



YMCA Career Expo and Beyond!

Career Manenoz

2018 Project Report

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1. Introduction

In May 2016 the Africa YMCAs committed to develop the YMCAs to an innovative and empowering space for young people, using local resources, leveraging on local partnerships that enable the increase of the YMCAs influence regarding youth economic empowerment. This was the birth of the YMCA Career Expo and Beyond dubbed “*CareerManenoz*”. Career Manenoz focuses on development of corporate relations and partnerships for sustainability of youth work. The initiative was first piloted successfully in 2016 in collaboration with the Kenya YMCA and is now an annual event scheduled to coincide with the celebration of the Africa Youth Day on 1st of November each year. The theme for Career Manenoz is Connecting youth to opportunities and is designed to be a space where young people experience self discovery, unlock their potential and connect to opportunities that will support them in their career and wealth creation pursuits.

Career Manenoz 2018 took place on 2nd and 3rd November 2018 at the Kenya YMCA on State House Road in Nairobi Kenya. This year’s Career Manenoz focused on three main areas for opportunities, Agriculture, ICTs and Creative Arts. The event targeted 3,000 youth from across the country mobilised through institutions of learning (High Schools and colleges) Churches, Youth Spaces and other youth led and youth serving organisations across the country. It was envisioned as a space to specially address youth livelihoods and wealth creation as well as their citizenship responsibilities including countering violent extremism, participation in leadership and promoting positive sexual and reproductive health behavior among the youth.

2. Background:

While some 500,000 graduates enter the job market every year in Kenya, companies are still hard pressed to find adequately qualified youth to fit their productive needs. This rising and youthful workforce faces new challenges, such as a rapidly changing work environment, the rise of technology and the need for new skills. Many of the issues that contribute to youth unemployment and underemployment revolve around the mismatch of skills to available job opportunities and a lack of quality education with missing focus on innovative thinking, work ethics and (personal) responsibility as well as missing guidance for young people towards opportunities in the market.

On the other hand, the world of entrepreneurship remains largely unexploited by young people. 80 percent of youth below 35 years of age are either unemployed or underemployed and partnership between the Government, the Private Sector and Academia becomes vital in resolving this growing social and development challenge. ***CareerManenoz***’ is our answer to supporting the economic growth of Africa by beginning a process to harness the youth potential to invaluable assets for economic growth in line with our vision of “empowering young people for the Africa Renaissance”. The initiative will not only be an opportunity for young men and women to interact with industry and get real time opportunity for guidance, mentorship, recruitment and even job placements, but also an opportunity for further interaction for employment and enterprise creation through the YMCA Youth Spaces

3. Outcomes of Career Manenoz 2018

The event was attended by a total of 1,386 youth from Nairobi, Nakuru, Busia, Naivasha, Nyeri, Kisumu, Mombasa and Kiambu Counties. These youth interacted with entrepreneurs and professionals through the following platforms:

3.1 Opening Ceremony

This was held on Friday 2nd November and was presided over by Ms. Emily Kimani, the Regional Representative for Nairobi in the Ministry of Public Service Youth and Gender Affairs. Ms. Kimani in her remarks sensitized youth on platforms and opportunities that the government is putting in place to empower youth and encouraged them to utilize the skills and talents they have to make the country

better as the youth have the solutions to all the problems they have. The Opening Ceremony was preceded by a Stop Youth Poverty March by young people in the streets of Nairobi to sensitize the public on the challenges experienced by young people in their livelihoods and wealth creation pursuits.

3.2 Vibes:

These were small group sessions between entrepreneurs/professionals with 20-25 youth. These sessions created an opportunity for young people to draw motivation from the speakers' personal experiences and also acquire some skills in the thematic area being discussed in the vibe. Each session was 1.5 hours long. The following vibes were hosted at this year's event:

1. Creative Arts;

A total of three sessions were held on this thematic area. These were hosted in separate sessions by the following speakers:

- Timothy Kimani a.k.a Njugush, Comedian
- Kezzy Omoni, Ebru TV
- Rachael Muthoni, Safari 254 Bloggers

The speakers encouraged youth creativity and shared various opportunities that exist in television, comedy and blogging. These include journalists, news anchors, makeup artists, costume and set designs producers and cinematographers. Young people were encouraged to start small and they build their brand in order to succeed in life.

2. Kilimo Manenoz

Two sessions were held for this thematic area and hosted:

- Carol Moko and Michael Wahwai, Sylvia's basket
- Alphaxard Ndungu, Alpham Fresh Produce

Most of the participants were agricultural students, high school students and entrepreneurs. They were informed about the available opportunities that exist. The speakers challenged young people's view that is a dirty job without good pay.

3. Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship Vibe.

One session was held on this topic hosted by Lydia Njoroge. Participants for this vibe included young people in the business industry, students in university, in high school and colleges and people interested in venturing in business. The main concerns raised during this session were around business registration.

4. Sex Manenoz sessions

A session was held each day on this topic and focused on provide accurate information and services on Sexual and Reproductive health. The sessions were held in partnership with Family Health Options Kenya (FHOK) who also provided free HIV, STI and Cervical Cancer screening services.

3.3 Hangouts

The vibes were supplemented by hangouts, which were open and hands on spaces for young people to interact with various innovations and practices in creative arts, agriculture and ICTs. These were hosted as follows:

- Kilimo Manenoz: Miramar College and the YMCA College of Agriculture and Technology. These show cased various technologies on urban farming.
- Creative Arts: BEMOS Crafts and Buru Buru Institute of Fine Arts (BIFA). These demonstrated the various arts opportunities and innovations that young people could explore.
- ICT: IBM Kenya. This session provided various ICT sensitization and skills for the opportunities that exist around technology and the internet.

- Career Manenoz also hosted an innovator, Mr. Thaddeus Lebanon, who showcased his creation a bicycle propelled aircraft.
- Environmental Conservation: Africa Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYICC). Hosted sensitization sessions on opportunities and activities in environmental conservation

3.4 Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony commenced with the competition for Mr. and Miss YMCA. The competition saw young people from different branches of the Kenya YMCA, compete for the title. Francis Amisi a.k.a Frasha, Musician and Director of Youth Machakos County was a special guest during the competition and was accompanied by Thomas Kwaka aka Big Ted.

The closing ceremony was further presided over by Kevit Desai, the Principal Secretary in the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education (TVET) in the Ministry of Education. He encouraged young people to use their talents as that is the most important and most significant path to their ambitions and also important for national development. He also crowned the winning contestants, Miss Kenya YMCA Grace Njeri (Shauri Moyo) and Mr Kenya YMCA Reuben Mungai (YCAT)

Also in attendance during the closing ceremony was Dr. Pius Mutisya, the Director of Quality Assurance in the Ministry of Education and members of the Kenya YMCA National Executive Committee including Mr. Patrick Kaptway the Chairman. They all encouraged youth to take serious what they do and utilize their talents and they will succeed in life. The event ended with the crowning of MR/MISS YMCA 2018.

Partnerships

Career Manenoz 2018 was collaboration between AAYMCA, Kenya YMCA and with the financial and in-kind support of the following partners: Legacy Consulting, Y Global, YMCA USA, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Elgon Kenya Limited, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), Youth Enterprise Fund, Thika Clothing Mills Limited, Kevian, Britania, Buruburu Institute of Fine Arts, Sports Station, Sylvia's Basket, Hotpoint and support from individuals contributions.

Evaluation

From the evaluation conducted with 200 youth participating in Career Manenoz, 60% ranked the event as excellent while 29% said it was a good event. When asked which session they liked best, the hotbench and sex manenoz were ranked highest by the youth participating in the evaluation. This is an indication that the youth enjoyed the panel discussions. The vibes were also ranked high among the best experiences with young people reporting having enjoyed overall the motivational talks offered during the event. Among the other things highlighted by the youth in the evaluation is that they enjoyed the dance performances, interaction with other youth and the panelists. In addition the young people also appreciated the information and services offered by NHIF and NSSF. In terms of the areas where the young people called for improvement was in the food, time management especially on the first day as well as the registration process. 90% of the young people expressed that they would be interested in participating in another career manenoz.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

1. Resource mobilisation; continues to be a challenge in the implementation of the YMCAs Careers Expo and beyond. The YMCAs especially is looking into raising more resources and partnerships through private sector for this initiative. We understand that early mobilisation and connecting with private sector is essential. However there is also need to conduct sensitization within Private Sector on the value of investing in youth empowerment.

2. Time was also a challenge in the planning and implementation of Career Manenoz. Resource constraints have limited the event to two days and this has resulted in a very tight programme with rushed activities. One of the ways the YMCA intends to managed this is by ensuring more robust Career Manenoz type of activities and events at Kenya YMCA branches so that the main event in November is a culmination of these smaller events.
3. Marketing of the event is among the areas where the YMCA will work to improve in the coming years. Although 2018 has seen more engagement on community media, there is still potential to leverage more on exisiting media including radio and TV. Among the challenges expreined was securing free spaces to market the event especially in main stream media and therefore more effort is required here. The YMCA believes that increased visibility will increase the number of youth who can benefit from this event.