



Generating, Testing, and Scaling Innovative Solutions to Global Youth Unemployment

“A really great event...not only was it a lot of fun, but some of those programs are going to change the lives of thousands of young people on the margins. That's an amazing thing.”

David Barth
Director of Youth Programs
Ford Foundation

The magnitude of the global youth unemployment challenge is unquestionably enormous. Few dispute that the field is desperate for innovation. But how do we generate, test, and scale good ideas? The [Global Center for Youth Employment](#) (GCYE), in partnership with the [Ford Foundation](#), hosted a two day Ideathon on June 15th and 16th to co-design and invest in innovative collective impact solutions to the global youth employment challenge. The Ideathon was held at [1776](#), a global innovation network and start-up incubator in the Brooklyn's Navy Yard and drew a diverse crowd of thought leaders from NGOs, private sector companies, and youth.



Paul Weisenfeld shares RTI's vision for GCYE in filling knowledge and innovation gap.

Call For Ideas

From an open competition that saw 200 on-line submissions from 25 countries, 16 innovative ideas were selected by a panel of GCYE members and invited to “pitch” at the Ideathon. After a round of voting from event participants, 5 ideas were selected to receive “seed” funding and to work in partnership with RTI and Center members to support, test and evaluate ideas.

- [Lynk](#), a digital platform to promote job security, fair wages, a safe work environment, and the opportunity for career growth in Kenya's informal economy;
- [Harambee's](#) model to aggregate information across South Africa's labor market to more efficiently match youth to the labor market;
- [Ten Youth Mentoring](#), an affordable online tool to accelerate the adoption of high impact mentoring in all youth training to employment programs;
- [GRID's](#) JobSensei, a mobile game to educate and empower youth to hunt for jobs, starting in Pakistan; and
- Making Cents International and [Banqu's](#) approach to creating blockchain backed digital economic identities for young Syrian refugees and other displaced peoples.

Youth Engagement

The GCYE partnered with [Restless Development](#), an NGO dedicated to advocating for, and supporting, positive youth development to implementing a leading edge youth engagement approach at the Ideathon. With the help of this GCYE member organization, youth from Atlas Corp and the [MasterCard Foundation's Youth Think Tank](#), youth were engaged at every step of the process – from selection of the ideas to providing guidance on the development of the solutions. We drew from the belief, "[Nothing about us, without us!](#)"



Ford Foundation President, Darren Walker, posing with youth participants after calling GCYE and Ideathon, "Brilliant."

Collective Impact

Led by Peter Joyce and Eric Johnson at RTI, the power of GCYE is the collective knowledge of its members. In this spirit of collaboration, members formed working groups, led by mentors and coaches, to deliberate, shape, and design growth strategies to best translate the 5 selected ideas into reality. The Ideathon concluded with a final pitch of the adapted ideas to a panel of judges, including foundation representatives, business entrepreneurs, and a leading NGO president, who gave their feedback on the growth plans. The next steps include the continuation of collaboration among Center members to further develop the ideas and their implementation roadmaps.



Event participants at the close of the two day Ideathon.

The [Global Center for Youth Employment](#) is a virtual learning and action center that brings together a broad, diverse coalition of allies to identify and nurture innovative youth employment solutions. The Center consists of over [50 members](#) - Accenture, LinkedIn, MIT JPAL, Duke, World Vision, Plan Intl, Save the Children, and International Rescue Committee, and other NGOs, private sector partners, and academic researchers.



Global Center for
Youth Employment
Generating solutions for a working world