



Yes Youth Can Rift Valley

USAID/Kenya



Maureen, a member of the Poa bunge in Uasin Gishu County, earns money for college by sewing in her bunge-started embroidery shop.

Funding Level:
\$5.6 million

Duration:
March 2011 – August 2014

Activity Goals:

- Empower youth to expand their economic opportunities and contribute to their communities
- Encourage youth leadership and a youth voice in local and national policy dialogue
- Increase youth participation in local development and peace initiatives

Activity Accomplishments:

- 8,195 *bunges* formed in the Rift Valley to date
- 1.4 million youth aware of Yes Youth Can Rift Valley through outreach efforts
- 245 community service projects completed

Implementing Partner:

Mercy Corps, with funding to: African Sports Talent Empowerment Program, Rural Women Peacelink, and Wareng' Youth Initiative, and the county *bunge* forums and SACCOs of: Uasin Gishu, West Pokot, Trans Nzoia, Nakuru, Kericho, Nandi and Elgeyo Marakwet

Key Partners:

Ministry of Industrialization and Enterprise Development, Ministry of Planning and

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Yes Youth Can is a national activity that has empowered 1,000,000 Kenyan youth to expand their economic opportunities, contribute to their communities and become responsible members of society. Through Yes Youth Can and the National Youth Bunge Association, young people aged 18-35 organize themselves into youth-run and youth-led village and county-level *bunges* (Kiswahili for “parliaments”) and democratically elect leaders to represent them at the national level.

The *bunges* provide a structure and a forum for young women and men to take action to improve their own lives and those of their neighbors, develop new leadership skills, promote transparent decision making about their priorities, and empower themselves to be positive forces for change in their communities.

USAID has established Yes Youth Can in 30 of Kenya’s 47 counties, focusing on those that have experienced high levels of violence or where threats of terrorism and extremism are prevalent.

ACTIVITY AREAS

Youth *bunges* in the Rift Valley plan and implement community service projects. They work to improve their communities and earn a sustainable living. As *bunge* members, they also commit to cooperating across ethnic lines and making their voices heard in local and county decision-making bodies.

The Yes Youth Can Rift Valley program provides training on entrepreneurship and life skills. The activity also helps improve women’s access to political, social and economic opportunities by conducting gender assessments, mentorship forums, and outreach campaigns.

ACTIVITY IMPACT

The Rift Valley experienced some of the worst post-election violence in Kenya. In Nakuru County, a bridge separated the Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities. Youth were used as instruments to initiate violence among these communities. They destroyed the bridge during the violence.

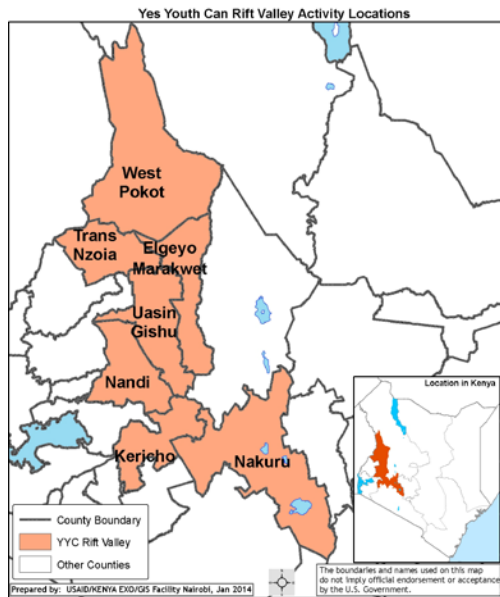
“For a long time now, youth were being used as agents for violence, this has remained the perception in my community. It has been hard to change this,” said Enok Onkoba (below).

Enok Onkoba, age 27, has been influential in changing this perception. He is a board member in Soinelites Youth Bunge, Nakuru, Molo Sub

Devolution, Ministry of Interior and
Coordination of National Government

Activity Locations:

Uasin Gishu County, Nakuru County,
Kericho County, Nandi County, Elgeyo
Marakwet County, West Pokot County, and
Trans Nzoia County.



USAID Contacts:

Christine Pagen, Director
USAID/Kenya
Office of Education and Youth
Tel: +254 20 862 2755
Email: cpagen@usaid.gov

Pamela Wesonga
USAID/Kenya
Office of Education and Youth
Tel: +254 20 862 2000
Email: pwesonga@usaid.gov

Yes Youth Can Rift Valley Contact:

Joyce Kageha Ogesi
Chief of Party
Yes Youth Can Rift Valley
Tel: +254 722 224183
Email: jwafula@clusakenya.org

Website:

<https://www.facebook.com/YYC.coast>

County and is also the chair of the procurement committee in the Nakuru County Board Forum. During the post-election violence in 2008, Onkoba was among the many youth in Nakuru that sought to change the representation of youth at the county level.

Through his youth *bunge*, youth helped to reconstruct the bridge as a sign of reconciliation between the two communities. “It has been hard for the community to believe that youth can be instrumental to creating reconciliation and peace. This has been my number one challenge as a leader,” said Onkoba.



Through the Yes Youth Can Program, Onkoba was trained on leadership, entrepreneurship and early response and warning mechanisms. He has mentored his peers on leadership and participation in key county development areas.

“I am happy because the skills I got have been passed on to other youth. This is what I wanted. One of my mentees is a representative at county level in community policing and another represents the youth in the Constituency Development Fund Committee,” he said.

Levels of peace and security have changed because of youth involvement. The group now feels economically empowered, and further committed to a peaceful community that supports their ambitions.