

UNICEF YOMA **Developing a Sustainable Scaling & Financing Strategy**

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Executive Summary

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the United Nations agency that is responsible for providing humanitarian assistance and developmental aid to youth worldwide. Generation Unlimited (GenU) is a global multi-sector partnership that is currently housed by UNICEF. It was launched at the 2018 UN General Assembly to meet the urgent need for expanding education, training, and employment opportunities for young people aged 10 to 24, on an unprecedented scale. Together, these organizations were clients for the 2020-2021 Workshop in Development Practice at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA).

In 2020, UNICEF and GenU launched a digital platform called Yoma, a youth agency marketplace that enables youth to engage, learn, and earn while achieving impact. UNICEF and GenU are working to reach the goals of creating 1.5 million individualized learning pathways and 500,000 job opportunities on the Yoma platform by 2023. A team of five SIPA students was brought in to help the client develop sustainable scaling and financing strategies, with a particular focus on reaching "Youth on the Move" (YOTM) and other hard-to-reach populations.

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, all work for the project was done remotely. By adopting a human-centered design methodology, which is further explained in this report, the SIPA team collaborated with the client, practitioners within Yoma's ecosystem, as well as scholars within academia, to produce three deliverables:

- 1) a short-term scaling presentation with five ideas on how to "scale deep", i.e., how to reach hard-to-reach population and deepen impact;
- 2) a long-term scaling framework focused on identifying readiness for new host offices to scale wide, i.e., to replicate and disseminate the Yoma model, increasing the number of people impacted;
- 3) a sustainable financing presentation including five ideas on how to create revenue streams for Yoma.

This report provides an overview of the research methodology, key insights from the research phase, descriptions of each of the deliverables, and the rationales for the development of each deliverable.

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Abbreviations

ESAR	Eastern and Southern Africa
GenU	Generation Unlimited
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
MVP	Minimum Viable Product
SIPA	School of International and Public Affairs
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
Yoma	Youth Marketplace
YOTM	Youth on the Move

1. Introduction

1.1. The Client - United Nations Children's Fund and Generation Unlimited

1.1.1. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF works in the world's toughest places to reach the most disadvantaged children and adolescents, and to protect the rights of every child, everywhere. Across more than 190 countries and territories, UNICEF helps children survive, thrive, and fulfill their potential from early childhood through adolescence. Programs support child health and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, quality education and skill-building, HIV prevention and treatment for mothers and babies, and the protection of children and adolescents from violence and exploitation (United Nations Children's Fund, n.d).

1.1.2. Generation Unlimited (GenU)

GenU was launched at the 73rd United Nations General Assembly in September 2018. It is a global multi-sector partnership currently housed by UNICEF to meet the urgent need for expanded education, training, and employment opportunities for young people aged 10 to 24 on an unprecedented scale. GenU brings together partners from government, multilateral organizations, civil society, and leaders from the private sector, with the commitment to cohere efforts around young people for large-scale impact. It supports young people's greater access to digital connectivity, quality education and skills development; economic empowerment through decent jobs; entrepreneurship; youth engagement, participation, and advocacy (UNICEF Yoma, 2020).

GenU has partnered with the UNICEF Regional Office in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAR) to develop the Yoma platform, which provides a place for youth participants to build their futures by actively engaging in social impact challenges and educational offerings. The platform intends to create a Youth (Yo) Marketplace (ma) of opportunity for youth participants who will engage in these offerings and for organizations (social impact, corporate, SME's, educational institutions, and more) who will list them. The initiative was launched in Africa, and the intention is to expand Yoma into regions around the world (UNICEF Yoma, 2020).

1.2. Background

1.2.1. Africa's Demographic Dividend

According to United Nations statistics, there are 1.2 billion youth aged 15-24 globally, accounting for one out of every six people worldwide as of 2015. This segment is predicted to increase to one out of every four people by 2030. The global trend of growth in this youth segment has particular relevance for Africa because it has the largest concentration of young people worldwide. Two hundred and twenty-six million

youth between the ages 15-24 lived in Africa in 2015, representing nearly 20 percent of the continent's population. If one includes all people below the age of 35, this number increases to a staggering three-quarters of Africa's population. Moreover, the share of Africa's youth in the world is forecasted to increase to 42 percent by 2030 and is expected to continue to grow throughout the remainder of the 21st century, more than doubling from current levels by 2055 (Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, n.d).

On the one hand, Africa's demographic dividend presents an excellent opportunity for accelerated economic growth and innovation; however, on the other hand, it offers economic and social challenges, as well as implications for regional peace and security. Unemployment or underemployment, and lack of social security, educational opportunities, and inclusive governance can drive youth to informal work or even criminal activities, making them susceptible to terrorist organizations' recruitment efforts or lead youth to attempt illegal migration.

1.2.2. Youth Unemployment in Africa

In most African countries, youth unemployment occurs at a rate that is more than twice that for adults. The majority of youth in Africa do not have stable economic opportunities: of Africa's nearly 420 million population aged 15-35, one-third are unemployed and discouraged, another third are vulnerably employed, and only one in six is in waged employment (African Development Bank, 2016). Many of these individuals are unable to secure jobs due to a lack of education, skills, experience, and financial means. The region's workforce is the least skilled in the world, constraining economic prospects. Building the skills -- cognitive, socio-emotional, and technical -- of today's workers and future generations is vital for realizing the region's development potential. The design and implementation of a successful skills agenda involve engaging multiple actors, including but is not limited to families, youth, educational institutions, skill training providers, private sector actors, and national governments.

Achieving significant progress in building skills requires enacting system-wide change. To achieve the desired outcomes of equitable access, quality, relevance, and efficiency in skills development, there is a need to pay attention to the governance environment in which skills programs operate. Lack of coordination and weak capacity can result in inefficiencies, duplication of efforts, and inattention to important issues. Therefore, to achieve broad and sustained results, reforms need to create incentives to align the behaviors of all stakeholders (World Bank Group, 2017).

1.2.3. Youth Migrants

The ongoing crises in the Central African Republic, Nigeria, and South Sudan, new conflicts erupting in Burundi and Yemen, and triggers such as environmental degradation, have contributed to forced displacement around the region. The number of refugees in Africa has almost tripled over the past ten years, from 2.3 million in 2008 to over 6.3 million in 2018. Similarly, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has dramatically increased from 6.4 million in 2009 to 17.7 million in 2018. Almost 57 percent of the population of refugees and asylum seekers are below the age of 18, and more than half of this population identifies as female (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2018).

Sub-Saharan Africa has also generated significant outflows of intercontinental migration, mainly to Western Europe, North America, and the Arab region. This mainly includes young, unskilled labor migrants who emigrate in significant numbers to find better economic opportunities outside their home countries (International Organization for Migration, 2015).

1.2.4. Youth Marketplace (Yoma) for Skillbuilding

The Yoma initiative was conceptualized as a holistic approach to address the challenging present and an uncertain future by increasing youth agency across the globe. The motivation behind this initiative is to meet the changing demands of the labor market while equipping young people (including YOTM) with relevant skills and competencies to compete in local and global markets. Yoma's vision is to become a youth agency market that enables youth to engage, learn, and earn while achieving impact. Its mission is to “positively impact youth, local communities, and the world by developing a digitally-enabled ecosystem that is ‘youth centric’ and provides value to all players, linking talent with opportunities and professional/entrepreneurial pathways” (UNICEF Yoma, 2020b).

1.2.4.1. Placing Youth at the Center

The Yoma ecosystem aims to place youth at the center and surrounds them with tasks and activities that they can undertake to acquire digital tokens, which can be redeemed in an intellectual marketplace for services (such as mentorship) or a digital/physical marketplace for goods. Underpinning the ecosystem is supporting technology infrastructure including artificial intelligence, psychometrics, data triangulation, and smart contracts via blockchain. This supporting infrastructure allows young people to build an alternative trust profile and demonstrate reliability and acquisition of skills, enhancing employability and allowing for more informed matching with the labor market (UNICEF Yoma, 2020).

As youth engage in opportunities available on Yoma, their involvement and completion are recorded to their profiles. This allows them to build a verifiable, digital CV with trusted credentials. Furthermore, their efforts are rewarded with the platform currency, a digital token, that can be spent in the Yoma marketplace. See Figure 1 for Yoma’s conceptual model.

Yoma’s first large-scale minimum viable product (MVP), or “Yoma 1.0” was initiated in mid-May 2020 through a challenge around COVID-19. The platform is currently being incubated by RLabs in South Africa, and it has been implemented in collaboration with 20 partners. Yoma is active in three countries and has a total of 12,500 user registrations (UNICEF, 2020a).

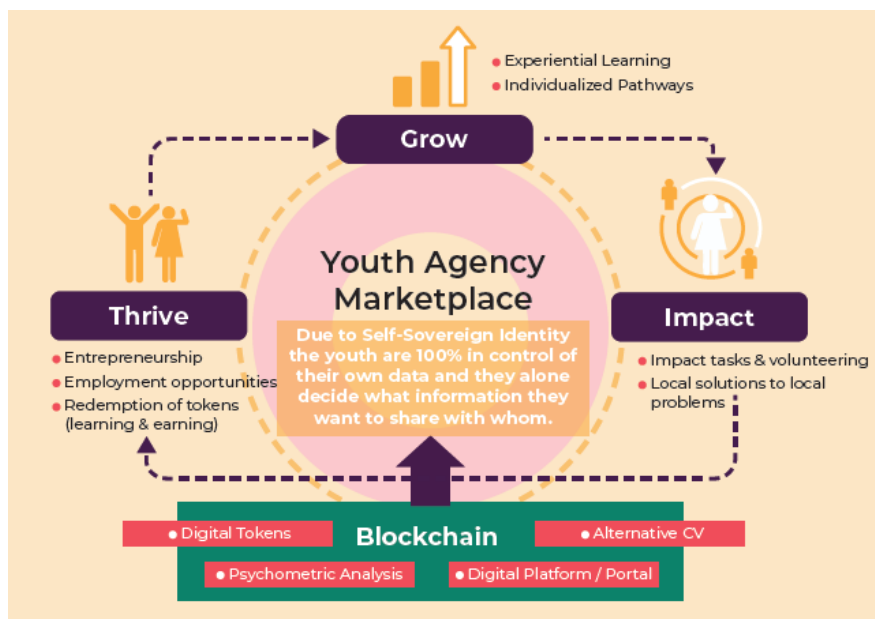


Figure 1: Illustrative Yoma Conceptual Model
Source: UNICEF, 2020a

1.2.4.2. Scaling and Financial Sustainability Strategies

Yoma is nearing completion of the next version of the platform, or “Yoma 2.0.” Yoma plans to scale the second version of the platform and aims for it to become largely self-financed within three to five years through the digital token economy. To meet Yoma’s future goals of creating 1.5 million individualized learning pathways and 500,000 job opportunities by 2023, the SIPA team has developed sustainable financing and scaling strategies for UNICEF. The SIPA team has focused mainly on the “Youth on the Move” use case of Yoma.

2. Rationale

UNICEF: As Yoma empowers youth to discover and tap into their potential, this project directly contributes to UNICEF’s mission. Scaling and sustaining Yoma will touch upon the following relevant work areas for UNICEF’s Eastern & Southern Africa Offices (UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa, n.d.):

- Adolescent development, protection, and participation
- Ending child poverty
- Gender equality
- Making domestic resources work better for children
- Quality education and learning
- Social protection

GenU: GenU’s mandate is to support and enable young people to make a large-scale impact. The success of this initiative will put Yoma on the map as a scalable, effective tool to engage and ultimately employ youth in a region where youth unemployment is pervasive. While early prototyping and piloting results show positive feedback, this project aims to help the client take Yoma to the next level: sustainability (UNICEF Yoma, 2020).

Below are the key phases of Yoma’s development and the intended contributions of SIPA’s Workshop team:

- Yoma’s development and co-creation process:
 - [Sept 2019 - Feb 2020] **Exploration:** Empathizing from young people’s perspective
 - [Mar to Aug 2020] **Prototyping:** Find solutions to identify and nurture untapped digital talent in Africa
 - [Sept 2020 to Aug 2021] **Piloting:** Pilot some prototypes in a few African countries
- The SIPA team evaluated early piloting results and developed strategies to help bring Yoma to the next phase of growth:
 - [2021 onwards] **Scaling & Financing:**
 - To grow the platform, Yoma will need to develop a sustainable financing model
 - To reach more youth, Yoma must scale deeper in existing pilot countries and expand to other countries in Africa and regions around the world

3. Objectives

The success of Yoma depends on its ability to address youth and ecosystem partners' needs, sustainably finance the platform, and scale to other countries around the world. In particular, the SIPA team supported UNICEF in developing sustainable financing and scaling strategies for Yoma's "Youth on the Move" use case. The SIPA team supported UNICEF to fulfill the following objectives:

3.1. *Sustainable Financing Strategy*

- Research and share innovative financing and funding mechanisms that might be leveraged to ensure financial sustainability

3.2. *Scaling Strategy*

- Short-term:
 - Identify scaling strategies for the YOTM use-case
- Long-term:
 - Develop a tool to support Yoma's expansion into new geographies

4. Central concepts

4.1. Scaling

For this project, the concept of scaling has been central. Commonly defined as the growth of impact (see for example Seelos & Mair, 2016), the idea of scaling Yoma has mainly been centered around impacting a greater number of youth through the dissemination of Yoma to different parts of the world. However, for this project, a two-pronged approach to scaling has been adopted, building on the research and conceptualization of scaling by Darcy Riddell and Michele-Lee Moore (2016). This approach to scaling, visualized below, allowed the SIPA team to develop a scaling framework that focuses on reaching more young people (scaling out) and reaching harder to reach youth segments, thus deepening its impact (scaling deep). As further detailed in Section 8, the two approaches are connected and support one another.

Scaling Strategy	Definition
Scaling Out	Replication and dissemination; increasing number of people impacted
Scaling Deep	Reaching harder to reach populations; deepening impact

Figure 2: Strategy Definitions

Source: Adapted from Ridell & More 2015

4.2. Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability refers to the ability of an entity to maintain financial capacity over time. To reach financial sustainability, an organization needs financial capacity, which can be defined as the “resources that give an organization the ability to seize opportunities and react to unexpected threats while maintaining general operations of the organization” (Sontag-Padilla et al., 2012). Such financial capacity can be secured in several ways, ranging from full dependence on external sources of funding (such as grants and donations) to full reliance on self-generated income (for example, providing services or products for a fee). Further, financial sustainability can also refer to sustainable financing, i.e., the process of taking to account environmental, social, and governance considerations when seeking to build financial capacity (see for example European Commission, n.d.). In this project, financial sustainability refers both to Yoma’s ability to maintain financial capacity over time and the goal of Yoma to use sustainable financing practices when scaling the Yoma platform.

4.2.1. Earned Revenue

Relevant to the financial sustainability for Yoma is the idea of earned revenue. To date, Yoma relies on contributed revenue (in other words, donations and charitable contributions), and although contributed revenue will continue to be important, the SIPA team wanted to address Yoma’s potential for earned revenue. Developing earned revenue, defined as money earned providing a good or service, will help Yoma diversify its income and become more financially sustainable and independent (Candid Learning, u.d; Society for Nonprofits, u.d.). Earned income will be especially important in scaling Yoma as it will help Yoma to better sustain its operations and develop the platform further (Ibid). Thus, in developing the sustainable financing strategy detailed in Section 7, the SIPA team exclusively researched opportunities for Yoma to generate earned revenue.

4.3. Youth

There is no universally agreed international definition of the youth age group. However, the United Nations defines “youth” as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years for statistical purposes. All UN data on youth are based on this definition, as is reflected in the annual yearbooks of statistics published by the UN system on demography, education, employment, and health (United Nations, n.d.).

4.3.1. “Youth on the Move”

Like youth, there is no universally agreed international definition of what constitutes “Youth on the Move” (YOTM). In relation to this project, YOTM is loosely defined as youth who are or have been moving from one geographical place to another, both voluntarily or forced (see Huxley et al., 2018 for similar definition). As such, YOTM is a broad group including, but not limited to, youth in refugee camps, youth migrants, and internally displaced youth. It is worth noting that this broad definition may affect the impact Yoma can have on both YOTM and other hard-to-reach populations. Although the YOTM population share some of the same characteristics in terms of opportunities and challenges, they are not a homogenous group. Thus, as presented in Section 7, the final deliverables are limited as they cater to a broader population of YOTM and may therefore not address the specific challenges of each subgroup's reality.

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Research Phases

To meet the objectives, the SIPA team adopted a design thinking methodology. Design thinking is a human-centered, non-linear, and iterative process that is effective in generating solutions to complex challenges (Ideo, n.d.). Further, design thinking is a process that can help counteract human bias and stimulate creativity while receiving buy-in from stakeholders by actively involving them in the design process (Liedtka, 2018). In line with best practices in design thinking project methodology, the SIPA team divided the work into three phases: inspiration, ideation, and exploration. Each phase and the key activities conducted during it are briefly outlined below.

5.1.1. Inspiration

During the inspiration phase, the SIPA team gathered inspiration on best practices for scaling and financing similar projects from practitioners within UNICEF and the Yoma ecosystem. The SIPA team also conducted desk research on central concepts and a thorough review of Yoma’s current business strategy documentation. In total, the SIPA team conducted over 15+ interviews, which are listed in Annex 1. Based on the initial research, the SIPA team generated a number of key insights relevant to the scaling and sustainable financing of Yoma. A number of these insights are shared in Section 6. Based on the insights generated, the SIPA team constructed three ‘How Might We Questions’ that came to guide the work:

Objective	How Might We Question
Scaling Short Term	How might Yoma better reach and support YOTM?
Scaling Long Term	How might Yoma identify where to scale next, with a focus on YOTM?
Sustainable Financing	How might Yoma generate revenue, in both the short and long term?

5.1.2. Ideation

Based on the key insights and the How Might We Questions, the SIPA team started building on concrete ideas to solve the challenges and answer the objectives. The SIPA team held brainstorming sessions within their own team, as well as with the client, and these sessions generated over 70 ideas of how to scale. Furthermore, the SIPA team presented eight financing case studies with inspiration on ways for Yoma to

generate revenue. Towards the end of the inspiration phase, the SIPA team, along with the client, clustered similar ideas and voted on top ones that felt feasible, exciting, and youth-centered.

5.1.3. Exploration

In the exploration phase, the SIPA team refined the ideas from the ideation phase by conducting further research and conducting more interviews. The team also explored piloting approaches and examined the complexity of the proposed ideas. During the exploration phase, the team also defined and designed the final deliverables introduced in Section 7.

5.2. Client Support and Input

Central to the SIPA team's success with adopting a design thinking methodology was the continuous support given by the client. The SIPA team met with the client on a bi-weekly basis, where progress was shared and input incorporated. Further, as explained in Section 2.1.2, the SIPA team conducted an ideation session with the client. The SIPA team captured the ideas and information from these meetings in several slide decks that were shared with the client as a part of the final deliverable package.

5.3. Limitations

The SIPA team conducted its work during the Spring of 2021, a time where the COVID-19 pandemic still had a tight grip on the world. This had several implications for the work, some of which limited the research and findings of the SIPA team. Firstly, the team solely relied on remote research. All interviews were conducted online, to some extent restricting rapport-building. Remote research also brings challenges in terms of connectivity, time differences, and types of activities that can be conducted. The SIPA team tried to address these challenges by a number of measures, such as scheduling ample time for interviews and researching best practices for conducting human-centered design activities online. Despite the obstacles remote research brought, the SIPA team also used remote research as an opportunity to connect to a broad range of practitioners and experts in different parts of the world, something that might not have been feasible if research was done in person.

A second limitation is that the SIPA team did not speak to any youth directly, both due to ethical research concerns and the remote nature of the research. Thus, no direct youth input is included in the deliverables to the client or in this report. The limitation of not getting insights directly from the end-user has a number of implications. The SIPA team believes that the tools developed, especially for short term scaling, are more suited as general insights on how the Yoma team might reach YOTM. However, without direct youth input, the operationalization/ roll-out of these ideas may not be the most effective, efficient, or even suitable

way to reach YOTM. Thus, in taking the ideas further, the Yoma team should seek input from YOTM and tailor the ideas accordingly. Despite this limitation, the SIPA team has adopted a youth-centered focus and continuously gathered secondary data on youth experiences and needs through interviews with the UNICEF country offices and Yoma's ecosystem partners. Furthermore, the SIPA team tried, when possible, to integrate youth considerations into the deliverables; for example, the team included a "youth centricity" assessment for each idea presented in the short-term scaling deliverable.

6. Key Insights

The SIPA team and the client worked together to draw out key themes and insights for the project through the research and ideation phases. There were four themes with seven insights that were most central to shaping the final tools and deliverables, each of which is presented below. The insights are inclusive but not limited to issues affecting YOTM.

6.1. Theme: Inclusion of YOTM

- Insight: Digital literacy and access to technology and data is not ubiquitous in the YOTM population. For example, some have access to personal devices while others only utilize technology through local NGO hubs.
- Insight: YOTM and hard-to-reach populations need stronger linkages between digital and physical worlds, both due to digital accessibility issues and the heightened importance of trust in making the decision to use new technologies and platforms.

"[Yoma is] not accessible for everyone, and maybe not accessible for those who most need it"
-Country Office Employee

"[Yoma] needs NGO partners to reach hard-to-reach populations with physical hubs/digital literacy training."
-Country Office Employee

6.2. Theme: Customization

- Insight: Customization for local contexts (language, economic landscape) is key for youth engagement. For example, an entrepreneurship course for a young person in rural Burundi may look very different than for a young person in Cape Town who is training to be an engineer.

"Important to embed Yoma in the existing national structure for sustainability and scale"
-Country Office Employee

6.3. Theme: Partnership for Scaling and Implementation

- Insight: Host office/entity buy-in is critical to scaling due to the need to customize, market, and fund the Yoma platform separately in each new country.
- Insight: Strong ecosystem partnerships are essential to achieving the learning-to-earning value proposition, particularly when it comes to apprenticeship, internship, and full-time job opportunities in a country or region.

"Partnerships need to be win-win, platform partners need to see the value proposition."
-Country Office Employee

"We need to think beyond the challenges, Yoma needs to be connected to income-generating opportunities"
-Country Office Employee

6.4. *Theme: Revenue Generation*

- Insight: Prioritize revenue generation and donor-based funding over impact investing as the platform is not yet ready to generate investor returns.

"[We] see it more as an NGO over a for-profit corp... [An] NGO, funded through grants, management fee to funds. [We are] doubtful that this would be profitable/self-sustained."
-Yoma Funding Partner

These themes and insights were mapped to the objectives of the project--short- and long-term scaling, as well as financial sustainability--and helped to inform the tools and deliverables outlined in the next section of this report. In terms of stakeholder contribution to these insights, country offices provided the insights most central to understanding how and in what ways Yoma should scale, especially focusing on YOTM. These insights were later confirmed by other stakeholders, like Yoma funding partners, the UNICEF migration team, and Yoma opportunity providers. For the insight on financial sustainability, Yoma's current philanthropic-based funding partners were the key sources of information, and the insight was later supported by social enterprise experts within academia.

7. Introduction to Tools and Deliverables

7.1. Short-term Scaling

To reach hard-to-reach populations, including YOTM, and meet Yoma's goal of creating 500,000 job opportunities by 2023, Yoma must build out the rest of its Grow, Impact, and Thrive dimensions by scaling deep into the countries where it is already operating. After collaborating with the Yoma team during the ideation phase to develop 70+ scaling ideas and rank preferred ideas, the SIPA team selected five opportunities to explore and adopt further. These ideas were selected along five key principles: youth centricity, inclusion, testability, grounded in resource realities, and ability to be contextualized. The short term scaling opportunities identified included the following:

- *Youth Ambassador Network*: Create a network of youth ambassadors who can reach different youth segments (e.g. YOTM) that may be harder to reach. This could increase in-person outreach capabilities and create an integration between the digital and physical worlds.
- *Digital Partnerships*: Partner with established organizations / telecommunications companies to support youth and YOTM with free wifi and/or data and encourage them to use Yoma.
- *Personas for Different Contexts*: To deepen Yoma's understanding of how to reach different segments of YOTM, Yoma could identify a number of personas that represent different user types. These personas can help to prioritize what segments of YOTM Yoma wants to focus on and help to brainstorm ways for Yoma to reach and increase its usability.
- *Tracks*: To incentivize youth from different contexts and stages of education and employment to join Yoma, Yoma could identify and create a number of tracks for different groups with appropriate resources and educational and professional opportunities.
- *Country Playbook*: To support countries in establishing a broad network of vendors and ecosystem partners, Yoma could develop a country playbook outlining how to launch and build Yoma ecosystems for countries with varying capacity levels.

Each of these short-term scaling options included pilot opportunities, examples of the idea in practice, key considerations around design principles, and open questions. These scaling recommendations will enable the Yoma team to continue deepening their impact in countries that have already started implementing Yoma to ensure they are also reaching YOTM and harder-to-reach populations.

7.2. Long-term Scaling

For long-term scaling, the SIPA team developed a long-term scaling framework supplemented by a traffic-light scoring model for host offices/entities to self-identify their readiness to adopt Yoma in their country.

The long-term scaling framework consists of six main dimensions: Political, Organizational, Financing Landscape, Use Case Implementation, Ecosystem Landscape, and “Youth on the Move,” spanning a total of 58 indicators. Each of the indicators is awarded a red/amber/green color code based on the host entities' ability and capacity for implementation.

The tool is meant to guide host entities to self-identify areas where additional effort is needed in terms of time, resources and/or preparation to adopt Yoma. The Readiness Index would help rank host entities on the basis of potential ease of implementation of Yoma.

7.3. Financing

One of Yoma's priorities is to work toward financial sustainability. As mentioned in the key insights section, the SIPA team's research led to the conclusion that revenue generation opportunities should be the focus of Yoma's financial sustainability strategy.

After developing eight potential ideas through desk research and interviews with social enterprise practitioners, the SIPA team worked with the client to narrow the list to four priority revenue models that the SIPA team could research more deeply. The team recommended four revenue-generating opportunities that Yoma can continue to explore:

- Short-term revenue generation models:
 - *Sponsorship of impact challenges*: Corporate or philanthropic sponsors could provide the funds for Yoma's impact challenges, including operating funds and rewards given to youth for completing the impact challenges, in exchange for co-branding and input on challenge topics.
 - *Platform integration fees*: Yoma's ecosystem partners could pay either a flat fee or monthly subscription fee to integrate with Yoma's API and gain access to Yoma's expansive youth network.

- Long-term revenue generation models:
 - *Employer advertising on Yoma's marketplace*: Yoma can explore charging corporations to pay for posting and/or promoting job opportunities on the platform, as well as accessing a database of digital CVs.
 - *Social impact bonds / results-based financing*: Yoma can explore setting up social impact bonds with impact investors, governments, and/or philanthropic partners that could support skill development and job opportunity placement for youth.

The short-term options build more closely on Yoma's existing platform and therefore will be less technically complex to implement. The long-term options are tied to outcomes that Yoma may not yet be providing, such as job opportunities, and thus will take longer to prepare for and implement, and they may also involve more complex partnerships.

For each model, the SIPA team included examples of businesses using the revenue model in practice, assessments of the applicability for Yoma, and prerequisites and complexity considerations for implementation.

8. Recommendations

8.1. *Why Scaling Deep Now, and not Later, Matters*

Scaling deep is essential to impacting all hard-to-reach populations, including YOTM, women, rural-, and low-income- populations, among others. To meet Yoma's goal of creating 500,000 job opportunities by 2023 and prioritizing youth inclusivity on the platform, it is important that Yoma focuses its attention on mastering the Grow, Impact, and Thrive dimensions in countries where it is already operating. Piloting the short-term scaling ideas outlined in the SIPA team's deliverable will help Yoma showcase its ability to create impact for all youth populations, and the team believes funding partners will be supportive of this approach based on project interviews.

*"Need to be careful not to scale too fast without quality and evidence."
-Yoma Funding Partner*

8.2. *Why Scaling out with Intention Matters*

Replicating Yoma in different countries will be critical to reaching 1.5 million youth by 2023. The SIPA team's interviews with Yoma's implementation partners led to the conclusion that scaling with intention, resources, and strong host entity buy-in is critical for success. Customization to local contexts and strong government and ecosystem partnerships are essential to Yoma's sustainable growth within a region, and Yoma should seek to scale where these can be achieved. The long-term tool included alongside this report will help Yoma assess country readiness and ongoing host-entity capacity.

*"It's interesting how we are always talking scale before we have piloted... We should really take it down to something smaller before we talk scaling... Would like to have different tangible products run successfully and then go to scale."
-Yoma Funding Partner*

8.3. *Why Revenue Generation Matters*

To scale the Yoma platform, Yoma's financial sustainability will become increasingly important. While the SIPA team acknowledges that the Yoma platform will continue to rely on contributed forms of financing (grants, donations, etc.) for the foreseeable future, through discussions with social enterprise professors at SIPA and Yoma's ecosystem partners, the team confirmed that revenue generation is an opportunity Yoma should pursue. Not only will revenue generation be important in scaling Yoma as it will help Yoma to better sustain its operations and develop the platform further, but earned income is also attractive to donors who have limited resources and want to contribute to sustainable programs. The ideas included in the financing deliverable will be a strong starting point for Yoma in exploring revenue generation models.

*"We have to reduce [the burden on donors], otherwise it remains a huge cloud. We need to start selling the pieces [of Yoma] that are already functioning and possible to self-finance. Not every [donor] will invest in this trial and error period."
-Yoma Funding Partner*

9. Conclusion

Since the 2020 launch of Yoma, a youth agency marketplace that enables youth to engage, learn, and earn while achieving impact, UNICEF and GenU, along with their stakeholders, have worked hard to broaden Yoma's reach. To achieve the goal of creating 1.5 million individualized learning pathways and 500,000 job opportunities by 2023, the SIPA team developed sustainable financing and scaling strategies, with a particular focus on how to reach YOTM and other hard-to-reach populations. By adopting a human-centered design approach, the SIPA team, along with input from the client, practitioners within Yoma's ecosystem, as well as scholars within academia, developed three deliverables:

- A short term scaling presentation with five ideas on how to “scale deep,” i.e., how to reach harder to reach population and deepening impact
- A long term scaling framework focused on identifying readiness for new host offices to scale wide, i.e., to replicate and disseminate the Yoma model, increasing the number of people impacted
- A sustainable financing presentation including four ideas on how to create revenue streams for Yoma

Furthermore, the SIPA team developed a set of recommendations building on the idea that in the immediate future, Yoma should focus on scaling deep before moving on to scaling out with intention. Lastly, the SIPA team concluded that revenue generation will be essential for Yoma to successfully scale and attract donors with limited resources.

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Annexes

- *Annex 1 -Interview Guides*

Interview Guide for Financing Partners

Interviewees: Sushant Sharma, Chief Investment Officer, Botnar Foundation

Intro & Purpose :

- The SIPA Workshop team is working on developing a sustainable scaling and financing strategy for Yoma, focusing on YOTM. We are looking to learn more about the current financing of the platform today, Yoma 2.0, and future vision. The SIPA team would love to hear your thoughts around funding and self-sustainability of the Yoma platform.
- The information we gather during this research project will be incorporated in a report submitted only to UNICEF and Columbia University.
- Before we start, could we receive your consent to interview and record this conversation for our notetaking purposes?
- Any questions for us before we begin?

Key Research Questions:

1. [Botnar Foundation]

- a. Start by telling us a little about the Botnar's mission and work?
- b. What made Yoma a good partner to receive funding from Botnar?

2. [Yoma]

- a. What is your vision for Yoma?
- b. Can you tell us about your financial partnership with Yoma to date? Are you financing a specific part of Yoma (i.e. grow, thrive dimension)? Specific countries?
- c. How do you see your role changing as Yoma transitions from the "1.0 version" of challenges to the "2.0 version" where the ecosystem is more built out?

3. [Youth on the Move]

- a. We've learned from country offices that YOTM are particularly affected by limited access to digital technology, has Botnar funded work that is trying to reach populations that struggle with digital access?
- b. As a donor, would you prefer achieving scale or reaching the hardest to reach populations first? What would bring the most value for your money?

4. [Financing]

- a. Trying to better understand the best opportunities for monetizing Yoma/generating returns

for investors (be it social impact bonds, impact investments). Are you familiar with other platforms that have achieved self-sustainability? How did they do so?

- i. Advertising
 - ii. Subscription-based platform
 - iii. Cross-subsidizing - paying users subsidizing non-paying users
 - iv. Social Impact Bonds - Scalability?
 1. Impact Bonds for Syrian Refugee Livelihoods: The Kois Invest
 - v. Corporate Social Responsibility
- b. Has your organization explored joint funding mechanisms for Yoma?
 - c. In your experience, what are the key factors necessary for Yoma to become financially self-reliant?

Thank you so much for your time and insights. We're very thankful that you could take the time to help us understand the Yoma project. *If we need to follow up with more questions about Yoma, who should we follow up with?*

Interview Guide for UNICEF Country Offices

Interviewees: UNICEF Country Offices where Yoma has been implemented/ where there is interest.

Intro & Purpose:

- The SIPA Workshop team is looking to gain insight on the Yoma ecosystem and partnership landscape in the country and understand the challenges and opportunities for increasing user engagement.
- The information we gather during this research project will be incorporated in a report submitted only to UNICEF and Columbia University.
- Before we start, could we receive your consent to interview and record this conversation for our notetaking purposes?
- Any questions for us before we begin?

Key Research Questions:

1. **[Implementation]** What do you know about Yoma and what has been your engagement thus far?
 - a. What were the results (if applicable)?
 - b. If you haven't implemented Yoma, how could it align to the programmatic needs in your country?
2. **[Youth]** What has been youth's responses thus far? Has it been addressing their needs?

- a. Could you give us some examples of how it has helped youth in your country thus far?
3. **[Scaling/ Best Practices]** What are some best practices that your Country Office has adopted for implementing Yoma and increasing user engagement?
4. **[Challenges]** What are some challenges that the implementing team has faced?
 - a. Engagement, technology access, digital tokens [if applicable]
5. **[Value Prop to Youth]** What would provide the most value to YOTM in your country, given your local knowledge of the needs of young people in your country?
 - a. What barriers do you think YOTM would face more than other youth demographics in your country?
 - b. How would you envision your CO's engagement with Yoma 2.0?
 - i. How much localization/customization of Yoma is required for a particular geographic area
6. **[Ecosystem]**
 - a. How are youth finding employment opportunities in your country? Are youth finding these jobs digitally?
 - i. In addition to Yoma, do you know any other players in this space?
 - b. What kinds of skill building opportunities are available to youth? Are youth finding these opportunities online?
7. **[Financing]** Do you know if any of your local financing partners would be interested in funding Yoma?
 - a. Have you started considering sustainable financing strategies and if so, what models / partners have you considered?

Thank you so much for your time and insights. We're very thankful that you could take the time to help us understand the Yoma project in your country. *If we need to follow up with more questions about Yoma, who should we follow up with?*

Interview Guide for Ecosystem Partners

Interviewees: Yoma's ecosystem and learning partners

Intro & Purpose :

- The SIPA Workshop team is looking to gain insight on the Yoma ecosystem and partnership landscape in the country and understand the challenges and opportunities for increasing user engagement.

- The information we gather during this research project will be incorporated in a report submitted only to UNICEF and Columbia University.
- Before we start, could we receive your consent to interview and record this conversation for our notetaking purposes?
- Any questions for us before we begin?

Key Research Questions

1. [Yoma]

- a. How would you describe your partnership with Yoma? What is the nature of your partnership with Yoma?
- b. How do you see your role for Yoma 2.0? Is it expected to change from now?
- c. Who are the target segment(s) of your platform? For example, specific ages, educational experience, etc.

2. [Yoma Challenges]

- a. What is the difference between the web-based and mobile-based challenges?

3. [Implementation Experience]

- a. How would you describe your general user vis-a-vis users of Yoma challenges?

4. [User Experience]

- a. Do you have feedback you can share from users about their experience?
 - i. Were you able to reach all youth segments, including youth of different gender, urban vs. rural, youth with disabilities, etc.?
- b. Do you know if Youth on the Move participated in the challenge?
 - i. If yes, do you know how they accessed the challenge? Did you collect any specific information from youth in this community?

5. [Challenges & Lessons learned] What are some challenges that the implementing team has faced?

- a. Engagement, technology access, digital tokens [if applicable]
- b. What works? Successes to share for other COs/partners?

Thank you so much for your time and insights. We're very thankful that you could take the time to help us understand the Yoma project. *If we need to follow up with more questions about Yoma, who should we follow up with?*

○ *Annex 2- List of Interviews Conducted*

S. No.	Interviewee	Date
1	UNICEF Nigeria Country Office	2/10
2	UNICEF Burundi Country Office	2/10
3	UNICEF South Africa Country Office	2/11
4	UNICEF Greece Country Office	2/12
5	UNICEF Kenya Country Office	2/18
6	Cartedo	2/18
7	Goodwall	2/26
8	RLabs	2/26
9	Botnar Foundation	2/17
10	Yoma Chief Technical Officer	2/16
11	UNICEF Migration & Displacement team	2/26
12	UNICEF National Committee Switzerland	3/2
13	Prof. Sarah Holloway, SIPA	3/18
14	Independent Researcher on Blockchain Technology	3/22
15	Atingi (GIZ/BMZ)	3/23
16	Clever	4/1