa)

Teaming up with ecosystem partners across Tanzania meant TYDS 2021 could be more inclusive of the needs and interests of youth outside of Dar es Salaam.

“These kinds of training initiatives are sometimes limited to urban areas,” says Angela Falres Ilomo, Acting Director of RLabs Tanzania in Iringa.

The youth RLabs trains typically have lower literacy and education levels, prefer learning in Kiswahili, and are more likely to use feature phones as their main mode of communication. There are also added barriers of connectivity, access to smartphones, and awareness of how to use them.



Angela says the digital skills component of TYDS was attractive to many young people and complemented the innovation and entrepreneurship training offered through RLabs.

Hosted in the organization’s youth cafe, 54 TYDS participants learned from facilitators and young entrepreneurs Salum Abdallah Mauga and Zuhura Khalfan Mohammed about online safety, how to tailor online businesses to meet customer needs, digital marketing, and more.

“Most people’s livelihoods are based in the agricultural sector, and digitization could open many doors for them,” adds Angela. “It could reach even women in the informal economy, so I think we should keep this conversation going to see how we can bridge the gender inclusion gap with digital skills and also close the divide between urban and rural areas.”

"TYDS has marked the beginning of a digital transformation skills to youth at a local levels. It's has paved a way to AMUCTA to collaborate with both NGOs and Government by joining forces to support Digital employment agenda and utilization for entrepreneurial activities by using digital devices."

- Paschal Charles, Public Relations Officer, Archbishop Mihayo University College of Tabora (SAUT-TABORA)

"It was a wonderful opportunity for Cube Zanzibar to partner with DOT Tanzania to organize TYDS 2021 for the first time in Zanzibar. TYDS empowered youth to use digital skills to develop their business which was previously not part of trainings."

- Rashid Mwinyi, Programs Lead, Cube Zanzibar

"Partnering with DOT Tanzania for TYDS 2021 has given TAOTIC an exceptional opportunity to reach more talented and aspiring youth who have been invited to join our TAOTIC Interning program consisted of on-demand access to interim income-generating crowdwork opportunities and structured growth hacking challenges for accelerated career progress."

- Kiko Kiwanga, Founder and Director, TAOTIC Launchpad (Morogoro)

"TYDS 2021 was an amplification of Obuntu Hub's work in empowering young entrepreneurs through digital technology. As a national platform, it scaled the sensitisation and training of youth with practical digital skills and tools, notably in the tourism sector and for empowering digital talents such as graphic designers and developers."

- Collins Kimaro, Co-founder and CEO of Obuntu Hub (Arusha)

A group shot from Obuntu Hub in Arusha



TYDS: A culture of learning

We are always adjusting the way we do things in order to better reach young people. Here are two challenging realities we faced this year and how we overcame them. We hope these reflections are useful in guiding your future events.

Reality 1

Due to COVID-19, ecosystem partners were limited in the number of youth they could host at their venue. Further, we know that young people are not always able to attend sessions (online or in-person) due to work, school, location, or other circumstances. This extended online, where youth may not have had the device or internet bundle to stream each session live.

Action

TYDS 2021 committed to live-streaming every session using Facebook Live and YouTube. These videos were then posted online so youth could watch and learn at a time convenient to them.

Result

TYDS was able to reach more young people across Tanzania. Live-streaming permitted those who were unable to attend to watch sessions online and ensured learning content is available on-demand.

Video viewership grew in the days following TYDS. These views also increased page traffic for ecosystem partners.

Lessons learned

- **Organizers must ensure partners have access to the equipment and expertise to live-stream an event.** In the case of TYDS, DOT Tanzania went as far as to send a trained expert from Dar es Salaam to a region to offer technical support. Ideally, all youth centres should be equipped with the ability to live-stream and record their training sessions. This should include high-quality video and audio rendering.
- **Social media video views do not generate gender disaggregated data. This is problematic when trying to ensure young women are represented at an event.** Though platforms like Zoom allow for the collection of this gender data, attendees with a lower level of digital literacy may have been less familiar with how to sign-up for a webinar. Click and play social media platforms like Facebook and YouTube did not present this same barrier. DOT Tanzania is still reflecting on how to best collect this gender disaggregated data at future events.

Reality 2

The majority of presenters proposed by ecosystem partners were men. This was ironic and possibly harmful for an event that advocates for digital inclusion and bridging the gender digital divide.

Action

DOT Tanzania flagged this gender disparity with ecosystem partners—many had made the choice unconsciously. We made it mandatory that at least half of all facilitators and panellists be women.

Result

The summit achieved a 50-50 split when it came to female-male presenters. Though the precise impact of this action cannot be measured, TYDS participants have told us about the importance of female role models and presenters. DOT Tanzania will continue to champion and elevate the voices of women who are leading in these traditionally male-dominated spheres.

Lessons learned

[We need a gender-sensitive community of practice.](#) Many partners were surprised to realize they put forward an all-male list of presenters. Bringing this matter to light resolved the gender composition for TYDS, but a more formal community of practice is required to change the systems and mindsets that led to this challenge in the first place. For future events, DOT Tanzania will change the way it recruits and onboards partners in a way that better communicates our values.

[Gender safeguarding policies are important.](#) TYDS is a safe space for all, and it's critically important to have policies in place that guarantee as much. TYDS partners and presenters were required to go through gender sensitization training to ensure everyone was aligned in their vision of how to make young people of both genders feel comfortable and supported during the summit.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This report has been shaped by the insights shared during the Tanzania Youth Digital Summit (TYDS) which was hosted between 24-27 August 2021. A hybrid event featuring both in-person and virtual sessions, TYDS was attended by 2,716 youth (aged 15 to 35 years) from 10 regions across Tanzania.

Of that number, 87% of youth attended online, including 375 participants through Zoom and 1,997 social media views through sessions live-streamed on TYDS partner YouTube and Facebook accounts. Gender disaggregated data was not available for the social media attendees, a challenge we will work to resolve in the future.

An additional 344 youth participated in an in-person session (13% of total participants), 47% of whom identified as women. This number was small by design to account for COVID-19 precautions and the size of our partners' venues.

Data collection & analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered before and after the summit through a baseline evaluation at the point of registration and a post-summit evaluation survey. Both were optional for TYDS participants. The baseline study received 408 responses (32% of total participants) and the post-summit evaluation had 199 responses (16% of total participants). The baseline survey was conducted using Google Forms, and responses were more likely to come from participants with a higher degree of digital literacy and access. Therefore, results have been cross-referenced with the Digital Skills Poll mentioned below and focus group discussion findings.

Eight focus group discussions were hosted following the summit. These discussions brought together 39 youth from across the 10 TYDS regions, 87% of whom were young women. Participants were identified by ecosystem partners and each participant had attended at least one TYDS session. Focus groups were held virtually over Zoom or WhatsApp audio calls and co-facilitated by DOT staff in Tanzania and Canada.

This report also draws from the Digital Skills Poll developed by DOT Tanzania and UNICEF. The poll was conducted in August 2021 and engaged a larger sample size of youth (4,800 respondents from across the country).

Outcomes

Data will be used to inform:

1. DOT's digital skills and youth leadership training as part of its Daring to Shift project.
2. The Government of Tanzania's design of zonal soft centers for youth through Digital Tanzania, a World Bank Funded project.
3. The European Union Delegation to Tanzania's Digital Programming for youth.

This report will be launched at the National ICT Conference in October 2021, contributing to broader national strategies on Building a Digital Nation.

FEATURED YOUTH VOICES

Here are a few of the TYDS participants and presenters whose experiences and insights are shared in this report.



Lydia Charles Moyo

Lydia is the Founder and Executive Director of Her Initiative, an organization that promotes financial resilience for young women and girls through economic empowerment and digital inclusion programs. One of its products, Panda Digital, is an e-learning platform created specifically for young women entrepreneurs.



Fredy Peter

Fredy is a systems engineer living in Dar es Salaam. He also runs Triple F farm where he sells milk and vegetables via WhatsApp status.



Lightness Kweka

Lightness is an Arusha-based entrepreneur and the Co-founder of Kibarua, a soon-to-be released platform where informal economy workers can be paired with employers.



Given Edward

Given is a Tanzanian innovator and serial entrepreneur. He's a regular attendee and guest speaker at TYDS and delivered an insightful speech at the opening ceremony.



Carolyn Kandusi

Carolyn is a Program Officer with Segal Family Foundation. Carolyn is also a Co-founder of Ubuntu Hub, a long-time ecosystem partner of TYDS.



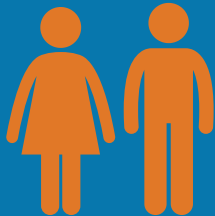
Fainah Simbeye

After studying at the Institute of Social Work in Dar es Salaam, Fainah moved to Iringa where she recently started a small business selling handmade carpets and doormats.

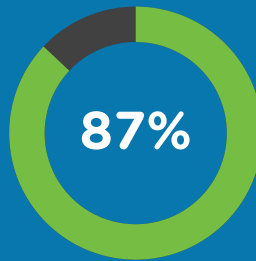
TYDS RESEARCH: BY THE NUMBERS

Whether it's through TYDS surveys or the U-Report Digital Skills Poll conducted by UNICEF and DOT, here's what youth told us about themselves.

TYDS research respondent gender*

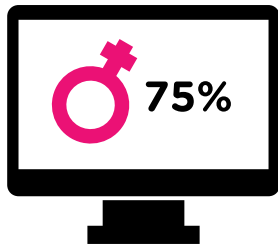
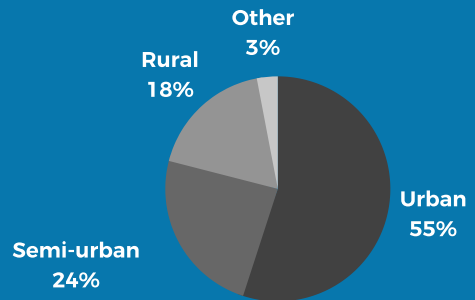


Women: 52%
Men: 48%



of youth attended TYDS online

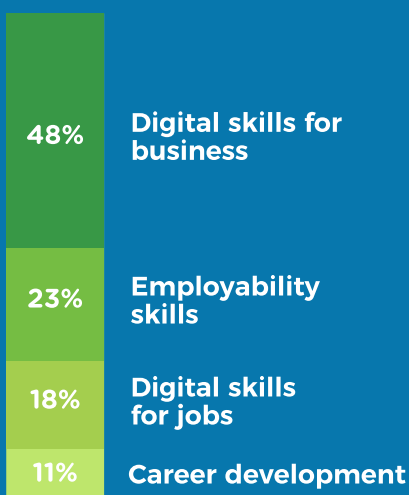
Participant location†



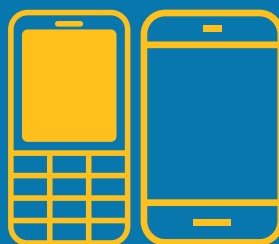
of attendees came away with a better understanding of how digital jobs can address the gender divide (source: TYDS post-summit survey)

From U-Report data:

Skills most desired by youth

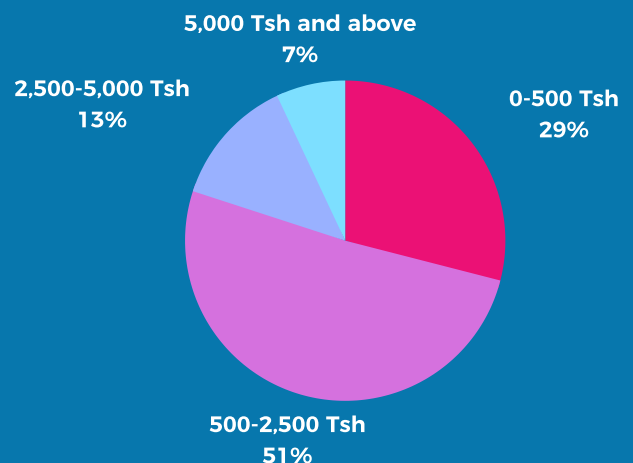


Most frequently used devices



Feature phones & smartphones

Weekly amount spent on internet bundles



How youth use their devices



* Source: TYDS baseline and post-summit surveys, focus group discussion attendees, TYDS participants, and U-Report respondents.

† Source: TYDS baseline survey.



START

First steps and skills for
online business and
employment

When it comes to the first steps and skills for entrepreneurship and employment, youth are excited and eager to learn.

But what they are eager to learn is dependent on their previous knowledge of technology, their access to digital tools, and their personal interests and needs. This section explores these dynamics.

Digital skills for entrepreneurship and employment—what do youth think?

When it came to this big picture question, the answer was clear: 99% of TYDS baseline survey respondents were interested in how they could use their digital device to improve their livelihood.

This favourable attitude was explored more deeply in post-summit focus group discussions where participants spoke enthusiastically about the ways in which they were already applying the skills learned from TYDS sessions:

"I was very interested to learn human centred design whereby I was able to understand how I can develop a prototype for a platform I will use to sell a product."

- Fredy, systems engineer and farm owner

"My takeaway from TYDS was about ideation related to online business. I started to redesign my customer profile so that I can connect with a larger target market. At first, I was doing business solely based on my interests, but now that I have a customer profile I can know their challenges and solve them."

- Maria, owner of an event management business

"I learned about searching for jobs online. We were told about UpWork and I am using it to find translation or proofreading jobs. After I told the TYDS facilitator I am studying education, he recommended I open an account on Amazing Talker, which is a language learning platform."

- Shella, university student

"We learned about the 4Ps of marketing: place, price, promotion, and product. Now I have started to make my juice unique from others and have started adding vanilla and ginger."

- Halima, small business owner

Entrepreneurship is a common path for Tanzanian youth, in large part due to necessity. “In Tanzania there are no more direct jobs after you finish university. It’s really hard right now,” shared Aidan Kibona, who recently graduated with a degree in procurement and supply chain management from SAUT Mwanza.

“Employment is limited and that’s why most youth, including me, are trying to find alternatives using entrepreneurship and other activities.” Aidan is currently keeping chickens.

Youth understand the reality of this job market. This is perhaps why the majority of TYDS participants said they’d prefer to learn “digital skills to support business” over digital skills to excel at work, develop their career, or get a job. At a time when employment prospects are low, youth are interested in creating their own opportunities.

The businesses started by youth tend not to be large and are generally run by a single person. From animal rearing to the sale of food and drinks, cosmetics production to boda boda driving, TYDS participants were exposed to the idea of applying digital skills to fields of business that are traditionally offline.

Let’s look at what resonated most with participants.

Start of journey skills for digital inclusion

Every young innovator must start somewhere. But that “somewhere” is not the same for everyone. Digital skills training must be mindful of that.

In Tanzania, young people constitute more than 70% of the country’s population—that’s over 40 million people who are under the age of 35 years.¹ Imagine the multitude of experiences and interests of that group, the full spectrum of where youth are at in terms of their knowledge of and ability to use technology.

TYDS was a reminder that understanding and empathy are necessary to effectively design programming with and for youth.

“We need to stop thinking about it as a ‘young person’ and instead think of ‘young people’ and the different personas they have.”

- Youth innovator Given Edward

Just as businesses develop multiple personas for customers, partners and stakeholders working with youth can apply similar market segmentation techniques. This will help to better design for the locality where a young person lives, their previous exposure to technology, the cultures and behaviours that may limit or enable, and more.

To that end, a goal of TYDS 2021 was to more effectively ‘segment’ youth into various personas. By collaborating with organizations across Tanzania, partners were encouraged to host sessions that would appeal to youth in their area. Further, TYDS research aspired to understand what digital entrepreneurship and employment could look like within different contexts, specifically in urban versus rural communities.

¹From the [United Nations World Population Prospects 2019](#); in Tanzania, young people are considered to be anyone between 15-35 years.

While TYDS participants in Dar es Salaam are more likely to have access to reliable internet connectivity, a larger suite of digital tools, and greater training opportunities, focus group discussions with youth from other communities revealed how disconnected these realities are from youth in smaller cities.

Take the coastal city of Tanga: “The youth we’re dealing with don’t have any idea of how to apply digital skills. We use our phones to call and receive texts and those of us who have a computer watch movies and look at photos on the internet,” explained Mwajuma Makwaya, part-time program manager with Tanga Women Development Initiative (TAWODE). TAWODE works with young girls who have dropped out of school and face early pregnancy.

“For youth out of school, what they need is to earn fast money, so they look to tailoring, make up, boda boda. Digital marketing skills are an opportunity because you can teach them to have their business on the internet and advertise it, which would help the business to move well,” added Annath Juma, Director of TAWODE. “Most in Tanga have no chance of marketing more widely because they don’t have knowledge of the world outside their city. It’s different from Dar es Salaam where there are lots of classes—in Tanga the main problem is how to tackle issues of economic failure and unemployment.”

With Mwajuma and Annath’s words in mind, here are the skills, tools, and mindsets youth identified as being most useful in their digital transformations.

Starter skill #1: Recognizing social media and the internet as powerful business tools

While youth are excited about the possibilities brought by the internet, what’s less understood is how social media and online tools can be applied to their business or search for employment.

Baseline data indicates that just over half of TYDS participants (53%) have used online platforms to promote and grow their business. As more than three-quarters of responses came from youth in urban or semi-urban settings, usage is presumed to be less in rural communities.

Many TYDS participants described learning about digital skills for entrepreneurship by accident—because a roommate purchased an item online, they came across a business profile on WhatsApp, or received some information during their studies. There are more deliberate ways to reach young people with these opportunities.

“We need more explanation about social media. How to use it and how to attract more followers to gain more customers. This would help a lot to sell our products and help us to get different connections.”

- Zainabu, a small business owner from Tabora

“After shifting online [to WhatsApp status], people I never expected to want my products are asking for them and my number of customers has increased dramatically,”

- Mohamed, a perfume seller in Zanzibar on how he’s expanded from selling offline to customers around his home

To support the use of digital skills for entrepreneurship, young people said it would be helpful to receive guidance as they register for new platforms and learn their basic uses. This first category of starter skills should also introduce the behaviours and mindsets needed to be safe online—concepts of privacy, one’s digital footprint, and digital citizenship.

There also remains the perception among youth that social media and online tools are “just for fun” and as such are not worth spending time and money on. Training partners can actively work to disprove these beliefs by providing examples of how other young people have digitized their business and the benefits of operating online.

After TYDS, here’s what young people told us about the benefits of digital skills for entrepreneurship and employment:

For entrepreneurship

- Start a business with limited financial resources, since using social media for a business is free and does not require renting a physical storefront.
- Reach a wider customer base.
- Improve and professionalize the marketing of products and services.
- More effectively track financial statements.
- Source products online that can be resold to local customers.

For employment

- Create online profiles that can be discovered by prospective employers.
- Use social media to search for jobs.
- Register for freelance platforms like UpWork and Fiverr.
- Access e-learning to grow one’s skills.

These benefits are practical and easy-to-grasp, and should be communicated to youth when advertising or starting digital skills training. Importantly, digital skills address both the short-term need for youth to earn fast cash while also achieving a longer-term goal of developing the foundational digital literacy skills and mindsets that will support them in their lives and livelihoods.

Forget websites—focus on WhatsApp

If mobile phones are the entry point for youth into the digital economy, then WhatsApp is the entry platform. Accessible to anyone with a basic smartphone (and even some feature phones), WhatsApp is the social media platform most used by youth in Tanzania.

Now, a growing number of young people are using the platform to connect with customers, advertise their business in a broadcast chat, or share photos of their products via WhatsApp status (which is like Instagram stories or Facebook Highlights).

And, because most youth are already on WhatsApp, adapting the tool for entrepreneurship involves less of a learning curve.

WhatsApp’s recent “click-to-chat” feature means entrepreneurs can create a web link that opens the platform and initiates a chat with customers. In the absence of a website, this click-to-chat feature is increasing in popularity.

Business Owner Spotlight: Reginah Mmasi

Reginah Mmasi has firsthand experience using digital skills to promote her online business and find employment.



A graduate of the University of Dar es Salaam, Reginah sells perfumes and accessories using Instagram and WhatsApp. Instagram is primarily where she posts photos of her products, and she encourages customers to contact her on WhatsApp so she can share more information and gain their trust.

Social media enabled Reginah to start her business with less capital than would have been needed for a physical shop.

“Most of us face financial problems, but let’s not have that be an obstacle,” says Reginah. “There are other ways to achieve what we want to do, for example learning through YouTube, so that when you get capital you have already equipped yourself with knowledge.”

Reginah credits her online business savvy to Joel Nanauka, a Tanzanian life coach and speaker who posts educational videos to his Instagram and YouTube and encourages entrepreneurs to start where they are and build from there.

Now, Reginah will be running her business while working in a new job.

Comfortable with WhatsApp and Instagram, Reginah was not a fan of Facebook before attending a TYDS session hosted by TAOTIC in Morogoro. “The presenter was telling us how we could use Facebook as something useful versus what people think,” says Reginah, referencing a prevailing misconception that social media is a waste of time.

With the encouragement of TYDS presenter Jackline Bwana, Reginah updated her Facebook to include her professional experience and studies. “It was quite heavy work to [update all my information] but it was worth it since if you apply for jobs on social media the employer must look into your account to see who you are,” says Reginah.

On the Facebook page of Ajira Yako, a Tanzanian job ad platform, Reginah came across a position that looked interesting: a gender-based violence project officer role with a local non-profit. She applied via Facebook, went for the interview, and recently started work.

“I would not have found that job if it were not for Facebook,” Reginah says. “It has been great for me since TYDS.”

Starter skill #2: Digital skills for market research and customer feedback

Once registered and aware of the usage of social media platforms, the next step is optimizing these tools for business. Many TYDS sessions touched on the business insight features of social media platforms, and participants appreciated how they could use these to better understand their target market.

This was the case for Fainah Simbeye, a recent university graduate in Iringa. Fainah runs a small business selling handmade carpets and doormats. “I was using social media before but I was doing it without any knowledge,” said Fainah during a focus group discussion. “From the summit we learned about Instagram insights and how you could see the location of your customer, age, and what they like. Now I know who I am selling to, and I can make designs according to the trends.”

Conducting market research was another skill that resonated. Neema Mboya, a restaurant owner from Arusha, described the challenges she faces in making her brand stand out. For her, the solution was to use Instagram and WhatsApp to conduct a survey of her customers and target audience. “I learned that for the delivery of food you have to be on time,” said Neema of one of the key takeaways.

Online research can also help disprove some of the perceived barriers youth have around entrepreneurship. This was illustrated by Eshe Muhammed, a participant from Zanzibar.

Eshe is a recent graduate who is trying to grow her skills related to consulting as well as coaching and training. “I always wondered how I could start with the limited resources that I have. TYDS was the solution for me. I was exposed to the various skills that I can start with only my smartphone and the little [mobile data] bundle I have,” Eshe said.

Previously, Eshe thought market research could only be conducted in-person. Inspired by what she learned at Cube Zanzibar, she started using her smartphone and computer to find research respondents, arrange meetings, and conduct interviews. In doing so, she learned her prospective clients were more interested in career counselling and soft skills training.

For youth already using social media to gather customer feedback, TYDS helped participants discover other tools. Meriana Charles, a participant from Arusha, now uses Google Forms to collect customer feedback about her sweet pili pili sauce.

Meriana also found a clever workaround for sharing on social media even after her internet bundle runs out. She creates a content calendar for her Facebook posts and schedules them to share later in the week: “When the time comes, it will be posted online and you don’t have to have a [mobile data] bundle!” Meriana’s tactics have been successful, and she’s now shipping her sweet pili pili sauce from Arusha as far as Iringa and Tabora.

Panda Digital: The e-learning platform designed especially for young Tanzanian women

Panda Digital is a recently launched free online platform that brings young women together to learn new skills, exchange experiences, and connect with funding opportunities to start and scale their business. And unlike any other platform out there, Panda Digital is built entirely for Tanzanian entrepreneurs.

That means no stories about Americans building businesses in their garage; overly technical lessons taught in English, or boring reading materials.

“Even if they go to school, most Tanzanians are not comfortable speaking in English. We started thinking how we could be more inclusive without a language barrier, and every Tanzanian young person understands Swahili,” explains Founder and Executive Director Lydia Charles of the choice to have the platform be entirely in Kiswahili. Lydia was a participant at TYDS 2021.

Language isn't the only way Panda Digital is customized to meet the needs of Tanzanian youth. The digital marketing course uses examples of locally successful entrepreneurs like @MakJuice_TZ, a fresh juice point in Dar es Salaam known for its attractive branding, celebrity endorsements, and social media influence.

The Panda team chats with users via SMS and Instagram DM, methods of engagement that are less intimidating for young people. Youth can go through the course at their own pace, and all lessons are presented as short videos.

“There is not a culture of reading, but we are a people that like to talk a lot,” laughs Lydia. “We thought that video and listening would be more appealing than giving them a document to read.”

The Panda Digital platform was brought to life by Her Initiative, an organization founded and led by Lydia. Since 2012, Her Initiative has been facilitating financial resilience and entrepreneurship training for young women and girls.

Since launching in April 2021, Panda Digital has registered nearly 1,000 users. “It shocked us [with its initial success],” says Lydia. “Because of COVID limitations young people have tapped into using technology, they love the learning since it's short, and they also love certificates!”

With a digital marketing course live and a Business Model Canvas course coming soon, many users are already eagerly awaiting the next course. Lydia says Panda Digital is eyeing a pair of financial literacy and resource mobilization courses once the team can secure new funding.

Lydia says there's plenty of room for further growth—within Panda Digital and in other platforms that are customized to meet the needs of Tanzanian youth. “We need more platforms coming and adding creativity and innovation, because we have millions of people in Tanzania. We alone cannot do it.”

Starter skill #3: Digital marketing and a new generation of creative tools

We are seeing the emergence of an exciting new generation of digital tools. The popularity and possibility of these tools was evident throughout TYDS, where digital marketing sessions across the country focused on the use of browser-based apps, particularly Canva. Youth in every focus group discussion raved about the platform.



“Canva helped me create a website and blog, and I look there for good designs. PixaBay helped me with photos. To get a photo to put on a website, we usually need to pay, but with PixaBay we get free, high-quality photos.”

- Lightness Kweka, Arusha, founder of Kibarua

“I use Looka for logos and Canva is more general. I use it to create photo albums and graphics for my WhatsApp posts. So many things!”

- Mwajuma Ally Makwaya, Tanga

“I didn’t know there were applications that I could use to create nice pictures. Now I use Canva to make brochures, create images, short videos, and do more things for my business.”

- Shuwena Seif Salim, Zanzibar

Browser-based design apps like Canva equip users with “superpowers” by putting creative design skills into the hands of a greater number of people. With simple drag-and-drop functionality as well as templates and design features (shapes, images, backgrounds, etc.), young people are using Canva to bring their creative vision to life. The platform operates under a “freemium” model, with a paid Canva Pro version.

It wasn’t so long ago that the only digital tools available were expensive, desktop-based software like the Microsoft Office or Adobe Creative suites.

This desktop-download model has never been best-suited to meet the realities of Tanzanian youth. Platforms like Canva, on the other hand, are more inclusive and don’t require overly-technical knowledge.

For reference, here's an expanded comparison between the new generation and old generation of digital tools. These new generation tools have tremendous potential and should be central in future training programs.

NEW GENERATION	OLD GENERATION
Browser-based video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet that are accessible to anyone with the click of a link.	Peer-to-peer video calling platforms like Skype which are primarily downloaded as desktop software.
Artificial intelligence-enabled writing editors like Grammarly and Hemingway correct spelling, grammar, and sentence structure.	Basic spelling and grammar check features in Microsoft Office ; manual proofreading.
Browser-based platforms like Canva provide templates and designs for users. Drag-and-drop functionality reduces the barrier to entry.	Expensive, desktop-based software like Adobe Photoshop and InDesign . Requires more technical knowledge, which raises the barrier to entry.
Platforms like Pixabay and Wikimedia Commons provide free access to hundreds of thousands of images.	Limited access to stock photos, reliance on lower-quality images.
Quick and casual WhatsApp chats for personal and professional exchanges.	More formal emails.

RECOMMENDATIONS

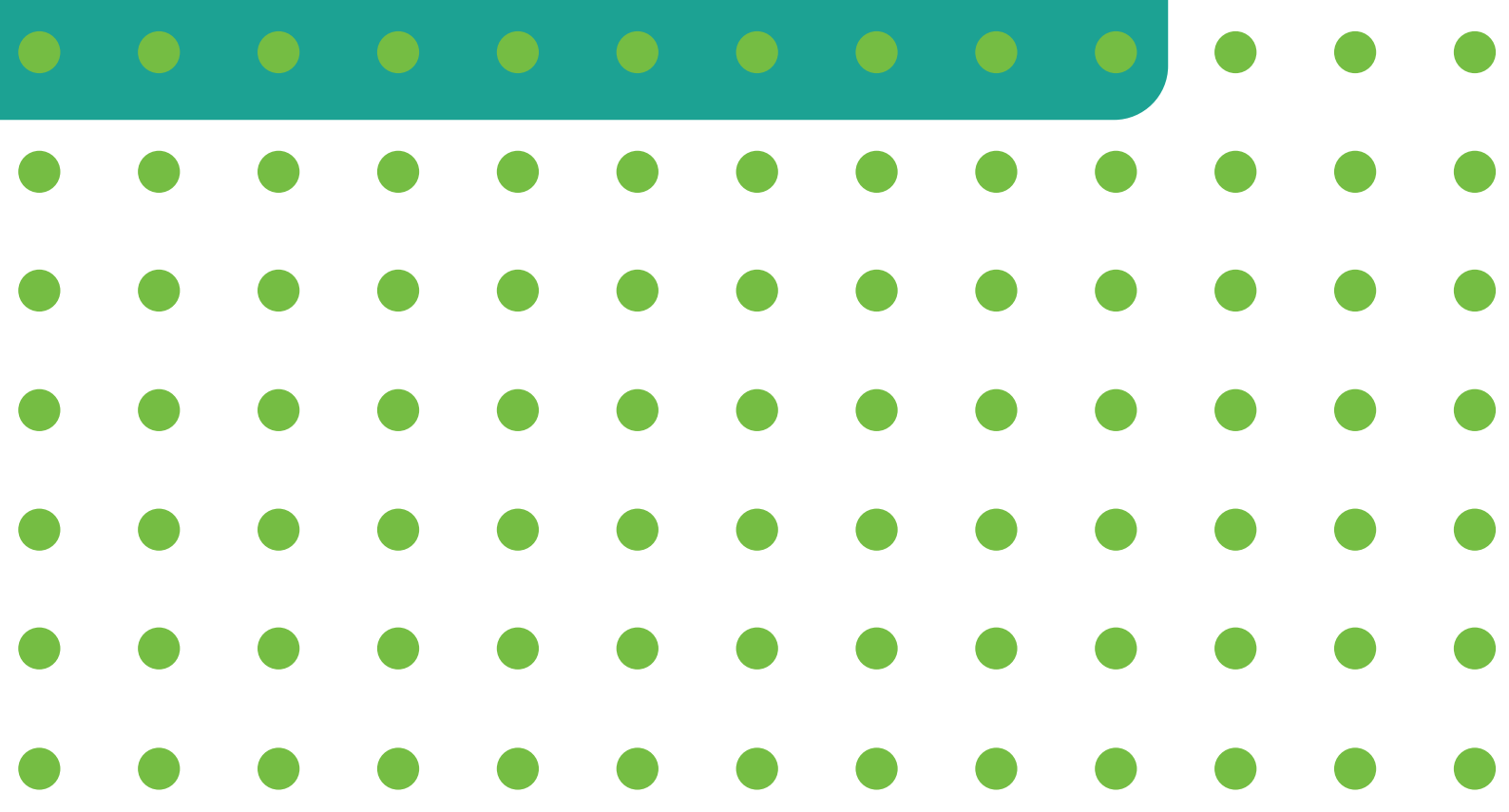
- Meet youth where they are at in their knowledge and use of social media for entrepreneurship and employment. Provide registration support and foster the mindsets needed to succeed online.
- Create user personas to develop training that better suits the needs and desires of different youth. Generally, youth will be at one of the three “starter skills” categories identified in this report.
- Pivot digital skills training to promote the use of less-expensive browser-based tools that require less technical skills and are accessible via smartphones and mobile devices.
 - A coalition of youth organizations could reach out to companies like Canva to see whether a free version of Canva Pro could be made available to young Tanzanian entrepreneurs—the company already offers a free upgrade for registered non-profit organizations and students.
- Equip all schools with internet and incorporate digital skills training to ensure youth can take advantage of the digital economy earlier in life.



A few of the young people who attended day two of TYDS in Dar es Salaam.

SELL

The reality of Tanzania's
e-commerce space



E-commerce is defined as any business transaction that happens using an internet connection:

- The purchase of a product from an online marketplace such as Alibaba.
- The use of a smartphone app like Uber to access a ride.
- The posting of an ad on a classifieds site like Jumia Deals or Jiji.
- The transfer of funds using a mobile financial services app such as Sarafu.

E-commerce has become increasingly prevalent worldwide, with an estimated 1.5 billion people now shopping online. This represents 27% of the global population over the age of 15.

But these trends are unevenly distributed—while over half the population in high-income countries shop online, that figure is 2% in lower-income countries like Tanzania.²

COVID-19 meant an acceleration from traditional commerce to e-commerce. And yet, the viability of e-commerce in Tanzania faces an uphill battle.

As The Citizen reported in December 2020, several digital marketplaces and service sites have exited the Tanzanian market in the last two years, citing the challenge of low engagement and growth.

This includes a 2019 decision by Jumia, Africa's largest ecommerce operator, to shutter operations in Tanzania to focus on African markets where the e-commerce space is more viable.³

So, what can be done in Tanzania to create a friendlier environment for e-commerce operators and the people who use them?

An assessment conducted by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) surveyed 60 public and private sector institutions about the barriers affecting the growth of Tanzania's e-commerce sector.

Those surveyed identified “Develop a national strategy or development plan for e-commerce development” as the greatest priority area needed for e-commerce development.⁴ Stakeholders claimed that this legislation would go a long way to building trust in the sector.

Youth perceptions of e-commerce

While the UNCTAD assessment provided an in-depth survey of public and private institutions, it failed to include the perspectives of youth who may be apprehensive to buy or sell products and services online.

Incorporating young people's views of e-commerce into policy and regulatory recommendations is critical, particularly given Tanzania's large youth demographic and the increased likelihood of their working in the informal sector (where significant opportunities for e-commerce and digitization exist). As such, the insights of this report are intended to complement the UNCTAD assessment.

² The UNCTAD B2C E-commerce Index 2020 Spotlight on Latin America and the Caribbean ([link](#))

³ “Jumia has shut down operations in a second African country within one week,” [Quartz Africa](#)

⁴ United Republic of Tanzania Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessment ([link](#))

Business Owner Spotlight: Maryam Makame Nyange

When it comes to her skincare business, Meyskin Products, Maryam Makame Nyange is an accidental e-commerce entrepreneur.



The young woman from Zanzibar formerly used bleaching products that damaged her skin. While attempting to find products to restore her skin's natural health, Maryam started documenting her journey on Instagram.

"I never knew it was an opportunity until later, people were asking 'do you have a page on Instagram? We'd like to see more,'" explains Maryam of how she got started on the photo sharing platform.

As her online following grew, Maryam began to provide skincare tips to her followers. That evolved into a thriving online consultation business, where customers from Tanzania, Kenya, and as far as Oman pay to receive skincare advice over WhatsApp voice notes.

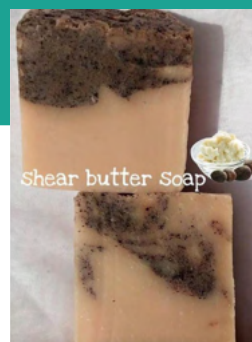
Her business has now expanded to include a line of homemade and imported skincare products such as facial creams, soaps, and serums—a competitive market in Tanzania.

But Maryam has a unique advantage: "I do not sell products without an online consultation because skin is sensitive and there are a lot of things that need to be considered." As a result, customers receive not only their products but also a more personalized skincare regimen.

Attending a TYDS session at TAOTIC in Morogoro, Maryam says she found the digital marketing session most helpful. The facilitator, Mr. Hashim, reviewed her Instagram and suggested she write her bio in Swahili to reach more customers. "The facilitator was friendly and supported me in changing my profile. Right after the session I also started promoting my business on Facebook," says Maryam.

Eventually, Maryam would like to study dermatology abroad. In the meantime, with 19.4k followers on Instagram, it's clear that Maryam and Meyskin Products are just getting started.

Two of Maryam's homemade products



Every regional TYDS session touched on the ability for youth to digitize and promote their business; similarly, in every post-summit focus group young people spoke of how they had started (or improved their use of) social media platforms to reach new customers and purchase products.

There is also a growing familiarity of platforms like Alibaba and KiKUU, Chinese-run online marketplaces that import products sourced primarily from China. Both platforms oversee ordering, payment, and fulfillment (shipment and delivery), giving them a competitive edge over the nascent model of e-commerce transactions in Tanzania.

In Tabora, TYDS participants learned about the opportunity to sell their products online and to purchase through online marketplaces.

“I never knew you could promote your products on WhatsApp, so after the session I started posting my groundnuts and I got a lot of customers through that,” Rehema shared. The 24-year-old would previously find customers by walking around town and selling to people gathered in groups, such as near a boda boda stand.

When it came to online marketplaces like Alibaba and KiKUU, Rehema was previously apprehensive. “I thought they were a scam because I could not see the seller and there was a long time to wait before I would get my product,” she said. She has started purchasing products online since learning more at TYDS.

Rehema’s comments illustrate two common concerns raised by youth when it comes to e-commerce: (1) a lack of trust and (2) awareness of the opportunities that exist to buy and sell.

Overcoming mistrust in e-commerce transactions

The first issue, lack of trust, arises from youth either having had a negative online shopping experience or knowing someone who did. These experiences pose a risk to the growth of the e-commerce sector.

Word-of-mouth and personal testimonials are a common means of business marketing in Tanzania, and negative experiences are often widely shared with friends and family. This means that one deception or poor sales experience may reach and taint the views of many.

Here’s a story shared by Esther Dominic, a TYDS participant from Arusha:

“I had a friend who purchased an item online. She waited and waited, but she did not receive it. When she communicated with the seller, it did not go well. She was disappointed because she spent her money on an item from a fake business.”

My friend said she will never again do any online business or purchasing. I have since tried to convince her to go back to buying things online, but she will not. Faithfulness should be the first goal in any online business.”

Here's what e-commerce transactions look like in Tanzania

The nature of e-commerce transactions differs around the world. In Tanzania, the majority are person-to-person (versus business-to-customer, government-to-customer, etc.).

Based on the experiences of TYDS participants, here's what a typical e-commerce sale looks like:

- 1** The entrepreneur purchases products at wholesale price, often from a larger city. Alternatively, an entrepreneur snaps photos of the items they like.
- 2** The entrepreneur returns home and posts photos of the products on social media, typically Instagram and WhatsApp status.
- 3** Interested customers see the advertisements and are prompted to message the business owner on WhatsApp to discuss product details and establish trust.
- 4** A sale is made: if the entrepreneur purchased the product earlier, they transport the item to the local bus station by boda boda and send it by bus to their customer (or they deliver via DHL); if the item has yet to be purchased, the entrepreneur visits the market to buy the desired item quantity and proceeds to send it to the customer.
- 5** Customers use a mobile money service to pay for the product.
- 6** Business owners gather testimonials to share on social media, the P2P equivalent of an online business review rating.

This buyer-seller journey involves a lot of manual intervention, which is more work for both entrepreneur and customer alike. Consumer education (for issues of trust), support services for entrepreneurs (photography and marketing), and automated fulfillment services (a digitized post office) could lessen the burden on entrepreneurs and streamline e-commerce exchanges.

Negative experiences can also deter frequent e-commerce shoppers. Such is the case of Zainabu Libuhi, an entrepreneur from Tabora who sells bed sheets. Located far from Dar es Salaam, Zainabu browses Instagram to discover and buy products. Her vendors, generally located in Dar, send her purchases to Tabora so she can resell to local customers.

In addition to running her business, Zainabu is an assistant lecturer in procurement and supply chain management at Tabora University. Her academic background, combined with her experiences purchasing on Instagram, means she has a higher level of digital literacy and online shopping familiarity than most.

And yet her views of e-commerce have also been sullied by negative experiences: “I tried to use KiKUU twice, but it was very disappointing because what I ordered was not what I actually received,” said Zainabu. “I bought a hairdryer and it was small like a child’s toy. I was not happy, and I will never use KiKUU again.”

The soft skills for e-commerce growth

Faithfulness, honesty, and trust were three words continuously mentioned by TYDS participants when asked how to increase the popularity of online business.

They suggested that customers have a duty to confirm the size, weight, and shipping details of products they order, and to read seller testimonials to avoid scams. While this consumer checklist may seem obvious for some, these are critical thinking skills that may be newer to more recent e-commerce shoppers, particularly those with a lower level of digital literacy.

Youth also felt that online business owners must accept the responsibility of making e-commerce transactions more safe and secure. As a result, building customer trust is another important skill when working with young people to start or grow their digital business. This includes soft skills such as effective communication, dependability, problem solving, and the ability to empathize with customers.

When it comes to tactics to build trust, Fainah Simbeye, a TYDS participant from Iringa, has one idea: “We should not edit product photos too much or use too many effects because it changes the product. We need to show things exactly as is.” Training could focus on how to take accurate, high-quality product photographs using smartphones and how to write product descriptions that convey the same degree of accuracy.

Lucy Terry, a fellow participant from Iringa, has been testing another approach to building trust. “You have to share testimonials on social media so people can see there are other customers who are doing business with you. That assures them that you are not a scam,” Lucy explained. She has started doing this with her own packaged juice.

Interestingly, as well as using WhatsApp as a tool to advertise their product, youth use the platform to build customer rapport. While platforms like Instagram or Facebook are more anonymous, peoples’ familiarity with WhatsApp means that one-on-one chats are often a way for business owners and customers to connect and exchange details ahead of a sale.

Whatever the tactic, youth were clear: trust is a necessary component of online sales. Experiences and insights like those shared above must be taken seriously and addressed as the Government of Tanzania looks to expand the country's e-commerce sector.

Consumer awareness training

When it comes to e-commerce and digitization more broadly, Tanzania is in an interesting place. As Given Edward pointed out during the opening ceremony, the country is experiencing the first, second, third, and fourth industrial revolution at the same time.

There are those experimenting with AI innovations while others do not have electricity; training programs focused on web design while there are youth who can only get online using their feature phones. These juxtapositions apply to e-commerce, too: as apps are introduced for online food delivery, products, and government services, there are still those practicing subsistence agriculture and travelling to the next village to sell their crops.

In countries outside of Tanzania and sub-Saharan Africa, the rise in e-commerce is paired with higher rates of digital literacy, consumer protection policies, and a more mature value chain (including more efficient means of producing and delivering products).

Contrast this with Tanzania, where youth may be equipped with the technology and connectivity to use e-commerce platforms but have not been exposed to the same degree of digital knowledge and consumer awareness skills to protect them from deceit.

Not only that, but they are making purchases within an environment that remains unregulated by the government.

Efforts to grow Tanzania's e-commerce space should come alongside consumer awareness training: how to assess whether a vendor is legitimate or if a product is fake, which online marketplaces offer the greatest transparency and accountability, and what means of recourse are available if a purchased product is not as it seemed online.

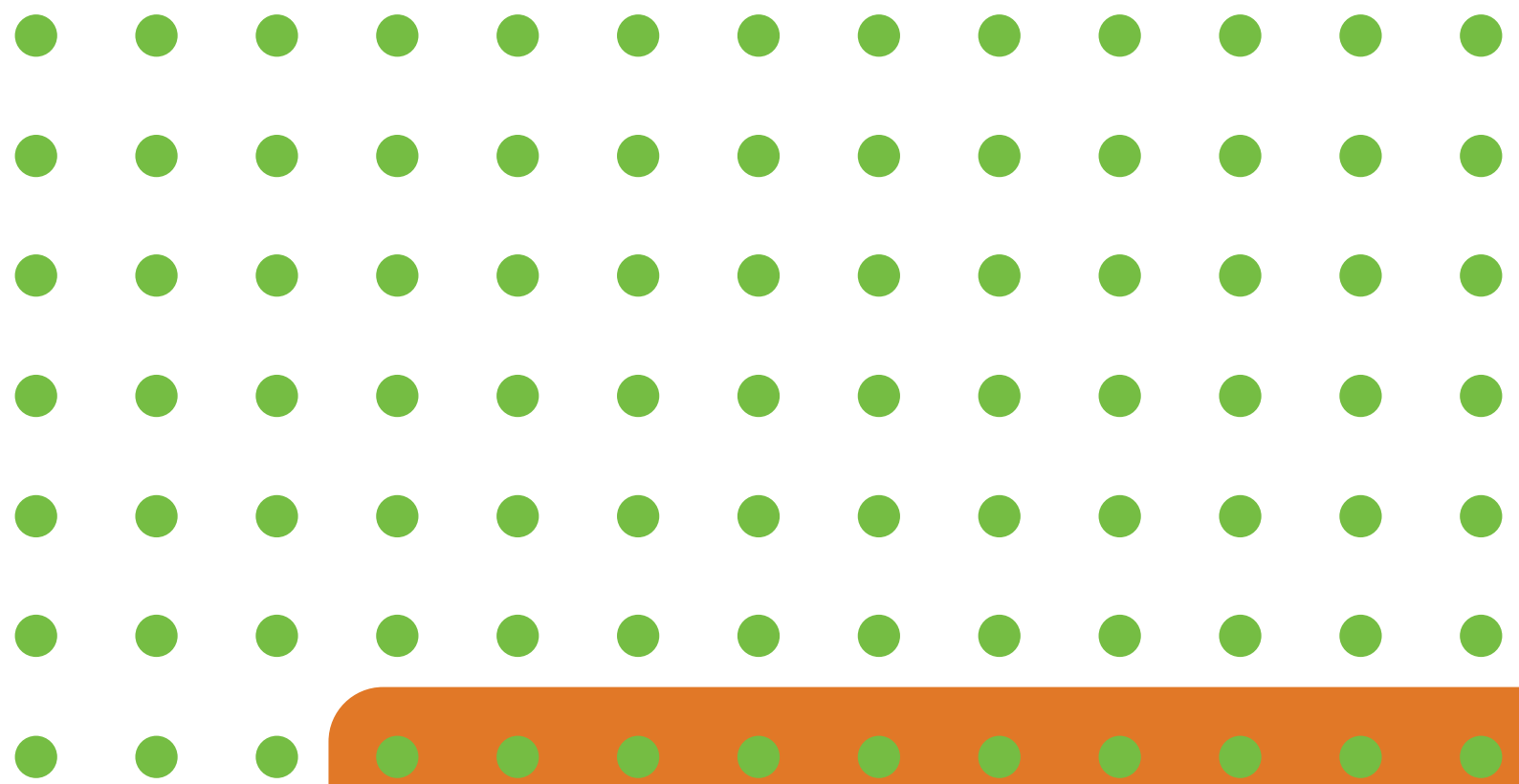
RECOMMENDATIONS

For individuals and business owners

- Training programs should be structured in layers: basic digital literacy and related soft skills are first and foremost required by business owners and customers; once this baseline has been achieved, campaigns can focus more specifically on online business opportunities.
- We cannot overlook the many complementary skills that will influence the success of Tanzania's e-commerce space. They include education around subjects like how to take accurate product photographs and write effective product descriptions; the value of gathering and sharing customer testimonials; of how to communicate, problem solve, and provide customer service in the digital economy.
- Youth (as business owners and customers) would benefit from understanding their legal rights when it comes to e-commerce transactions. Other consumer awareness training would also be helpful.

At a national level

- Create a national strategy or development plan for e-commerce in Tanzania, as per the recommendations from UNCTAD private and public sector respondents.
- Initiate research into improved fulfillment services for e-commerce retailers, asking how the Tanzanian postal service or providers like DHL could be mobilized to improve product delivery.
- Initiate some degree of regulation for online marketplaces, particularly those operating in jurisdictions outside of Tanzania.
- Begin the process of creating a national consumer protection policy that differentiates between traditional commerce and e-commerce and establishes a clear line of recourse for unsatisfied customers. Roll out alongside a significant education campaign.
- Examine opportunities under the newly ratified African Continental Free Trade Area to increase online marketplace trade and sales with other African nations.



SUPPORT

Key ways to grow Tanzania's
entrepreneurship ecosystem

In her remarks at the TYDS opening ceremony, Jacqueline Materu from Vodacom Tanzania asked attendees if they thought the country had all the right players in the innovation ecosystem.

About half the room raised their placard to indicate yes. For the other half—and for the majority of TYDS participants—there are still areas of Tanzania’s entrepreneurship ecosystem that are primed for improvement and growth.

We explore this topic in four ways:

1. Online safety and the gender digital divide
2. Training centres: Creating spaces for youth to grow, learn, and fail
3. Enabling environments and infrastructure: The missing pieces
4. Resource and grant support

Online safety and the gender digital divide

Closing the gender digital divide is an ongoing theme in DOT’s work and was again a key topic of discussion at TYDS. The root causes of this divide are multifold: the high cost of getting online, a lack of digital know-how, scarcity of content that is relevant and empowering for women, and the barriers women still face when it comes to speaking freely and privately online.

The consequences play out each year: from a young age, girls and women have less access to technology and the internet than their male counterparts. This leads to less women pursuing degrees in ICT—women account for just 12% of professionals registered with Tanzania’s ICT Commission.

When they are online, women face disproportionate amounts of abuse, and entrenched cultural norms accuse women of only using their phones to gossip with friends or look at photos of men. COVID-19 has exacerbated these disparities and harmful stereotypes.

These issues were at the forefront of TYDS, namely two sessions on “Gender Inclusion and Career Transformation in the Digital Era” and an “Accelerating Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality” panel.

Focus group discussions revealed there is still much awareness raising to be done around the gender digital divide and online safety, particularly for young women. Asked if they had ever felt unsafe online, most young women said no; when prompted further to share a story of a time when a female family member or friend may have felt unsafe online, most women referenced a worst-case scenario: when they witnessed verbal abuse on Twitter, saw that inappropriate photos were leaked, or came across a celebrity being harassed.

“A friend of a friend had her pictures taken and they were edited to make her look naked,” said a participant from Tabora. “People should be educated on the correct uses of social media.”

These conversations seemed to suggest that the internet is safe until a large-scale event occurs. However, we know that smaller slights happen daily to women, be it sexism, teasing, inappropriate comments, or otherwise.

The many forms of online harassment

- Spreading rumours
- Name calling or rude remarks
- Encouraging other people to send inappropriate comments
- Sending unsolicited, emails, messages, or comments
- Creating photos, graphics, or updates that depict someone in a negative way
- Impersonating someone online
- Microaggressions: comments like “You’re really good at that even though you’re a girl”

This has the potential to discourage women from pursuing online business. Take this story shared by a TYDS participant from Iringa: “The challenge for me and for many women who are online business owners is that men don’t come as customers, but to seduce and tease you.”

Stories like this are troubling, and yet discussing these matters openly is important to reduce shame around these experiences and double down on working to create digital spaces where everyone feels safe and accepted.

Online safety: Further opportunities

While greater awareness needs to be raised around the causes and consequences of the gender digital divide, youth were also interested in more generalized cybersecurity and online safety training on topics such as:

- Recognizing real links versus those that may lead to a scam or virus.
- Changing social media settings to make your profile private and prevent unwanted people from accessing photos and other content.
- Determining whether an online business is legitimate.
- Knowing how to react when witnessing someone being bullied online.
- Avoiding cybercrimes.

Training centres: Creating spaces for youth to grow, learn, and fail

Young people are experts on their own lives. On many occasions, TYDS participants said they wish they were consulted on the key challenges affecting them: unemployment, a skills mismatch between post-secondary education and the workforce, and a demographic that has a lot of collective creativity and energy but not many formalized opportunities to utilize it.

Speaking with young people about these pain points fosters empathy and could catalyze action to create spaces that provide youth with the practical skills and resources to complement their desire to lead change and create a livelihood.

A word of caution from one TYDS participant: “Taking training models and skills from outside of Tanzania, like China or America, will not help much. The Government of Tanzania needs to know the realities of what youth need here and what they are actually able to do.”

To promote a space designed for them, focus group participants suggested enlisting the help of youth ambassadors, youth-led organizations like DOT, or celebrity influencers. These people could also be invited as speakers, creating further incentive for youth to attend training.

Engaging other young entrepreneurs and youth-led organizations will also provide the opportunity for youth to hear from those who have gone before them and learn from their successes and failures. There are business models and methodologies that have worked in Tanzania, and these should be more widely celebrated and shared.

Speaking of failing, TYDS participants and presenters spoke about the importance of being able to fail fast and to have a social safety net when it happens. “When we think of failure, most of us think of it as the end versus as part of the process. How many young people have had the chance to fail like that?” asked Princely H. Glorious, Co-founder of Ona Stories and master of ceremonies at the TYDS opening ceremony.

Whether it’s running design sprints, providing young people with a seed grant to test their idea (see the “Completing the cycle of support” section), or connecting them with an established entrepreneur who has been through the ups and downs, the next generation of youth spaces must create a culture and support system for youth to start something, fail, and begin again to build back better.

Enabling environments and infrastructure: The missing pieces

TYDS emphasized the role that enabling environment and infrastructure play in supporting a young person’s success. Here’s a few ideas from youth about where development partners, youth-serving organizations, and government stakeholders could step in to improve their experience:

Understanding these pain points fosters empathy and could catalyze action to create spaces that provide youth with the practical skills and resources to complement their desire to lead change and create a livelihood.

- Provide access to computers where youth can download files and print materials.
- Improve mobile bundle affordability or create a special rebate or package for young people.
- Ensure all schools are equipped with the internet so students can gain digital literacy and digital citizenship skills earlier in life.
- Better promote microwork and freelancing platforms.
- Advance the digitization of Tanzania Post outlets or create fulfillment (delivery) services for online business owners.

Fortunately, there is already progress being made. For example, UNICEF has partnered with University of Dar es Salaam - College of ICT, together they support an Youth for Children innovation lab that leverages youth-centred problem solving, human-centred design and challenge-driven education in enhancing the innovation capacity of students.

Together, the Delegation of the European Union to Tanzania and the Funguo Strategic Innovation Program co-designed a “Commercialising University Innovations” workshop that brought together key universities, COSTECH and government agencies, youth, and other stakeholders to problem solve and brainstorm a way for Funguo to support the commercialization agenda through its facility.

Notably, Funguo used TYDS as a stepping stone to learn about the needs of young people and university leadership around the commercialization of university products. Going forward, Funguo will be conducting a feasibility study that will lead to further investment in this space.

Such partnerships and ongoing research to identify “the missing pieces” are critical.

Completing the cycle of support: Resources and grants

In August 2021, Lydia Charles Moyo penned a public letter to development partners. The letter detailed her multi-year struggles to secure funding for her organization, Her Initiative, a challenge shared by many young Tanzanian entrepreneurs. Lydia is also the founder of Panda Digital, a new e-learning platform for Tanzanian women which you can read about on page 22.

“Boldly, I would like to say we are over trained and over mentored. With all the training and mentorships we have received so far, there is not much we can do, if the same is not backed up with enough resources/investments to create meaningful impact and exercise our agency.”

- An excerpt from Lydia’s “Open Letter to Development Partners: Put Your Money where Your Words ARE!”



Lydia at the TYDS opening ceremony

Lydia expounded on these thoughts at a TYDS unplugged fireside chat hosted by Segal Family Foundation, which focused on the realities of funding for youth-led organizations. She spoke to the full lifecycle of services and support needed to help young entrepreneurs run sustainable businesses. A significant gap? Resources and funding.

Lydia is not the only person who has flagged this concern. Young people share that partners are often only interested in funding initiatives that have reached the coveted ‘growth’ stage and are therefore less risky and more likely to succeed. While a valid approach, young innovators need to start somewhere.

“The limitations are there before you even apply for a grant,” described Lydia. “They’ll tell you we need three years of audited reports, we need financial, HR, child protection policies. We need you to have a minimum number of staff who are paid. There is a level of due diligence that you need to reach, but when you’re interacting with young people it means they’re still learning. That’s why you’re engaging them: because you understand and believe in their potential, but also in their power.”

Lydia suggests evolving funding models to support initiatives in their starting phase when innovators are developing the aforementioned policies and systems. Having recently secured a multi-year partnership for Her Initiative, Lydia also believes in the power of longer-term funding opportunities so entrepreneurs can focus on sustainable growth versus scrambling to put together a program that satisfies a one-year funding term.

Joining Lydia at the Unplugged TYDS session were two members of the Segal Family Foundation, Dedo N. Baranshamaje, the Director of Strategy - Africa, and Carolyn Kandusi, a Program Officer for the foundation based in Tanzania. A leader in the field of impactful and equitable grantmaking, the Segal Family Foundation has a building visionaries model that focuses on organizational strengthening for its grantees.

In response to Lydia's comments, Dedo said that youth across the continent are dealing with similar funding challenges. He explained that grantmaking agencies still place greater legitimacy on programs initiated by international NGOs and bilateral organizations, versus those that are youth-led.

"There is a status quo in how funding and investments are structured, starting with the teams who give grants," said Dedo. "They use the same biases they have, the same biases that are extremely colonial of where the value is at."

Dedo recommends three tactics to break through these systemic issues:

- **Build a strong engine:** Young entrepreneurs should do a thorough landscape analysis to fully understand the problem and players in the space.
- **Build trust:** Innovators should ask donors and stakeholders for feedback and advice and develop their relationship from there.
- **Build a pipeline of funders:** Diversify your funding—if a larger agency can provide short commitment funding, search for the private foundations such as Segal that can support over the longer term.

Carolyn Kandusi, herself a young innovator and Co-founder of Ubuntu Hub in Arusha, also encouraged youth to ask donors for feedback and learn how to speak their language. She said securing funding is a two-way street, and the onus is on young innovators to know the types of projects and themes that donors are willing to fund.

The Unplugged session highlighted the importance of having a forum where young people can connect with funders to share their feedback, seek advice, and build relationships. This was also a takeaway for Joseph Manirakiza, former Tanzania Country Director with the Human Development Innovation Fund (HDIF) which recently became the Funguo Innovation Program.

“There are few times when you get people who are actually on the other side of funding to sit together with their would-be beneficiaries to understand exactly what needs to change. [...] It’s not easy, especially if you are dealing with these large, traditional funding organizations.”

- Joseph Manirakiza, Program Manager of the Funguo Innovation Program

Going forward, DOT Tanzania will act on a suggestion that came from this session: that candid conversations like this continue between youth innovators, donors, and other stakeholders. Alongside the Segal Family Foundation, DOT will be co-creating a series of monthly ‘unplugged’ sessions to build on the themes explored during TYDS, including how to connect youth with resources and funding.

Putting our money where our mouth is

Recognizing that many ecosystem partners focus on skills development—including DOT, historically—DOT Tanzania started offering funding opportunities. Initiated in 2016, we recently increased the number of recipients to receive seed funding.

This Catalytic Fund is a way for youth to test their ideas and see what is possible. The grant is an initial 5 million Tanzania shillings per award (approximately €1,850) and is dispersed once youth have a work plan, with further funding available once they reach key milestones.

DOT Tanzania considers itself a chaperone in this process, serving as that safety net to permit young innovators a degree of failure and experimentation. Just as a family member or friend may support an entrepreneur through the early days of their journey, we want #DOTYouth to know they can come to us whether they succeed or fail.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create education campaigns and targeted training for both women and men that helps people recognize and respond to inappropriate behaviour witnessed online.
- Establish or promote women-only safe spaces (such as those offered through Women At Web) where facilitators provide various real-life examples of what constitutes cyberbullying or inappropriate behaviours.
- Collaborate with established youth-led and youth-serving organizations to plan and offer complementary training, cross-promote events, and share other teachings. These organizations have worked hard to build relationships with their community, and a new centre should not have to recreate the wheel.
- Consider the full cycle of support needed by Tanzanian entrepreneurs to make their business sustainable. This includes skills development, mentorship, and access to resources and funding.





CONCLUSION: A MORE INCLUSIVE DIGITAL FUTURE

For decades, youth have been applying their energy, creativity, and skills to start their own business or community initiative. DOT knows—we've been supporting young people to do this for nearly 20 years.

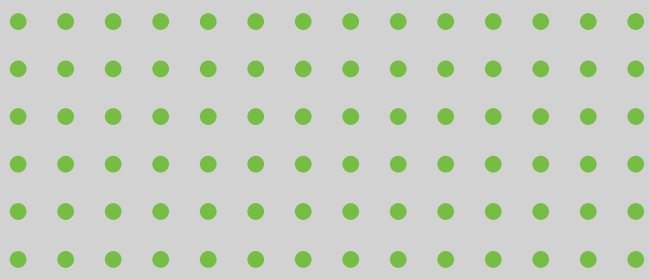
Now, trends in e-commerce and increased accessibility to technology, internet access, and low-cost digital marketing tools have opened the door to even greater opportunities. Whereas initiatives were previously limited to an entrepreneur's town or country, the internet has enabled their products, services, and ideas to reach across Tanzania and around the world.

Digital businesses are also a powerful way to close the digital gender divide. With more women working in the informal economy and the potential to operate businesses from home and with little resources, online businesses are a viable livelihood opportunity. These digital skills for entrepreneurship are part and parcel alongside ongoing efforts to eliminate the barriers that affect young women and girls.

Going forward, TYDS 2021 will inform an action plan for establishing zonal soft centres to promote youth engagement in digital innovation spaces countrywide. These centres will be implemented by the ICT Commission, in collaboration with DOT Tanzania, through the Digital Tanzania Project funded by World Bank and coordinated by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

This has been an energizing and inspiring year for the DOT Tanzania team. As well as hosting TYDS 2021, we celebrated the launch of Daring to Shift, DOT's latest project that puts young women at the centre of inclusive growth. The project was co-designed with youth from East Africa and the Middle East, and events like TYDS enable DOT to continue refining its digital skills and youth leadership training to best meet the needs of young people.

We'd like to thank the hundreds of young people and partners who shared their enthusiasm, experiences, and expertise at TYDS—your voices are of critical importance and DOT looks forward to working alongside you to build a future that promotes digital inclusion for all.



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