

# Country of the Week: Kenya

A climate change campaign that “breaks the rules” by bringing the discussion to the people through song, dance, and graffiti. A community mapping project that protects residents by empowering them to solve problems and advocate for themselves. A youth mentorship program that teaches high school students to be servant leaders.

What do these initiatives have in common? They were all started by YALI Network members.

Welcome to the first installment of the YALI Country of the Week! Each week, we will showcase one country and some of its outstanding YALI Network members. 

This week’s Country of the Week is Kenya, and each one of these impressive initiatives was launched by a Kenyan Network member. Read on to learn how the YALI Network helped them change their communities for the better.

## Climate Conversations

(Courtesy of Green Sun Cities)



Benedict Muyale calls climate change “the greatest challenge both the poor and the rich face” in the twenty-first century. He sees its effects in Nairobi, witnessing “intense rainfall, flash floods,” and “businesses or kiosks swept away.” But climate change can be difficult, or even boring, to bring up in conversation. “How do we make it interesting?” he wonders. With the help of the YALI Network, Benedict has found a way: art.

Through his organization, [Green Sun Cities](#), Benedict launched a Climate Art campaign that “brings the discussion to the people” through poetry, dance, rap, song, and even graffiti.

After receiving 50 applications from local artists who understood the need to address climate change, Benedict used the YALI Network Online Course [Understanding Climate Change](#) to train 18 of them to take climate change to the streets at an event in Kariobangi.

“We received overwhelming messages from over 300 locals who attended the event,” Benedict says. “To make sure this awareness stayed at the heart of the community, we painted a graffiti mural on the walls... This awareness is the starting point for taking responsibility to avoid destroying our planet and stealing the future of our children,” he says.

“With such demand for more Climate Art events, we now have a vision to take this discussion to other urban slums in Nairobi, together with the artists.”

## Creating Community Champions

(Courtesy of Stephen Githaiga)



“Knowledge is power,” says Stephen Githaiga, also of Nairobi. After taking the [Community](#)

[Organizing for Action](#) course, Stephen realized he could bring that power to the people of rural Nyatike.

Stephen used community mapping, which he calls “a process carried out by the community for the community,” to help Nyatike residents identify problems they were facing related to local mining activities and find solutions to address them.

Stephen began by identifying key community members “who would act as champions on mining issues and also represent the whole community.” Then, he worked with these leaders to gather information “on the state of small-scale miners in the area, resources available, their engagement levels with the government, and challenges they encountered.” Through community discussion and feedback, Stephen empowered residents to come up with solutions and rally together in “associations or groups for action.”

The meetings Stephen facilitated were inclusive of “women, men, local administration, clergy, and youth in proportionate measure.” One participant stated, “As a community, we are forever grateful for this knowledge and to other community members so that the whole community benefits. I believe that in a matter of time, our lives will change for the best.”

“Thank you, YALI Network,” Stephen says, “for enabling me to impact my community.”

## Growing Leaders

(Courtesy of Protus Musotsi)



The Servant Leadership: [The Deciding Difference](#) course “reshaped my thinking and drove me into action,” says Protus Musotsi, of Eldoret. He decided to use his new skills to improve society by launching a Youth for Servant Leadership initiative, training and mentoring local high school students to be better leaders.

“The program has been greatly appreciated by school teachers and students,” says Protus, a fact that has allowed him to broaden the program’s reach and include more young leaders. He has also used materials provided by the YALI Network to train these and other youth on environmental conservation and climate change, carrying out tree planting and solid waste management in their communities.

“I am who I am today because of YALI” and will be a member “for life,” he says.

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## [#YALI Network Events Across Africa](#)

Aspiring entrepreneurs in Kigali, 

Rwanda (Courtesy photo)

In the two months since we launched #YALILearns, there has been a flurry of activity among #YALINetwork members organizing and sharing events in our Facebook face2face group. Dozens of meetings and hundreds of people have shared their knowledge and connected with other young African leaders across the continent.

Papy Sibomana got together a group of prospective young entrepreneurs in Kigali, Rwanda, to teach business and entrepreneurship using the YALI Network Online Courses. There was also discussion of the #YALINetwork and its benefits for younger entrepreneurs and an overview of the Mandela Washington Fellowship application process.

Discussing the activities of the Regional   
Leadership Center at a meeting in Addis  
Ababa. (Courtesy photo)

In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Frehiwot Negash joined with Yigrem Ashenafi, Asmeret Gebre, Edie Zachs and Helina Stiphanos to organize a #YALILearns event and even created a separate Facebook group.

“It was so inspirational,” Frehiwot said. “We look forward to our next monthly event.”

Zakariyyah Freeman Musa, a Nigerian working in Kenya, connected with the U.S. Embassy in Tanzania to develop a #YALILearns event at the American Corner in Zanzibar. Thirty people discussed the YALI Network Online Courses on leadership and took the quiz to get their certificates.

YALILearns meeting in Harare (Courtesy   
photo)

Southern Africa was particularly active, including Vincent T. Mabotja’s event in South Africa to discuss xenophobia and another that involved a march against corruption. In neighboring Zimbabwe, several events took off.

“#YALILearns is an amazing tool to seeing people grow and develop ideas into actual projects and livelihood,” said Kelvin Tinashe Mutize after a networking event he organized with #yalicreatives in Harare.

Munya Bloggo, a 2015   
Mandela Washington Fellow,  
teaches business in Gweru,  
Zimbabwe. (Courtesy photo)

Munya Bloggo shared another Zimbabwe event, this time in the central part of the country where several Network members used the YALI Network Online Courses to discuss business planning and modeling at the American Corner in Gweru.

“We had a feisty discussion with students on how we can apply the lessons to a local context,”

Munya said, before adding a competitive element to #YALILearns. “I think when it comes to advancing education, Zimbabweans go at it like it was the Olympics.”

Just north, in Zambia, Patience Chisanga shared her expertise at a multi-day event.

“I spoke to 25 young talented and exceptional filmmakers about redefining entrepreneurship, the importance of turning art into a business, the basics of developing a business idea, a business plan, and how to deliver a business pitch to investors,” she said.

YALINetwork members take a quiz on   
leadership for a YALINetwork certificate  
at a meeting in Zanzibar, Tanzania. (Courtesy  
photo)

To the west, Ruddy Kielo Lingela held an event that utilized the YALI business lessons in Lubumbashi, #DRC, at the American Space there.

“More than 20 young entrepreneurs were present,” he said. “I was much impressed (with the audience). All the participants arrived 30 minutes before the launch of the meetup. The Congo is changing my friends.”

Over in Ghana, Oxford Bonsu put together a group of 320 undergraduates at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology for an event.

A huge YALILearns event in Ghana saw   
320 people show up for a meeting  
organized by Oxford Bonsu. (Courtesy photo)

“I used resources from YALI Learns to engage the students, and there was a positive feedback,” he said. “#YALILearns is a sure way to give back to your community and to empower young Africans to make real difference.”

If you want to hold your own [#YALILearns](#) event, you do not need any special tools or experience, just a willingness to gather people together and share knowledge. Use our courses or your own material, but please do share the results with us on our [#YALILearns feedback page](#).

Patience Chisanga, a 2015 Mandela   
Washington Fellow, teaches about  
filmmaking at a YALILearns event in Lusaka,  
Zambia. (Courtesy photo)

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