



Green Jobs and the Future of Work in Africa

INCLUDE

CHALLENGE
FUND
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Introduction

Africa stands at a crossroads. The continent's youth population is growing faster than anywhere else in the world, while the impacts of climate change are intensifying. Youth unemployment and climate change are often described as “threat multipliers” that exacerbate existing challenges and inequalities, especially for vulnerable communities in the Global South. Yet, they hold the potential to be turned into opportunities for an inclusive and just transformation towards a green economy. The green economy is often cited as a once-in-a-generation opportunity in Africa to create millions of decent and future-proof jobs for young women and men through alternative, more sustainable, forms of value creation. The question is no longer whether the transition to a green economy will create employment, but whether they will deliver the kind of work that enables Africa's youth to thrive in employment environments that provide dignity, fair income, and position them as innovators and agents of change to drive a sustainable and prosperous future for the continent.

In recent years, African governments and multilateral institutions have converged around one key message: **Green jobs are central to youth inclusion, climate action, and economic development.** At the Second Africa Climate Summit in September this year, leaders called for “bold, African-led climate solutions” to unlock pathways for renewable energy, resilient infrastructure, and youth inclusion as central pillars of the continent's future. The Summit pledged over 100 billion Dollar in investment through the strategic cooperation framework Africa Green Industrialization Initiative, signalling recognition that climate action must be paired with economic transformation. Meanwhile, several global initiatives and impact-oriented consortia, such as the Green Jobs for Youth Pact co-led by ILO, UNEP, and UNICEF, have set ambitious targets to create millions of new green jobs, improve existing jobs, and support youth-led entrepreneurship by 2030 and beyond.

Domestically, African governments are turning attention to national pathways and roadmaps for the green economy as both a climate and jobs imperative. Claver Gatete—Executive Secretary for United Nations Economic Commission for Africa—called on African nations during the 11th Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to harness inclusive, evidence-based strategies in order to drive the creation of green jobs. In addition, green jobs are also high on the agenda of international development efforts that aim to advance strategic partnerships, support local development trajectories and create a thriving ecosystem for businesses to scale their operations. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, played a pioneering role in establishing the **Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE)** as a multi-million Euro initiative that explicitly links decent youth employment to Africa's green and digital transitions.

Despite the momentum, implementation on the ground is lagging behind. A lack of coordinated effort and finance to support and scale existing youth employment initiatives and green business models is compounded by the absence of concrete and evidence-based strategies to overcome these barriers. Key questions remain that hinder strategy formulation and implementation:

- *How to define which green jobs truly deliver dignity and inclusion?*
- *Which green business models are viable in African markets?*
- *How to improve working conditions to attract and retain skilled youth?*
- *How can we ensure women, rural youth, and informal workers are not left behind?*

Building the Evidence Base: The INCLUDE–CFYE Partnership

Complementing the visions and targets shared by multinational institutions, research institutes are increasingly publishing systematic evidence that underlines the youth employment potential of the green economy. For instance, the first pan-African forecast for near-term job creation—the FSD Africa/ Shortlist Forecasting Green Jobs report—projects over 3 million new jobs in Africa’s green economy by 2030. Forecast reports like this serve as a broad foundation to assess labour market demand across different sectors, regions, and timeframes, highlighting the critical role of human capital in green economic growth and the need to address demanded skills and potential mismatches. While these constitute informed commitments and targets, the implementation gap between the realisation of these projections and the reality of current labour markets is widening into a critical fault line that risks leaving Africa’s youth behind.

Despite rising global attention on green jobs, significant knowledge gaps remain on how young people are included and can benefit from the green transition. Precisely to bridge this evidence gap, the CFYE and INCLUDE joined forces in 2022 to launch a research partnership on Green Jobs and the Future of Work. Its aim is to combine rigorous evidence from existing research, case studies of pioneering green businesses and system-level learnings *to uncover what works, why, and how in creating decent green jobs for Africa’s youth*.

By complementing each other’s strengths, the partnership was set up so that knowledge, experience and lessons learnt reach those who can make a difference through recommendations and key insights. CFYE provides direct access to enterprises and implementing partners who are experimenting on the ground with new models of green employment and entrepreneurship. INCLUDE contributes its expertise in brokering knowledge and curating evidence across contexts through research and knowledge exchange. This evidence synthesis report distills the lessons learnt from three years of joint research into actionable insights.

The Challenge Fund & INCLUDE Partnership Explained

The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment (CFYE), launched by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2019, is a seven-year, €134 million programme implemented by a consortium of Palladium, Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and Randstad. Its goal is to create a prosperous future for 230,000 young women and men (aged 15–35) across the Middle East, North Africa, Sahel and West Africa, and the Horn of Africa.

Operating in eleven focus countries, CFYE supports initiatives that provide youth with demand-driven and productive work, offering a stable income, safe conditions, and opportunities for personal development. With an increasing share of green and digital jobs in its portfolio, CFYE has become a testing ground for what works in building youth-inclusive and sustainable economies. CFYE’s portfolio is structured around three employment outcomes: Create, Match, and Improve. This framework balances innovation and scale by tailoring investments to context. In relatively mature markets, such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda, the fund prioritises scalable business models that can generate large job numbers. In mid-level economies, such as Senegal, Morocco, and Tunisia, it supports a mix of growth-oriented and early-stage ventures. In more fragile settings, such as South Sudan or Burkina Faso, it focuses more on inclusion and social impact. This differentiated approach ensures that funding strategies align with both market maturity and the enabling environment for private-sector engagement.

The Fund combines results-based financing, technical assistance, and adaptive portfolio management to help enterprises grow and improve job quality. Its model requires implementing partners to co-invest up to 50 percent of project costs, ensuring local ownership and market relevance. The consortium's complementary expertise—[Palladium](#) in private-sector development and fund management, [Randstad](#) in labour-market intermediation, and [VSO](#) in inclusion and youth engagement—enables CFYE to operate as both financier and ecosystem facilitator.

INCLUDE is an independent think and do tank hosted in the Netherlands. It connects African researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and private sector actors around inclusive-development challenges, translating evidence into policy and practice. Its current research agenda places a strong emphasis on economic and climate justice, with a focus on decent work and income for youth and women as a pathway to more inclusive and green structural transformation. Through knowledge brokering, evidence synthesis and policy dialogues, INCLUDE promotes fair, future-oriented economies that create green and decent jobs while addressing inequalities in access, opportunity, and voice.

Together, CFYE and INCLUDE form a strategic partnership that links implementation with evidence, ensuring that lessons from practice inform policy, and that research insights translate into concrete action for decent youth employment in Africa.

Research Design

The INCLUDE-CFYE research partnership followed a phased and iterative learning trajectory, designed to generate evidence on how green enterprises in Africa can create and sustain decent jobs for youth. Across all phases, the partnership combined literature review, enterprise case studies, focus group discussions, and sensemaking sessions with businesses, youth, and practitioners in the field. Participants were typically professionals and country leads from the CFYE and their portfolio of implementing partners and complemented by consultation with experts and business representatives that operate in the same ecosystem or sector. The result is not just a set of research outputs, but a collective learning process that brought diverse stakeholders together to reflect, adapt, and exchange knowledge.

Phase 1: Scoping the Green Job Landscape (2022-2023)

The first phase explored the green jobs landscape by reviewing the latest literature and looking into CFYE's portfolio of green businesses. Drawing on insights from interviews with CFYE country leads and a close look at three diverse business cases, it shaped a practical definition of green jobs for youth, built a green jobs mapping tool, and highlighted five sectors with strong employment potential. To support coordinated efforts in the fragmented green economy ecosystem, the report advanced key recommendations for employment creation in the green transition.

- ✕ [Report: Green Jobs for Youth in Africa](#)
- ✕ [Policy Brief: Green Jobs for Youth in Africa](#)

Phase 2: Exploring Circular Waste Management (2024)

Building on these insights, the second phase focused on the waste management sector through two Kenyan case studies advancing circular economy models that open opportunities for youth working in the informal economy. Based on a literature review and interviews with key company representatives, it examined how pioneering enterprises *TakaTaka Solutions* and *Mr. Green Africa** generate jobs along the plastic recycling value chain, while tackling barriers such as stigma, insecure working conditions, and fragmented policies.

- ✕ [Report: Green Jobs for Youth in Africa's Waste Recycling Sector](#)
- ✕ [Key Recommendations](#)
- ✕ [Infographic: How to make waste work for decent green jobs](#)

Phase 3: Leveraging Green and Digital Technologies (2024–2025)

The third phase turned to Africa's agricultural sector, exploring how agribusinesses are leveraging green and digital technologies to create and sustain jobs for youth, particularly young women and smallholder farmers. Through case studies of *ThriveAgric* in Nigeria and *Startupbootcamp (SBC) Senegal*, the research highlighted two different approaches along the innovation spectrum: *ThriveAgric* as a scaling pioneer embedding digital tools into farming ecosystems, and *SBC* as an ecosystem enabler supporting early-stage ventures in a more nascent market. Together, they illustrate the opportunities and constraints of harnessing technology for a just food systems transition in Africa. The case studies consisted of interviews with a small sample of company staff and were complemented by focus group discussions with CFYE country leads and implementing partners as well as key informant interviews with youth champions and other digital agribusinesses.

- ✕ [Case Illustrations: Leveraging green and digital technologies to create decent jobs for youth in agriculture](#)
- ✕ [Slide Deck: How green & digital technology can contribute to youth employment](#)
- ✕ [Slide Deck: Insights from youth agripreneurs and agribusinesses](#)

Phase 4: From Evidence to Action (2025-2026)

This synthesis report marks the fourth and last stage of the learning process. It brings together evidence and lessons from all previous phases and translates them into actionable insights for governments, funders, practitioners, and entrepreneurs. Therefore, consultations with a diverse set of stakeholders working in the youth employment and green business space were held to identify their knowledge gaps and evidence needs. Amongst them were programme managers from implementing NGOs, research institutes and private sector agencies; youth and employment policy advisors from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs; as well as research and monitoring, evaluation and learning managers at impact investment funds. Their questions were collected, categorised and matched with the findings that were generated in the context of this research partnership (see **Annex** for the full list of stakeholders and knowledge questions).

*The insights presented on Mr. Green Africa (MGA) are drawn from the 2023 case study. In November 2025, MGA withdrew from the CFYE programme due to business model adjustments made in response to shifts in market demand for specific types of plastic. These adjustments led to reduced investment in some job-improvement and social-support activities. This illustrates how evolving market conditions can influence the capacity of green businesses to pursue decent work strategies and highlights the importance of adaptive planning for both businesses and funders.

Their knowledge gaps, questions, and concerns have shaped the structure of this synthesis, ensuring that the insights presented here speak directly to those who can advance the creation of more and better green jobs in Africa.

The CFYE-INCLUDE research partnership placed the enterprise perspective at the centre documenting how businesses themselves grow, innovate, and create the conditions for decent employment at scale. The overarching research question guiding the partnership has been: *How can green enterprises in Africa drive decent and inclusive employment for youth while advancing environmental sustainability?*

The partnership enabled a targeted and practice-oriented inquiry into Africa's green jobs landscape through an analysis of the CFYE's portfolio, case studies of pioneering enterprises in agriculture, waste management, manufacturing and construction, and an examination of how digital technology and social support structures can meaningfully engage youth in the green economy. While the sample of enterprises is selective by design, the combination of case studies, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and portfolio analysis ensure that the findings capture patterns and lessons with relevance beyond individual examples.

Green Jobs and the Future of Work in Africa

**Click the Title Above for an Audiovisual Overview on Green Jobs*

This chapter translates the body of evidence generated in the context of the CFYE-INCLUDE research partnership into pathways for decent youth employment in Africa's green transitions. The result is a repertoire of lessons and recommendations that not only serve to inform but aim to inspire bolder commitments and practical decisions that can turn Africa's green transition into a prosperous future of decent work for its youth.

As explained in the previous section, these lessons are not only informed by the research outputs themselves, but also by the consultation meetings we held with a diverse set of stakeholders prior to the synthesis. To guide concrete action by entrepreneurs, policymakers, funders, and programme implementers, the findings are presented as practical strategies structured around four key drivers: *Awareness, Green Business Model, Decent Work, and Strategic Partnerships*. Developed and refined throughout the research trajectory, these *Future of Work Pathways* capture the main levers for creating and improving green jobs as part of a just transition towards a green economy. Before exploring these pathways, however, it is essential to clarify what we mean by "green jobs" and how they can be identified across different sectors, since understanding where such opportunities emerge is the first step towards creating them.

What is a Green Job?

Green jobs are more than just employment in "ecological sectors". They are jobs that both benefit the environment and uphold standards of decency. Drawing from international definitions ([ILO](#), [UNEP](#), [OECD](#)) and our own research, we define green jobs as:

Jobs in green businesses that contribute appreciably to maintaining or restoring environmental quality and avoiding future damage to the Earth's ecosystems, while also generating and supporting the wellbeing of people.

This means that green jobs are not only about reducing emissions, resource use, or waste, but also about providing dignity, fair income, rights, and security in line with the *ILO's pillars of decent work*. **An exploration of the green job potential, therefore, needs to consider both the capacity to create new green jobs and to improve the job decency of available youth employment opportunities.**

Importantly, green jobs exist across a spectrum rather than as a binary category: some jobs are “greener” than others, depending on their processes and outcomes. Conceptualising this spectrum into indicators can serve to measure to what extent a job is green. This can, for instance, help policymakers, funders and practitioners to assess the green job potential of a business model.

To this end, the OECD developed '**green job indicators**' representing different ways in which a job can be green: sector, product/service, production method, green awareness, position in the value chain, occupational profile, required skills and abilities, job decency, and green workload. Because our research was conducted in the context of enterprises supported by the CFYE, we take the business as the unit of analysis, focusing on how companies can create, improve, or transform jobs to become greener and more decent. **We created a simplified *Green Jobs Mapping Tool* that can help professionals to assess to what extent a business model can support the creation of green jobs.** It uses four indicators that are relevant to the CFYE's mission to stimulate green job growth for youth in Africa:

1. **Sector:** Delineates the sector in which the business is operating and the greening potential of that sector in the economy, including the extent to which environmental impacts can be reduced.
2. **Business strategy:** Considers the environmental sustainability of the business model, including the production of goods or provision of services that benefit the environment or contributing to more environmentally friendly processes.
3. **Climate action:** The extent to which a business is focused on climate mitigation and adaptation, looking at the extent of reducing emissions and stabilising the levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere as well as adapting to the consequences of climate change.
4. **Green Skills:** The knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop, and support a sustainable and resource efficient society, including core skills such as environmental awareness, technical know-how, values and attitudes, as well as specific skills and knowledge pertaining to green technologies and innovation.

Want to learn more about: *Measuring Green Jobs?*

- ✕ ILO's *Handbook on measuring green jobs and skills for green jobs* provides practical measurement approaches to help practitioners systematically measure and assess green jobs and skills for green jobs outcomes within existing monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks.

Which sectors are the most promising to absorb youth at scale?

Across stakeholder consultations, a shared concern was the need to create a green economy that can absorb youth at scale beyond isolated initiatives, pilot projects, and “frontrunner” businesses that rarely progress beyond the start-up phase. Achieving this requires identifying where large-scale job creation can realistically take place and how businesses can be supported to grow within those sectors.

For investors, policymakers, and international donors seeking monetary, social or environmental returns, this means focussing on the sectors with the highest potential and associated green business strategies.

Our analysis of the CFYE's portfolio with the *Green Jobs Mapping Tool* allowed us to create **Green Job Typologies** (see *interactive graphic below*) for the most promising sectors. We distinguish five sectors with high potential for green employment creation that can be considered growth sectors for green jobs for youth in Africa:



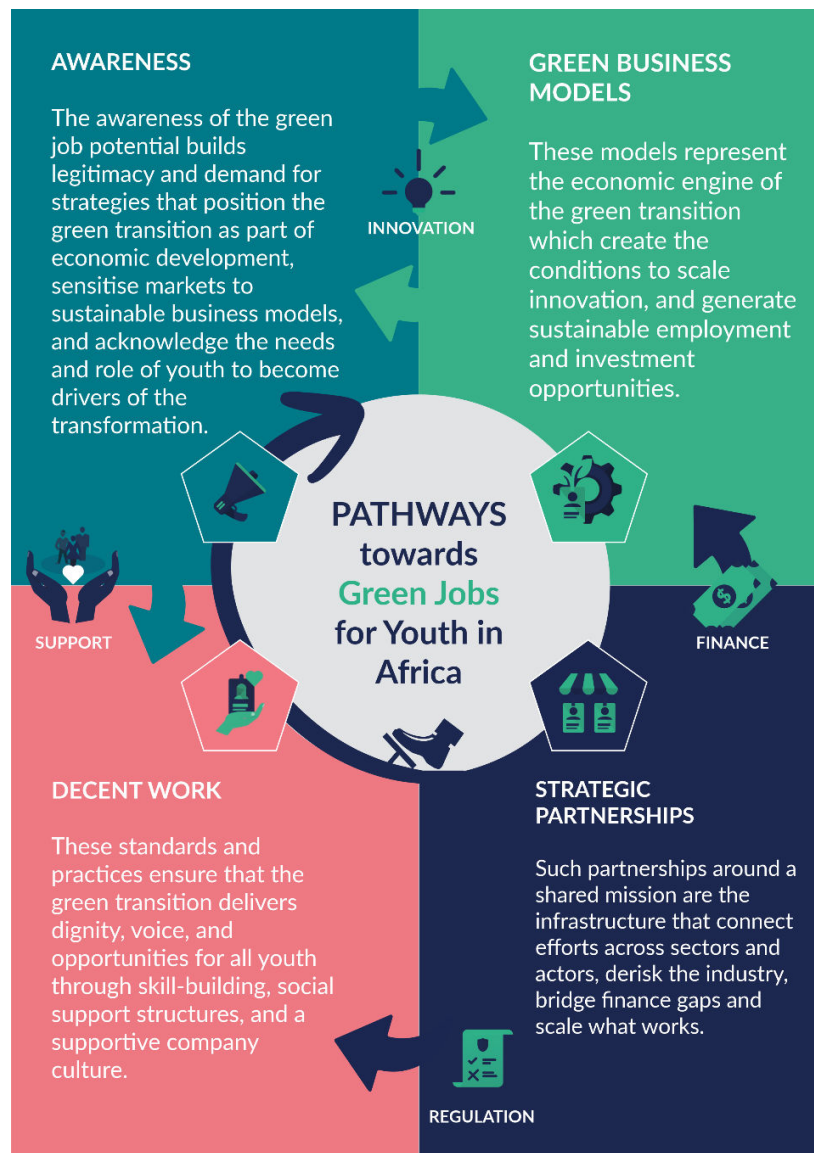
Figure 1: Adapted from INCLUDE Platform & CFYE. (2022). *Green jobs for youth in Africa*. <https://includeplatform.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Green-Jobs-For-Youth-in-Africa.pdf>

Beyond stimulating growth in specific sectors, the concept of a circular economy can also be seen as a powerful, cross-cutting opportunity for green job creation. By rethinking linear production systems and designing for reuse, repair, and recycling, businesses can create new markets and services while reducing environmental pressure. For many African enterprises, this shift is already taking shape through innovative models that turn waste into resources and inefficiencies into business opportunities. Evidence from the case study of waste-recycling enterprises in Kenya shows how circular practices can transform low-value, informal work into viable and decent employment.

Realising the full potential of the circular economy, however, requires an ecosystem approach that connects local innovation to supportive policies, financing instruments, and market incentives that incentivise circular production and consumption. Identifying growth sectors answers *where* green jobs can be created. The next question is *how*: what conditions enable these opportunities to translate into decent employment for youth?

Pathways towards Decent Youth Employment in Africa's Green Economy

This chapter brings together lessons from across CFYE's portfolio of green businesses, implementing partners, and expert consultations to identify where progress is needed most. **Drawing from this evidence, we developed four *Future of Work Pathways* (see graphic below) to guide professionals, policymakers, and funders in understanding how to overcome common barriers and what conditions are needed to build an effective green jobs ecosystem.** In the context of this research, the term “pathways” refers to socially and politically shaped routes that describe how different actors, institutions, and systems move towards a desired future. The *Future of Work Pathways* capture the key processes that enable Africa's green transition to generate decent, inclusive employment for youth. They are not linear steps but interconnected trajectories that reinforce each other. Together, they illustrate how Africa's green transition can become a driver of dignified and future-proof work for its young population.



Awareness

Raise awareness among all actors around the positive impact of the green transition on the economy, human well-being and the environment.

Why it Matters

A key driver of both the shift towards environmentally sustainable business models and decent employment opportunities for youth is broad-based awareness of the green transition's social, economic, and environmental benefits.

Barriers to Overcome

Despite growing attention to sustainability, awareness of the economic, social, and employment potential of green transitions remains limited across all levels. Policymakers often frame green initiatives as environmental or charitable projects rather than drivers of competitiveness and innovation. In the private sector, low visibility of successful green business models discourages adoption and scaling. Many communities still associate waste collection, farming, or construction with low social status, reinforcing stigma around the very sectors where most green jobs are found. For youth, this lack of awareness translates into uncertainty about career prospects and a disconnect between aspirations and available opportunities. Addressing these perception and information gaps is therefore the first step towards building legitimacy, mobilising investment, and aligning public and private action around a shared vision of green work.

Key Insights

Framing green jobs as an opportunity for competitiveness, innovation, and social inclusion helps position the green transition as a national growth strategy, rather than a social or environmental side project. Consistent lobbying and co-design with policymakers and implementers helps build support for coherent national strategies and effective implementation for a just green transition. Practitioners can increase legitimacy and buy-in of governments and investors by highlighting tangible success stories and strong business cases that show improved productivity and income for smallholders, informal workers and youth.

Context-specific evidence of nationally relevant case studies is needed to inform policymakers and donors about the most effective types of interventions. There is a need for both general market trends and disaggregated context-specific data on the impact of certain technologies, innovations and business models. To move beyond anecdotal and donor-driven evidence towards systemic assessments of impact on jobs and inclusion, governments and industry associations can establish a central repository for high-potential sectors that aggregates labour market data for tracking employment trends, effectiveness of interventions as well as industry and skills demand. Developing and sharing standardised data collection frameworks and methods industry-wide serves to ease data integration and aggregation. Analysing this data and publicly sharing the insights with companies will also help smaller businesses to adjust their business models to changing market conditions and learn from good practices.

Combining enterprises' investment in innovation with strategic community engagement, designing user-friendly services, and co-creating solutions with the very communities they serve can stimulate market demand. In agriculture, the digital agribusiness *ThriveAgric* demonstrated that visibility and peer learning among young farmers fosters trust and encourages uptake of sustainable practices.

The company built digital advisory and input-linkage services around farmers' lack of access to inputs, data and markets, thereby creating a customer-driven digital service that integrates youth as field agents into the agricultural value chain. Likewise, other digital agricultural extension initiatives (*Startupbootcamp Senegal*) showed that locally anchored communication through youth agents as trusted intermediaries can build confidence in new technologies and overcome barriers to adoption. Moreover, publicly sharing success stories can strengthen confidence among investors and inspire imitation by other entrepreneurs.

Professionalising employment opportunities in the green economy is key to overcoming social stigma and public perceptions attached to currently often informal, low-paid and insecure options. Currently, social stigma prevents many youth from entering potential green sectors, such as agriculture, waste management or construction. Strategic media and advocacy campaigns can reframe these sectors as engines of innovation and dignity. In the waste recycling sector, for example, community inclusion in awareness campaigns helped shift public perceptions from “waste picking as survival work” to “waste recycling as entrepreneurship”. Working together with and supporting NGOs and advocacy organisations, such as national waste picker organisations, creates trust among workers and opens dialogue with authorities.

Empowering youth to speak for themselves in local dialogues and policy processes, supporting relatable role models, and access to information platforms help shift perceptions from dependency to agency. Many young people remain unaware of how green jobs link to their aspirations for meaningful and future-oriented work. Thus, information on where to find employment, how to position oneself in evolving labour markets, and how to access skills and networks determines whether the next generation can seize the potential of green jobs. Young influencers and youth champions in the agricultural sector highlighted that awareness raising goes a long way if it goes hand in hand with representation and participation. Recognising and celebrating community-level innovation and entrepreneurship can in turn attract youth to green business opportunities that are often overlooked, such as agroecology, waste valorization and repair services, but hold high potential for dignified and future-oriented employment.

Across all levels, awareness creation requires collaboration. Currently, NGOs, pioneering businesses, and social impact consortia are driving much of the advocacy and evidence-building work. They need stronger institutional and financial support to reach the right actors at scale. Partnerships among governments, businesses, media, and civil society can help amplify impact, destigmatise low-prestige occupations, and highlight the tangible contribution of green solutions to economic growth and wellbeing. Key here is collaboration within one's own business ecosystem and internationally to exchange lessons and generate best practices.

Green Business Models

Create investable (youth-led) enterprises that can scale innovation, achieve market linkages, and train and retain talent.

Why it Matters

The African Development Bank recently emphasised the need for innovative and youth-led green businesses, portraying it as a driver for future employment opportunities. Without enterprises advancing green business models (see *Green Jobs Mapping Tool*) that combine environmental sustainability with profitability and youth inclusion, there is no lasting engine of employment and green growth. Innovation lies at the heart of building viable solutions and corresponding business models that cater to market needs. Across CFYE's portfolio, we find enterprises and initiatives that show that innovation goes beyond products and technology, but also include social innovation, in the way they engage youth and connect to markets. Within agriculture, for example, the adoption of digital and green technologies, such as solar-powered irrigation or digital agricultural extension services, is one of the key drivers to help change perceptions around work in the sector, making it more appealing for youth and increasing their participation.

Barriers to Overcome

The experience of technology-driven agribusinesses reveals several barriers that they must navigate when introducing and scaling digitally-enabled green business models. Firstly, high upfront costs for technology, like solar panels and precision-technology, hinder uptake by smallholder farmers who cannot afford to pay in one installment, specifically in early-stage environments. In rural areas, infrastructure limitations, including unreliable electricity supply, poor connectivity, and underdeveloped supply chains and logistics systems further restrict the effective use of digital solutions. Furthermore, language and literacy issues, trust gaps within value chains and limited awareness of the benefits of the new technology complicate user engagement. In particular, cultural resistance and unfamiliarity with using digital tools requires businesses to invest in intensive field engagement. These challenges underline the importance of developing technology through customer-centred design and locally-rooted implementation models to support inclusive technology adoption. The following lessons aim to inform businesses on how to design for context, invest in innovation, and communicate results transparently.

Key Insights

Designing green business models, requires entrepreneurs to identify leverage points in existing value chains where green solutions increase resource efficiency and create economic value. The concept of the circular economy offers a cross-cutting opportunity to rethink traditional business models and create new products and services at different stages of the value chain by designing for reuse, sourcing sustainably, reducing emissions in logistics, or turning by-products into inputs for other sectors. *TakaTaka Solutions*, for example, continuously improves recycling, sourcing and sorting systems for different types of waste through trial and innovation to create new scalable supply chains. *Hello Tractor* operates a digital marketplace matching smallholder farmers to tractor services via booking agents, unlocking mechanisation and linking asset owners, service providers and farmers in a more efficient agricultural value chain. This enables smallholders to become more productive without having to buy and own a tractor themselves. While these examples show that sustainable business practices can be a source of innovation, it is crucial that the business model addresses customer needs and is tailored to market demand.

In order to tailor innovations to local realities of customers, co-design with end-users is crucial. This helps green businesses maintain flexibility and user relevance in fast-changing markets. *ThriveAgric*, for instance, built its digital advisory services around the challenges faced by smallholder farmers, thereby creating measurable productivity gains and stable incomes for youth field agents. Integrating pilots and testing phases when introducing their digital tool helped them to improve their services through engagement with farmers, gathering data on adoption barriers, and refining features. This customer-first approach also strengthened market traction and credibility with investors. Entrepreneurship programmes, such as *Startupbootcamp (SBC) Africa*, can play a facilitating role for smaller companies. In Senegal, SBC helped solar-irrigation and digital advisory start-ups to co-design their products with farmers, local cooperatives, and off-takers before introducing them to the market. This start-up support was instrumental to refine pricing models, improve usability, and reach cost-effectiveness before entering new markets. These examples show that market validation and early testing is both an operational strategy and a form of risk management.

Collaboration with mentors and experts for informed technology decisions and technical training for employees is key for the adoption of new technological innovation. *Mr. Green Africa*, for example, had to hire international consultants to advise them on designing an efficient production line for producing high quality recycled plastic pellets that are suited for international markets. Looking for the right experts that could help them was time consuming and costly, while it was necessary to offer a competitive product. Donors and policymakers should, therefore, support international exchange platforms for innovation and good business practices as well as invest in the capacity of local experts, like business accelerators and mentorship programmes that facilitate knowledge sharing and industry collaboration. However, even when businesses have the expertise and capacity to develop innovations designed to provide impactful solutions, these can only realize their potential if they are adopted.

Demonstrating tangible benefits, such as increased income, cost savings, improved efficiency and social impact, helps build confidence among customers, investors and partners. In Kenya, the *Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter* partnering with three local sustainable constructions companies (*Gjenge Makers*, *MycoTile* and *The Toolkit iSkills*) first had to prove that eco-friendly building materials can reduce construction costs and deliver durable housing, which convinced local authorities and buyers to support their model. The same applies to the agricultural sector, which is dominated by older farmers often reluctant to adopt new practices or incur high up-front costs for novel technologies. However, when farmers noticed higher yields “on their neighbours’ plots”, they became interested as well.

Collecting data on key performance indicators helps green businesses to present themselves as market-ready and investable to investors. Next to their customers and market, green businesses also have to convince private sector partners, funders and (impact) investors that their business model is financially viable. A major issue that these actors face is inadequate data on the labour market, cost effectiveness, environmental impact, social-responsibility and governance compliance (ESG), as well as scalability and risk. Enterprises that keep their goals measurable and articulate a coherent strategy which links sustainability goals to performance indicators such as profitability, retention, and market share are better positioned to attract partners and scale effectively. *Hello Tractor*, for example, uses real-time machine data and booking analytics to track tractor utilisation, income generation, and youth agent performance. *ThriveAgric* integrated data systems into its service delivery by systematically collecting data on smallholder productivity, and loan repayment via its digital platform. This has allowed the companies to increase both operational efficiency and investor confidence. Across all cases, the message is clear: green businesses that design for sustainability, stay close to their markets, demonstrate tangible benefits for end-users, and keep learning are the ones that grow sustainably.

Decent Work

Ensure that the green transition creates productive work for youth that delivers a fair income, security, social protection, personal development and participation in the decisions that affect their lives.

Why it Matters

A just green transition depends on whether young people can enter, stay, and progress in work that contributes to sustainable business models. Experience from the case studies shows that when companies deliberately invest in youth participation and capacity building, they gain higher retention, stronger local networks, and, ultimately, more resilient business models. Making green jobs and related sectors more attractive to youth should therefore be a key strategy for green businesses. This requires moving beyond the creation of insecure and often informal livelihoods towards safe, fairly paid and future-oriented employment that offers dignity, voice, and opportunities for professional growth. To make this happen, all actors must first understand what young women and men themselves value in a job. Because youth are a heterogeneous group, in terms of cultural, ethnic, and religious differences, one-size-fits-all approaches to job quality will continue to fall short, producing the fragmented and unequal results we see today.

Barriers to Overcome

Despite the promise of the green transition, the quantity and quality of available jobs remain limited. Across African labour markets, a large share of job opportunities are informal, low-paid, and lacking social protection or career progression. For example, the [International Labour Organisation](#) notes that many young workers in Africa remain in working poverty and informal employment. Opportunities in the green economy also fall into this pattern, especially in sectors such as waste collection, micro-services and smallholder agriculture. Meanwhile, youth aspirations are shifting towards jobs that are modern, tech-enabled and purpose-driven. But sectors such as agriculture, construction and waste management continue to be seen as unattractive or low status, which reinforces a mismatch between aspiration and opportunity. At the same time, unequal access to the skills youth need, such as operational, business, digital and soft skills, limits their ability to enter emerging green sectors. Training opportunities remain scattered and uneven, especially for young women, rural youth, and those outside formal education systems. Without stronger demand for decent jobs, more inclusive training ecosystems and a re-valuation of green occupations, the green transition risks reproducing existing inequalities rather than transforming them.

Key Insights

Intentionality is key when it comes to engaging youth meaningfully. This starts by engaging young people in conversations about what they perceive as a quality job. Beyond contextual differences, youth consistently prioritise a reliable income, safe working conditions, paths for professional development, flexibility and social recognition. Generally, creating a youthful and dynamic company culture through transparent engagement with employees and taking their feedback seriously has served the studied companies to create a better working environment.

Want to learn more about: *Youth's Perspective on Decent Work?*

- ✂ CFYE's [Youth Perspectives on Job Quality in Kenya's Waste-Recycling Sector](#) provides insights into what a just transition looks like for marginalised youth, such as women, working in Kenya's informal waste recycling sector.

Companies that operate in sectors that are prone to informality, should focus on addressing safety risks and health concerns. In Kenya's waste-recycling research, young workers highlighted health and safety risks and a lack of basic protection as core concerns. At irregular dumpsites, specifically, risks include physical assault, harassment, cartel control, and verbal abuse, which women face disproportionately. Practical measures to address these concerns include clear site rules co-created with worker groups, equal access protocols to materials and spaces, grievance channels, and liaison with local authorities and police for safety patrols. Concerning personal protective equipment (PPE), companies found group-based distribution most effective because items may be sold when income is precarious. Complementary measures can include regular health checks, insurance schemes, first-aid training, on-site hygiene, and clear reporting channels for harassment. These raise job quality and also signal professional standards.

Beyond investing in role-specific "green skills" training, companies and youth employment initiatives should invest in the employability of young women and men. A commonly held assumption in the green economy discourse is that green jobs require reskilling and upskilling in high-level technical skills. However, looking at the CFYE portfolio, we find that highly technical skills are not necessarily required for green jobs and that employment is created for many different skill levels and skill sets. While technical competences remain essential, what ultimately determines job quality and retention is a broader set of skills and conditions that enable youth to grow professionally and personally. This includes foundational digital literacy, problem-solving, teamwork, and customer service, paired with specific operational or technical know-how. In initiatives that prepared youth for entrepreneurship, youth also called for financial literacy, business development, and group-savings skills to build resilience and independence. For companies and funders, this means investing in skills ecosystems that link training, mentorship, and basic protection with clear career pathways.

Want to learn more about: *Future-of-Work Skills?*

The [Green General Skill Index](#) distinguishes four categories of skills particularly relevant to the green economy:

- ✂ **Engineering and technical skills** for the design and operation of green technologies;
- ✂ **Science skills** that underpin innovation across sectors, such as energy and waste;
- ✂ **Operational management skills** to adapt business processes and organisational structures; and
- ✂ **Monitoring skills** for assessing compliance with environmental and safety standards.

Not all green jobs, however, require advanced technical expertise. Evidence from the CFYE portfolio shows that green jobs are being created across all skill levels. **Low-skilled roles** often rely on traditional capabilities, occasionally complemented through on-the-job training. **Medium-skilled positions** tend to require a mix of operational, digital, business, and life skills, for which specific training courses are likely needed. **High-skilled labour** is essential for driving innovation and entrepreneurship within the green economy.

While this concerns only very few roles it can be a critical bottleneck for scaling operations as this often requires specific technical know-how. Access to international knowledge hubs or talents pools can fix this in the short-term.

In addition to these specific competences, a wider set of soft skills are increasingly critical, including creativity, adaptability, resilience, and empathy. These transversal skills enable workers and enterprises to navigate technological change and contribute to a just and sustainable economic transition.

✕ *ILO's [Guide for young people, job seekers and those who support them: How to Work in the Green Economy?](#) presents specific job typologies with necessary skills per potential sector.*

Short modules combined with on-the-job coaching and mentoring appeared to be the best approach to achieve up-skilling and offer tailored staged support to youth. Pilots implemented by *Startupbootcamp* in Senegal, which trains youth as agricultural extension agents in collaboration with local start-ups that cannot afford to hire and train field agents themselves yet shows this. They offered tailored training sessions in small groups in partnership with start-ups that they support, which created a win-win situation for youth and companies. *ThriveAgric* combined digital tool training, which was needed for field agent roles, with mindset and leadership coaching. This helped youth see themselves as modernisers of farming rather than just farm workers, which improved pride, performance, and retention. Furthermore, peer-facilitator models can enable digitally literate youth become mentors within their communities while advancing their own careers, reinforcing that employability grows through both learning and leadership.

The degree to which youth have voice and agency is an important determinant of decent work and can be influenced by the way how work is organised. When youth are organised in workers associations, community groups, or agent networks information flows improve and norms around safety and conduct are easier to enforce. The studied waste recycling companies made good experience with organising informal waste workers in formal groups, which enabled training to stick, reduced exploitation by intermediaries, and opened dialogue with local authorities. In addition, experimenting with different agent-based models that position youth in advisory roles (e.g. booking, field and sales agents and technical assistants) is an entry point for promoting leadership, strengthening trust within communities and professionalising the services along the chain. *Mr. Green Africa* managed to successfully integrate informal workers through a loyalty programme that incentivises regular and continuous engagement with the company. This enabled them to offer a tiered employee journey, which progressively invested in the professional development of waste pickers to become employees within the company operations.

The inclusion of marginalised youth can be strengthened when policymakers, programme implementers and companies address issues related to informality, instead of working around the informal sector. Oftentimes, vulnerable youth are forced to become entrepreneurs in the informal sector as a coping strategy in order to get by. Some youth, however, reported that they prefer informal self-employment because it gives them a sense of stability and dignity compared to insecure occasional employment opportunities. While the informal sector remains the main engine of employment creation across most African countries and offers youth the opportunity to become independent self-entrepreneurs, a job in the informal sector comes with high vulnerability due its unregulated nature.

Improving the lot of informal workers starts by recognising them as economic agents that contribute to advancing the green economy. *Mr. Green Africa* and *TakaTaka Solutions* successfully demonstrated how this can be done in the informal waste management sector by creating transparent trading/buying points with fair pricing which also function as one-stop centres to pilot basic social protection schemes. Social support structures for self-employed informal waste workers can include help in official identification and licensing registration, offering insurance and providing microcredits to groups to establish their own waste collection/trading point. For the recycling companies, direct purchasing from these trading hubs enabled a stable source of raw material for their production line. For workers, the hubs in combination with loyalty schemes, which incentivise regular engagement, have reduced dependence on exploitative middlemen and improved incomes by 20–30%, while making supply for the recycling companies more reliable. In the agricultural sector, digital platforms can fulfill similar functions by enabling more direct engagement with self-employed field agents.

Capacity-building and inclusion efforts need to be tailored towards the individual needs of different youth groups, especially young women. Specifically, young women face barriers across sectors related to sexual harassment, care duties, and social norms in male-dominated spaces. Therefore, companies and projects need to tailor their support structures, such as enforcing anti-harassment procedures and embedding childcare infrastructure, from the get-go. To address cultural restrictions that prevent women from attending technological training, for example, *ThriveAgric* offers safe, women-led group sessions, adjusts timing and distance to accommodate women's schedules outside of familial duties, and collaborates with local governments to build trust and ensure access. This has led to increased female enrolment and completion rates. Additionally, gender-transformative approaches to shift workplace cultures include role-model visibility of women, training modules that challenge predominant stereotypes, and pathways to supervisory roles.

To conclude, actors that want to ensure decent work should focus on advancing job profiles and career pathways that match young people's aspirations. Youth are already the driving force behind green business models, systemic transformations and circular economy practices. By framing youth's roles as part of a broader mission to modernise traditional practices and support their communities, helps them find purpose and pride in their work. Circling back to the first recommendation, companies should be intentional about working together with young people on the green transition by creating opportunities with them together. When young people are treated as partners in shaping sustainable business practices, their creativity and commitment become the driving force that turns decent work into lasting change.

Strategic Partnerships

Leverage collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships to bridge finance gaps, overcome fragmentation, and scale what works.

Why it Matters

Across all phases of this research partnership, we found that improving green job opportunities only becomes self-sustaining and scalable when actors collaborate. Whether in agriculture, waste management, or construction, the creation of decent work for youth through green business models depends on partnerships that connect regulation, markets, and people. **Strategic collaboration around solving systemic problems is the infrastructure that connects awareness, viable business models, and decent work into a functioning ecosystem.** The effectiveness of these partnerships determines whether Africa's green transition produces isolated success stories or a resilient employment system that endures beyond project cycles.

Barriers to Overcome

The promise of collaboration can fall short of its potential if efforts are not well-aligned. Although this research partnership specifically focussed on successful green job initiatives, we learned from these front-runners and expert consultations that most programmes are implemented through isolated projects, ad-hoc interventions to address emerging challenges, and short donor cycles that limit continuity. The results are weak enforcement of sustainability standards, regulation that enforces outdated standards (for example, for alternative building materials), and limited financial incentives that discourage private investment and slow innovation in high-potential sectors. Even when early-stage enterprises receive training and seed funding, they often lack the patient capital and supporting regulation to scale. At the same time, public, private, and civil-society actors frequently operate on conflicting incentives. CSOs and NGOs focus on inclusion and advocacy, businesses on viability and reducing costs, and governments on sector development and compliance with existing regulations. The absence of shared objectives, coordination mechanisms and common learning trajectories prevents these actors from building on each other's strengths. The following lessons show how strategic partnerships can turn this fragmentation into alignment and lay the foundations for ensuring that Africa's green transition translates into more and better jobs for youth.

Key Insights

Bridge funding gaps through finance partnerships and blended finance models. Across the CFYE portfolio, enterprises consistently cited access to finance as the most binding constraint for scaling green employment, while donors and implementers ask themselves how to make green and youth-led enterprises investable. There is a gap to bridge from donor dependency to readiness for private sector investment because green businesses often operate in low-margin, infrastructure-dependent sectors such as recycling and agriculture, where investment risks are perceived as high. Companies like *TakaTaka Solutions* and *ThriveAgric* demonstrate both the potential and the limits of grant-based support. While donor funding helped them pilot innovative youth engagement models, scaling their operations required capital-intensive investments in machinery, logistics, and technology. Ultimately, financing partnerships must balance short-term support with patient, long-term investment horizons to scale green business models.

Staged multi-actor finance arrangements can be mobilised by blending grants, concessional loans, and private investment around shared employment targets. Governments can complement this with tax incentives and subsidies for green businesses or guarantees for investors. Investors can partner with banks and insurance companies to create financial products that reduce risks, for example related to the seasonality of agricultural production, while recognising youth employment and green innovation as part of ESG performance. Development finance institutions, such as multilateral development banks and microfinance institutions that support the private sector in developing countries and donor-supported challenge funds, such as the CFYE, can bridge the gap. They have great potential to accelerate the transition to a green economy by providing companies with both the financial means and technical assistance they need to create and improve green jobs for youth. The CFYE approach shows how impact-linked finance, where repayment conditions are tied to job outcomes, can align incentives across financiers and implementers.

Want to learn more about: *The Challenge Fund for Youth Employment Approach?*

The *Challenge Fund for Youth Employment* was designed as a collaborative ecosystem for job creation that combines financial, technical, and labour-market expertise to strengthen youth employment outcomes in selected focus countries. Its co-investment model, where implementing partners match half of the project grant, builds shared ownership and local accountability. The fund's adaptive management structure, with dedicated country teams and local advisors, allows flexibility and responsiveness to changing labour market realities.

Beyond compliance-driven grantmaking, CFYE embeds technical assistance (TA) as a core partnership mechanism. TA is provided throughout the project lifecycle from proposal design to implementation and monitoring, which helps enterprises improve both business performance and job quality. Local experts support partners to reach inclusion goals, such as the 50% gender target, and to integrate decent working conditions into business operations. Continuous feedback loops through portfolio reviews, sensemaking sessions, and peer learning events enable the fund to adapt and identify what works across countries and sectors.

The CFYE experience demonstrates how challenge funds can evolve into knowledge brokers that connect finance, evidence, and policy. By linking results-based financing with adaptive learning, CFYE not only funds enterprises but also aims to strengthen the broader ecosystem. Its monitoring and evaluation systems aggregate data on job creation, job quality, and cost per job across eleven countries, thereby creating a comprehensive dataset of youth employment creation in Africa. This evidence supports more strategic resource allocation and enables cross-learning between partners.

CFYE channels funding to smaller or riskier ventures through trusted intermediary impact investors, addressing the “missing middle” in youth entrepreneurship finance. Through collaborations with Scalable Employment Models (SEMs) such as *Acumen*, *Jobtech Alliance*, and *Balloon Ventures*, CFYE aims to accelerate systemic change by investing in ecosystem support for small-scale innovation and entrepreneurship. This is an effective way to invest in overlooked businesses with high impact potential and professionalise informal occupations.

The CFYE model shows that combining financial incentives with learning, TA, and adaptive management can make green innovation less risky and help green business models to become viable in the market. CFYE's experience suggests that multi-stakeholder funds can function as brokers between public ambition and private innovation, thus, helping green and digital enterprises to grow, improve job quality, and create employment that is both decent and sustainable.

Align policy with practice through early co-design and co-implementation. While considerable progress has been made in the formulation of a comprehensive set of national roadmaps and strategies to enable the transition to a green economy in Africa, implementation of these policies by local governments is still work in progress. The experience of the *Waste to Work* programme in Kenya illustrates that early involvement of local policymakers is crucial for creating the political will to enact supportive policies. In the programme, the recycling enterprise *TakaTaka Solutions*, the implementation partner *VSO Netherlands*, and waste picker associations collaborated to support green youth-led start-ups so that they can create decent jobs through waste recovery and value addition. The initiative initially faced licensing and recognition challenges. Only after policymakers were brought into project committees and recognised the role of informal waste pickers in driving the professionalisation of waste recycling and employment creation, they started supporting the initiative by contextualising national policies and working more closely with waste picker associations. The delayed engagement, however, made progress slower and less effective than it could have been.

Design partnerships with an intentional focus on decent work to ensure that the green economy translates into quality employment. Collaboration between companies, worker associations, municipalities, and NGOs has proven effective in improving safety, income security, and social recognition for informal workers. *Mr. Green Africa* and *TakaTaka Solutions* partnered with waste picker association and NGOs to provide training, protective equipment, and health insurance while jointly campaigning to destigmatise waste work. Their experiences highlight that inclusion, and profitability can reinforce each other when designed deliberately and with support from partners that follow a common mission. Productive partnerships recognise that businesses can gain visibility and credibility through fair employment practices, while NGOs and governments can achieve greater impact by aligning their social and economic objectives with viable business strategies. In addition, co-delivering gender-responsive interventions, such as women-only training sessions, childcare support, and mentorship programmes, has proven to improve both participation and retention among female workers.

Build systems for learning and data sharing to align strategic investment and policy decisions. The consultations with different stakeholder groups, specifically with donors and impact investors, revealed that reliable data remains a critical issue for evidence-based decision-making concerning budget allocation, investment priorities and TA needed. Some larger digitally enabled businesses, such as *Hello Tractor* and *ThriveAgric*, are integrating data systems directly into business operations, which enables tracking performance metrics, such as tractor utilisation, loan repayment, and youth agent income, to demonstrate measurable results. Many small and medium sized enterprises, however, lack the capacity to systematically record employment and impact data, limiting access to finance and policy recognition.

To address the data gap, youth employment programmes should track the performance of their implementing partners. This allows CFYE to create a repository of aggregated data on job creation, training outcomes, and gender inclusion which makes it easier to identify scalable business models and direct funding more effectively. While the Fund is only now at the end of their 7-year funding cycle able to systematically harvest the lessons learnt, continuous peer exchanges and learning loops allowed their partners to troubleshoot challenges collaboratively and identify good business practices.

Additionally, green jobs initiatives can engage learning partners that broker knowledge and facilitate reflection within projects whilst setting up adaptive monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems. In the *Waste to Work* initiative, the learning partner observed that the most productive learning occurred when partners reflected openly on their different mental models and priorities. Creating structured spaces for dialogue helped NGOs and private sector partners to align their approaches.

Turning learning into a shared responsibility rather than a compliance exercise requires mutual understanding of incentives, constraints, and contributions.

Ultimately, strategic partnerships determine whether Africa's green transition remains a mosaic of pilots or becomes a cohesive employment strategy. They are the connective tissue that binds awareness, green business models, and decent work into shared responsibilities. Building these partnerships means moving beyond donor-led projects towards locally-led, problem-focused collaboration that connects market development, policy reform, and finance models. As the CFYE experience shows, when partnerships are grounded in trust, data, and shared accountability, they can bridge structural divides and translate the green transition into a just and prosperous future of work for Africa's youth.

Conclusion

This evidence synthesis report echoes the findings of recent macro-level analyses in that Africa's green transition has the potential to create and improve employment opportunities for the continent's growing youth population, especially in renewable energy, construction, waste management and climate-smart agriculture. However, this requires coordinated efforts to build the necessary human capital, policy implementation and investment to drive the innovative capacity of green businesses.

At the same time, job quality remains an issue that needs to be addressed. The rate of youth not in employment, education or training remains high, informality and insecure livelihoods are pervasive, and progress is uneven across regions. This calls for more attention to decent work standards, which include income, safety, social protection, professional development and voice. In order to accelerate the green jobs agenda, donors, practitioners and investors call for a solid evidence-base that links sectoral transitions and market systems development to skills demand and job quality outcomes so that regulation and investment is grounded in the realities of those advancing the green transition.

This partnership synthesis report adds what macro studies often miss: business- and ecosystem-level insights on how green jobs can materialise and what can be done to improve job quality. The four *Future of Work Pathways*—Awareness, Green Business Models, Decent Work, and Strategic Partnerships—translate the insights from the three-year research partnership between the CFYE and INCLUDE into lessons for investors, policymakers, and enterprises. These align with wider calls from the international donor community for more collaborative and locally-led transformations centred on SMEs and private investment as the backbone of Africa's just green transition. Together, these lessons and strategic directions shift the debate from “creating X number of jobs” to what it takes to create the conditions for sustained and quality livelihood opportunities for youth at scale.

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Annex

1. CFYE IPs

*The insights presented on Mr. Green Africa (MGA) are drawn from the 2023 case study. In November 2025, MGA withdrew from the CFYE programme due to business model adjustments made in response to shifts in market demand for specific types of plastic. These adjustments led to reduced investment in some job-improvement and social-support activities. This illustrates how evolving market conditions can influence the capacity of green businesses to pursue decent work strategies and highlights the importance of adaptive planning for both businesses and funders.

Implementing Partner and Country of Operation	Description	Sector	Youth Engagement
TakaTaka Solutions (Kenya)	TakaTaka Solutions is the largest waste management and recycling company in Kenya that recycles 90% of the managed waste through an integrated model of collection, sorting, recycling, composting, and buying waste from waste pickers.	Waste recycling	TakaTaka engages youth through the creation and improvement of jobs across the waste management and recycling value chain, including waste sorting, recycling plant operations, and buyback centres near dumpsites. Youth waste pickers and sorters benefit from improved incomes, safer working conditions, access to social benefits, and more formalised employment opportunities as recycling capacity expands.
Mr. Green Africa (Kenya)	Mr. Green Africa (MGA), a certified B-Corp company, creates a sustainable, long-term social, environmental, and economic impact through collecting, converting, and selling post-consumer plastic waste.	Waste recycling	MGA has built a professional, fair and inclusive (plastic) recycling ecosystem in Kenya that offers decent employment and income opportunities to all, but especially women and youth. They formalise the relationship with informal waste pickers, integrating them into a fair and remunerative value chain.
ThriveAgric (Nigeria)	ThriveAgric is a growing agri-tech company with a passion in ensuring	Agri-Tech	ThriveAgric employs young people as data, field & sales agents equipped with mobile devices to

	<p>food security. The company was created in 2017 and helps smallholder farmers gain access to formal markets through a partnership with large agribusinesses by leveraging their technology to access finance and improve productivity and sales to promote food security.</p>		<p>access real-time information from their digital platform.</p>
<p>Startup Bootcamp (Senegal)</p>	<p>Startupbootcamp is a global network of startup accelerators launched in 2017 in Africa and scaled to Dakar by 2021. Their project, Sustaining Senegalese Pilots Program (SSP), is a scaled-up version of a successful Fass Boye test pilot that managed to increase participating farmers' incomes by 500%. The SSP aims to support startups to deepen their roots locally and scale their impact across Senegal.</p>	<p>Agri-tech/Startup Acceleration</p>	<p>The SSP addresses the challenges and aspirations expressed especially by rural youth by providing technical skills training in climate-smart agriculture, farming crops with 60% longer shelf-time, and offering indirect financing for better farming equipment, leading to increased incomes.</p>
<p>Hello Tractor (Nigeria)</p>	<p>Hello Tractor is an agricultural technology company that solves the problem of access to reliable and affordable mechanisms in Africa. Their project, The</p>	<p>Agri-tech</p>	<p>They focus on training in-demand skills to Nigerian youth and matching them to employment opportunities in the agriculture sector. They provide access to affordable and reliable mechanisation, as well as hubs, with a training centre, mechanic's</p>

	Mechhub, is an extension of their goal to solve this problem together with the youth unemployment in Nigeria.		workshop, a spare parts dealership and a large agent network that responsible for aggregating the farmer demand for tractor services.
Acumen (Nigeria)	Acumen is committed to catalysing long-term impact for the poor. Their patient capital invests where commercial investors are unwilling to – in companies working on hard-to-solve problems in hard-to-reach areas.	Impact Investing	They identify impactful businesses that serve low-income communities and create a roadmap for companies to reduce the barriers to employment for women and youth.
Jobtech Alliance (Kenya/Nigeria)	Mercy Corps and BFA Global are accelerating inclusive jobtech platforms in Africa. The Jobtech Alliance accelerates early-stage jobtech small and growing businesses (SGBs) and stimulate product innovation and market expansion in more established jobtech SGBs.	Digital Employment	Young people strive to have more access to digital tools and proficiency to take part in digitally enabled employment opportunities. Jobtech Alliance works with eight early-stage jobtech innovators and 20 established jobtech SGBs in several CFYE target countries to create and improve 15,000 decent jobs and equip the sector to create millions more.
Balloon Ventures (Uganda/Kenya)	Balloon Ventures is building the world's first missing middle financial institution dedicated to creating good jobs. By combining financial investment of €10k-€50k with tech-enabled business support, they unlock the huge potential of	SME Finance/Impact Investing	Balloon Ventures supports youth employment indirectly by strengthening small and growing businesses (SGBs) that employ young people. Through revenue-based financing and hands-on business management support, Balloon helps SGBs improve productivity, formalise operations, and create more stable, higher-quality jobs for youth within the

	small and growing businesses (SGBs).		informal and semi-formal economy.
Habitat for Humanity (Kenya)	Supports a greener next-generation construction sector through sustainable housing and climate-resilient building practices, reducing emissions and promoting inclusive growth.	Infrastructure & Construction	Engages youth and women in low-skilled jobs (production of green housing products) and medium- to high-skilled jobs transforming construction practices.
Fair Agro Food (Sudan)	Builds a digital agri-service ecosystem to modernise farming, improve water management, and integrate solar energy, supporting climate adaptation and mitigation.	Agriculture	Creates and improves decent jobs for youth and women through digital, technical, and business roles, alongside on-the-job training and specialised skills development.
Releaf (Nigeria)	Optimises productivity in the oil palm sector using digital sourcing and nut pre-processing technology, while converting palm waste into energy.	Agriculture & Forestry	Recruits, trains, and retains young women and youth; creates technical, digital, and operational jobs across the oil palm value chain.
Woord & Daad (Uganda)	Promotes youth employment through beekeeping linked to tree-planting, biodiversity protection, and climate-resilient coffee farming systems.	Agriculture & Forestry	Links youth beekeepers to coffee farmers, creating self-employment opportunities supported by training in technical, business, and soft skills.
Sanivation (Kenya)	Develops waste-to-energy sanitation treatment plants that improve urban	Waste Management	Creates low- to high-skilled jobs for youth, from biomass collection to plant construction and

	sanitation, reduce deforestation, and generate clean energy.		operation, supported by on-the-job training.
ReelFruit (Nigeria)	Upskills youth for agri-processing careers through market-led, industry-aligned training, improving access to decent employment in agribusiness.	Agriculture	Places youth—especially women—into decent jobs through tiered training focused on employer-relevant skills and job matching.
Africa Clean Energy (Uganda)	Expands access to clean thermal energy by strengthening rural distribution and after-sales service for clean cookstoves, reducing CO ₂ emissions.	Renewable Energy	Creates jobs for youth and women in sales, distribution, and servicing, requiring additional digital and soft-skills training.
Marula Creative Consultancy (Uganda)	Transforms organic waste into sustainable animal feed and organic fertiliser using insect-based production systems.	Agriculture & Waste Management	Employs youth directly and supports youth farmers through training in insect breeding, processing, and extension services.
Pad-Up Creations (Nigeria)	Produces washable and reusable sanitary pads to reduce waste, promote menstrual health, and support inclusive economic growth.	Waste Management / Recycling	Trains low-skilled youth (18–35) in production, operations, and sales, creating pathways to income generation and financial independence.

2. List of participants of the stakeholder consultation

Position	Organisation	Stakeholder Group
Programme Manager	Volunteering Services Overseas (VSO)	NGO/ Implementer
Programme Manager	International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI)	Research/Knowledge Partner
Programme Manager	Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries (CBI)	Netherlands Enterprise Agency
Policy Advisor	Consulate General of the Netherlands in Lagos, Nigeria	Government/Embassy
Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Manager	IKEA Foundation	Impact Investor
Director	Truvalu Group	Impact Investor
Associate Director	Advocacy for Policy and Innovation (API)	Policy Think Tank
Policy Officer	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands)	Government
Youth Advisory Committee Member	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Netherlands)	Youth Representative
Director of Research	African Economic Research Consortium (AERC)	Research/Policy Think Tank

3.

Full list of questions from the stakeholder consultation to guide the synthesis:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are green jobs essentially, and which aspects are indispensable for indicating job quality? • How can we overcome major barriers to create a green economy that can absorb youth at scale, and which sectors are the most promising? • How to create a viable business model and make youth and women-led enterprises market-ready and investable for the private (impact investment) sector? • How can innovation help businesses and youth to take advantage of the opportunities and overcome challenges of the green transition? • What role can green jobs play in creating sustainable, dignified and decent employment opportunities for youth? • What does an equitable transition look like for marginalised youth, such as women, or working in rural or informal sectors? And, what does it take for informal workers to transition towards formal, financially sustainable enterprises?

- What kind of skills and knowledge are young people actively seeking or need to acquire to participate effectively in the circular economy? And, how can we ensure gap-free skill-building leads from training to employment with tangible, lasting outcomes like increased income or access to finance?
- How can SMEs attract and engage youth and create decent jobs that they would like to stay in?
- What are successful models of multistakeholder partnerships that create system-level linkages to foster a thriving green economy ecosystem for African youth beyond project cycles?
- What financing mechanisms are needed to unlock youth-led green entrepreneurship at scale? And, who will finance green jobs?