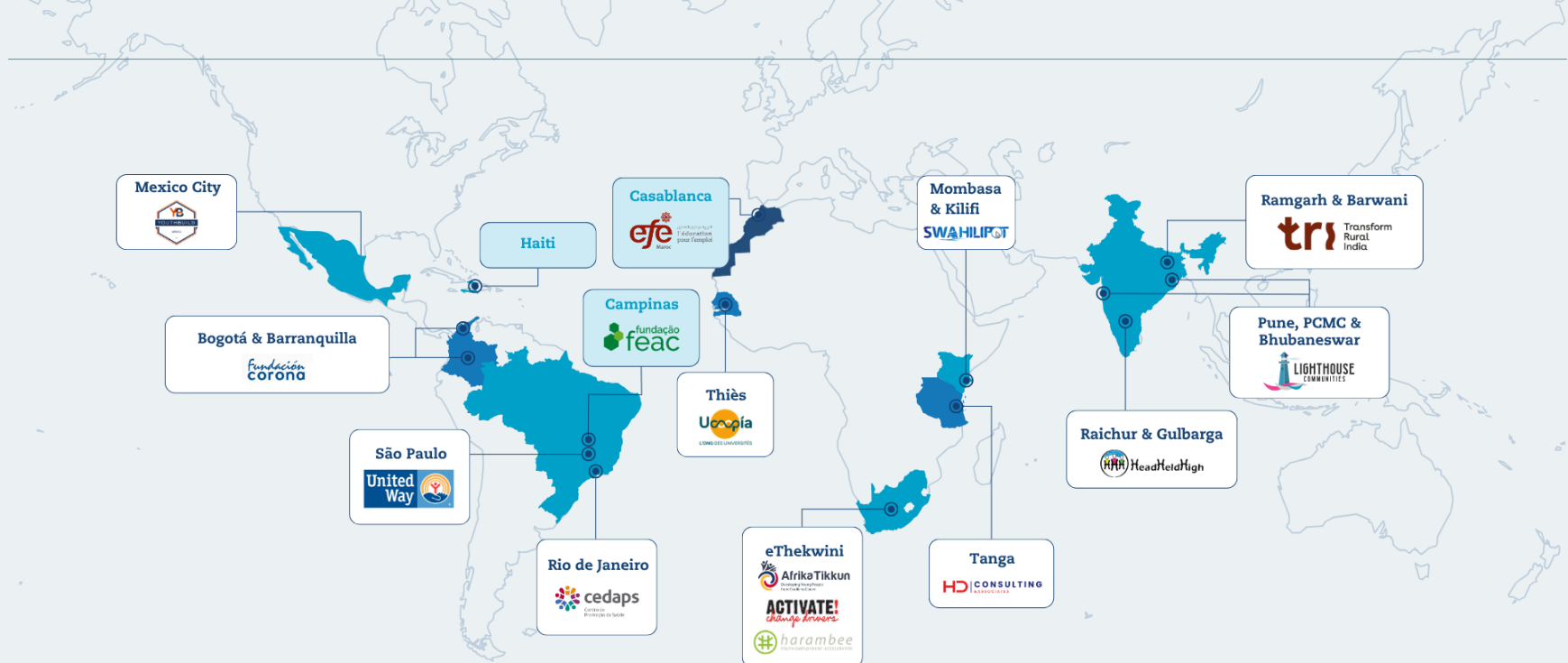


HAPPY INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY



At GOYN, we believe young people are essential partners in shaping decisions, co-creating solutions, and building more equitable, inclusive communities.

This International Youth Day, we're inviting you to meet 19 young leaders from our GOYN communities in India, Africa, and Latin America to celebrate their leadership, stories, and the impact they're making every day.

Kilifi, Kenya

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH NETWORK
THE FUTURE IS YOUNG
aspen institute

JESCA REHEMA

Jesca has turned her own journey from a humble background into a driving force for community empowerment. She co-founded Sombeza Enterprise, supporting vulnerable families with essentials.

She is also among the founders of MIDPO, which advocates for local industries to help farmers and entrepreneurs add value to Kilifi's coconut and cashew resources. As a storyteller with Wikimedia-affiliated AfroCROWD, Jesca documents Mijikenda cultural heritage, work that has taken her to Wikimania in Nairobi and, this year, Paris. As a YAG members, she also mentors other young people.

"I believe that every opportunity we create for someone else has the power to transform not only one life but an entire community. My purpose is to ensure that no young person gives up on their dreams simply because they lacked someone to believe in them."





CHRISTINE TITUS

Christine is a passionate young woman leader serving as GOYN Mombasa's Youth Advisory Group Secretary, dedicated to youth empowerment, disability inclusion, and community transformation. Representing youth from Likoni, she advocates for meaningful youth participation while championing disability inclusion, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and climate action, working to create safe, inclusive, and sustainable spaces for young people and persons with disabilities.

As Chairperson of the Jasiri Women PWD Group and founder of Tish Tamu Bites, she combines leadership, entrepreneurship, and advocacy to empower marginalized communities and inspire positive change.

eThekweni,
South Africa

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH NETWORK: ETHEKWINI
THE FUTURE IS YOUNG
aspen institute

XOLISWA AMANDA MATOME JWILI

Xoliswa is an admitted attorney, labour law specialist, researcher, entrepreneur, facilitator, and traditional healer that has built her work around advancing justice, dignity, and equal opportunity for all. Through her firm, Moyana Jwili Attorneys, she provides expert legal services while championing access to justice, workplace fairness, and human rights, with a particular focus on empowering women, vulnerable groups, and rural communities.

Guided by the principles of Ubuntu, Xoliswa continues to inspire youth to become agents of change, showing that success is measured not only by professional achievement, but by the ability to uplift others and contribute to a more just, inclusive society.



ACTIVATE!
change drivers

 **AfrikaTikkun**
Developing Young People
from Cradle to Career

 **harambee**
YOUTH EMPLOYMENT ACCELERATOR

ADAMA GUÈYE

Adama Guèye is a young cook whose passion for the kitchen began in childhood, watching simple ingredients transform into delicious dishes. This passion led her to pursue technical training in cooking, where she sharpened her talent and grew her ambition. Seeing the Skills Competition as a chance to push herself further, she trained rigorously and won regional champion, then carried that momentum through intensive coaching all the way to the national final — ultimately earning first national prize.

Her journey stands as a powerful example of how talent, hard work, and perseverance can turn vocational training into a path of true excellence.



Tanga, Tanzania

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH NETWORK: TANGA
SIKU ZA USONI NI CHANGA
aspen institute

ABDALLAH RASHID MSELEM

Growing up in a humble background, Abdallah discovered that leadership is not about titles, it is about service, compassion, and creating opportunities for others.

He has become a strong advocate for youth participation, amplifying young people's voices through Ward Youth Forums and championing their meaningful representation in local decision-making. From mobilizing community clean-up campaigns to inspiring civic engagement, Abdallah has consistently shown that lasting change begins when young people choose to lead.

"A car lift does not find you at home, it finds you on the road. Make sure you are on the road to seize opportunities."





YASSINE ETTALIBI

Yassine is a Master's student in Renewable Energy who believes young people can drive meaningful change when given the right opportunities.

He has dedicated himself to connecting young Moroccans with international opportunities. He also developed IHYAE, a solar-powered smart irrigation project that won first prize at the Morocco Youth Prize for its innovation and positive social impact, which was awarded by the Moroccan Ministry of Youth, Culture and Communication.

"I believe real change begins when we stop waiting for opportunities and start creating them—not only for ourselves, but for others too."

Barranquilla,
Colombia

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH NETWORK: BARRANQUILLA
EL FUTURO ES JOVEN
aspen institute

YUCELIS ALEJANDRA ARROCHA FLÓREZ

Yucelis is a 21-year-old community advocate who felt called to service as a child. Her path has taken her from volunteering with Catholic churches and the Barranquilla Zoo's education team. She co-founded Flor de Marzo, a feminist collective building a more just Caribbean region, where she works to bring education on sexual and reproductive rights to local youth.

"I believe that one of the most meaningful moments in my story has been my time at GOYN Barranquilla. Being able to connect other young people with real opportunities, accompany them as they discover who they want to become, and see the joy on their faces when they feel heard, understood, and capable, is a satisfaction that is hard to put into words."

Fundación corona



MARIAPAZ BONILLA ROSAS

Mariapaz overcame childhood bullying to become a voice for youth participation. A scholarship to CIVIX Colombia's LIDERAB program revealed her purpose: helping young people realize their voice matters. She co-founded Pulzo Paz y Sport, using sports to transform lives in Suba's neighborhoods, and later ran for the Local Youth Council of Suba, finishing as the locality's second most-voted independent candidate. She now advises GOYN Bogotá's Youth Advisory Group, serves as a CIVIX Colombia ambassador, studies International Relations at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, and has addressed Colombia's Congress on behalf of youth councils and rural inclusion.

"I understood that the problem wasn't that young people didn't want to participate. The problem was that often no one taught them that they could."



Rio de Janeiro,
Brazil



MATEUS LUIZ FRAGA MOREIRA

Magrão is a 20-year-old multi-artist, cultural producer, and YAG member from Japeri. Raised by a single father, his interest in art and student leadership began early, with one of his poems selected for his municipality's Literary Fair. After losing his father at 15 and moving to Rio's North Zone, he found slam poetry, an encounter that reshaped his path.

He founded Slam Magia Acari and launched initiatives supporting student communication and youth councils, including with UNICEF and Decola Cria. Today, Magrão studies Education at UERJ and Social Media at Spectaculu, continuing to use art, education, and communication as tools to uplift young people from Brazil's peripheral communities.





RODOLFO OLIVEIRA

Rodolfo learned early on the value of feeling welcomed. When he looks back on his childhood, it's not the streets he remembers first — it's the people, and the feeling of belonging.

He's always noticed details that almost no one else sees, and that's how art found its way into his life. Writing became the place where he belonged. He sees beauty where almost no one else looks for it. You'll always find him filling pages with words and drawings, because once, they saved him from silence.

"Representing Campinas in GOYN's YAG means showing that every young person deserves to find a place where their voice fits. Someone has to walk so that one day others might run."

São Paulo, Brazil



ISABELLY SILVA RODRIGUES

Isabelly is a member of Juventudes Potentes's Núcleo Jovem (Youth Advisory Group). Her story is marked by hardships, including a struggle with depression during the pandemic. After rediscovering her strength and believing in herself again, she found in the YAG a space of support, connection, and new possibilities.

As a student of International Relations, Isabelly believes that every challenge we overcome makes us stronger.

"I found the YAG in an obscure period where I didn't know where to go, what my direction was, and what I was doing. My most striking experience so far has been the 2025 Convening, which was literally a watershed moment for me."



VERÓNICA BEAÑA GONZÁLEZ

Verónica joined Mexico City's YAG while she was navigating the nerves and insecurities that so many young women face when spaces for their voices are limited. Today, she commands the stage as master of ceremonies at major GOYN Mexico events, channels her creativity into the "Voices and Agents" video series to communicate youth challenges through art, and has recently taken the bold step of returning to her studies.

Verónica's journey reflects the deeper purpose of the YAG: it's not just a space to attend meetings, but a long-term process of growth that gives OY the tools to recognize their own leadership and become agents of change in their communities.

Ramgarh, India

ANJU KUMARI

For Anju, her desire to support her family became the foundation of a successful enterprise that has transformed her life and benefited her entire community. Born into a farming family, she believed that starting a business would help her become financially independent while also addressing a local need. After receiving entrepreneurship training and a loan, she was confident enough to open her grocery stand.

Today, Anju supports her family, has improved her children's education, and provides a vital service to her village. She dreams of expanding into a larger store and inspiring other rural women to pursue financial independence.





NIRMALA

Nirmala turned her concern for her community's wellbeing into powerful youth-led action. Witnessing women neglecting their own health, elderly people going untreated, and girls held back by gender norms, she translated her passion into meaningful action by joining Raichur's YAG, which built her leadership, communication, and mobilisation skills.

She went on to lead a Pulse Polio Awareness Rally promoting child immunisation and organised a Free Health Check-up Camp that gave women, the elderly, and vulnerable residents access to preventive healthcare. She has also driven household conversations on gender equality, encouraging families to support equal opportunities for women and girls.

Primpri Chinchwad,
India

SAKSHI GHOLAP

Sakshi is a passionate social entrepreneur and menstrual health advocate dedicated to improving women's health and well-being. Since 2021, she has been working to raise awareness about menstrual hygiene and promote sustainable menstrual products through her Sakshi PadPreneurs Initiative.

Through her work, she aims to empower young women and tackle unsafe menstrual practices, rising health risks, and the growing burden of plastic-based sanitary waste by offering safer choices and open conversations.





ANJANEYA

Like many young people in his community, Anjaneya witnessed poverty and inequality firsthand. He was troubled by the gap between policy and reality and the normalization of injustice. This shaped his belief that real change begins when ordinary people find the courage to speak up for one another.

He joined GOYN's local YAG and began addressing issues that affected his community, even when it meant facing pressure and pushback. Rather than back down, he leaned on tools like the Right to Information Act to pursue transparency — not by speaking for others, but by helping them understand their own rights and find their own voice.

For Anjaneya, success has never been about recognition. It's about watching people who once felt invisible start to believe their voices matter.

Bhubaneswar, India

NAFISHA BEGUM

Nafisha has always been driven by a desire to lift up her community. With a Master's in Education, she's spent years leading programs that raise awareness around education, health, and opportunity.

She developed an interest in menstrual health and sustainability, which led her to innovate. Last year, her work developing eco-friendly sanitary pads earned her 2nd Prize at the Menstrual Health and Hygiene Conclave, hosted by IIT Bhubaneswar University.

Looking ahead, Nafisha dreams of building an organization of her own that creates lasting social impact through education, skills, and livelihood opportunities for others.





BALAJI SHINDE

Balaji is a social development professional with over four years of experience in Corporate Social Responsibility and community development. He is passionate about promoting inclusion, financial independence, and sustainable opportunities for marginalized communities.

He leads a cooperative, peer-led initiative that focuses on building skills, confidence, and access to dignified, local income opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Alongside livelihoods, his initiative strengthens awareness of rights and access to government programs.

Barwani, India

RUKHSANA BI

Rukhsana always dreamt of financial independence, even though social norms limited her formal education to the 8th grade. That didn't stop her from staying curious and, with encouragement from her family, she sought to find a way to serve her community. It was then that she noticed that there were no local fabric shops.

She turned that observation into action, securing credit and building a business plan to launch Ayesha Collection Cloth Shop. Today, her shop serves nearly 200 local families, offering fabrics, bangles, and seasonal garments.

Running her own business has given Rukhsana greater confidence, a stronger standing in her community, and the ability to invest in her children's education and future.

