



Africa
Evidence
Youth
League



AFRICA
EVIDENCE
NETWORK



Establishing the Africa Evidence
Youth League (AEYL)
Interim six-month report

2024



*Africa
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Executive Summary

Overview of the AEYL project

The Africa Evidence Youth League (AEYL) emerged as a community of practice driven by the expressed needs of young individuals within the Africa Evidence Network (AEN) seeking a platform to address the challenges they encounter daily. Established with the primary goal of fostering, empowering, and amplifying the voices of emerging evidence education leaders across Africa, AEYL comprises a diverse cohort of 45 individuals representing various sectors within the ecosystem. This includes researchers, monitoring and evaluation experts, lecturers, policymakers, and teachers, among others. In its initial phase, the AEYL is focused on education, bringing together a dynamic group of 45 young people from 15 different African countries, united by their shared interest in strengthening the continent's education system through the use of evidence and data.

The AEYL project is funded by the BHP Foundation for a period of 12 months, from June 2023 to July 2024. The AEYL serves as a pilot to establish the viability of convening such youth leagues as an approach to transforming the practice of using evidence for education decision-making. In its inaugural year, the league will focus on activities related to community building (e.g., an in-person launch), capacity-sharing (e.g., a mentoring programme), and agenda-setting (e.g., an AEYL award).



AEYL launch event as part of
Evidence2023



AEYL

Manifesto



AEYL

Online Platform



AEYL

Partnerships with high schools and universities



AEYL education landscape Report



AEYL

Mentorship Program



AEYL

Award





Key achievements

Driven by the core values of relationships, collaborations, and community, the AEYL has been able to accomplish the following key milestones in its first six months:

1 The convening of the first-ever Evidence Youth League in Africa through the successful recruitment of 45 emerging education evidence leaders from 15 different countries.

Hosting a lively and engaging in-person launch of the AEYL during Evidence2023 in Uganda.

2

3 The conception, finalisation, and subsequent launch of the AEYL manifesto, which outlines the collective vision of the AEYL.

The successful development of the AEYL online platform as a hub for interaction and capacity-sharing among youth leaders.

4

5 Sustained monthly internal interactions among AEYL members.

Establishment and recognition of the external brand identity of the AEYL.

6

7 Formation of productive partnerships with key organisations that have officially endorsed AEYL.

Piloting an AEYL podcast as part of the AEYL communication campaign.

8

Next priorities

In the upcoming six months, the AEYL plans to achieve more milestones. These include:



January 2024: Launch of the AEYL online platform.



February 2024: Launch of the AEYL mentorship and partnerships with schools and universities.



March 2024: Mapping of education EIDM needs and stakeholders to be published in a landscape report.



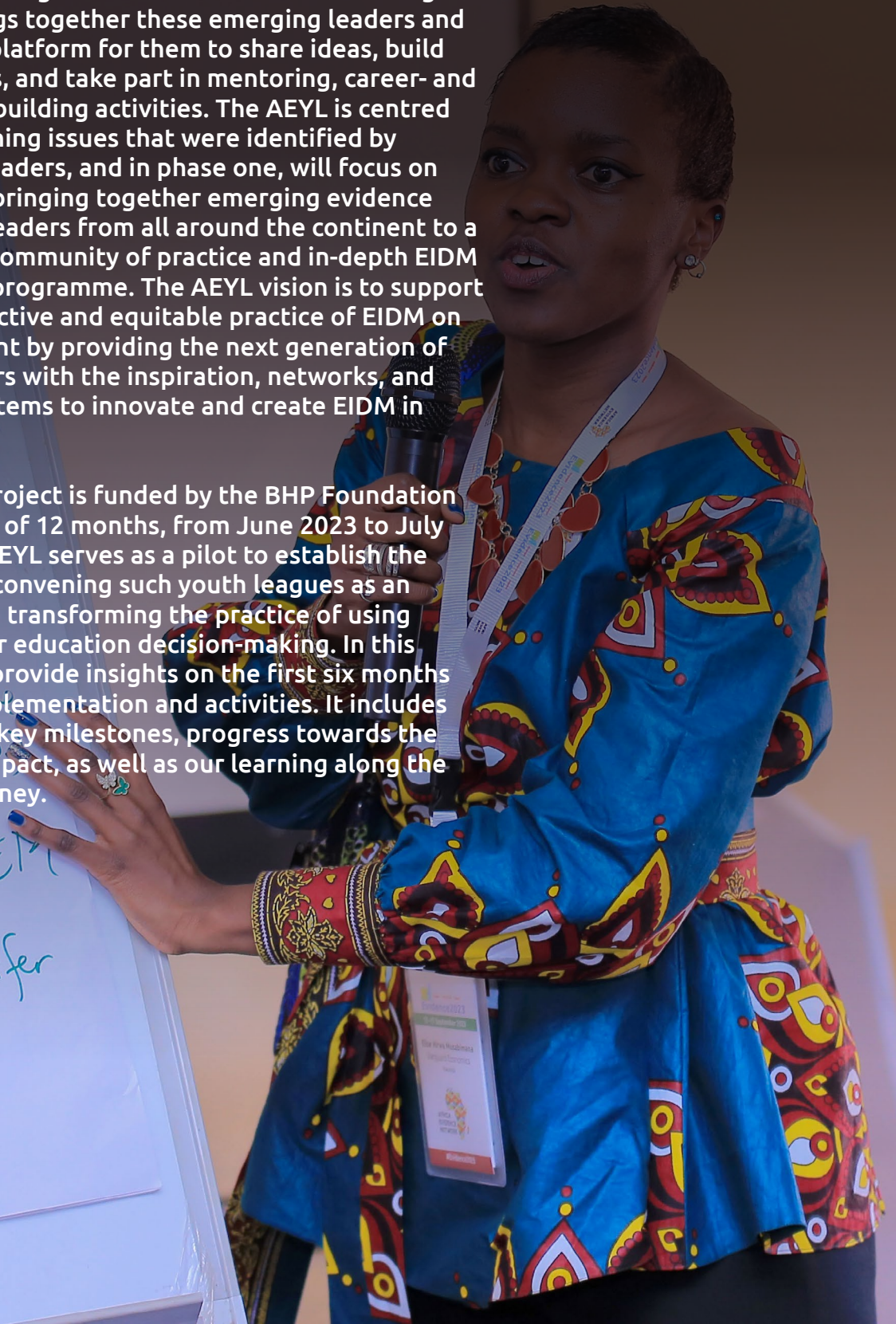
June 2024: The awarding of the AEYL award and the AEYL EIDM Mentoring technical programme report.

1. Introduction

Across the continent, emerging evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) leaders have been raising their voices to play a more active role in finding solutions for the challenges facing African countries through the better use of data and evidence for decision-making. The Africa Evidence Youth League (AEYL) brings together these emerging leaders and provides a platform for them to share ideas, build connections, and take part in mentoring, career- and institution-building activities. The AEYL is centred around burning issues that were identified by emerging leaders, and in phase one, will focus on education, bringing together emerging evidence education leaders from all around the continent to a facilitated community of practice and in-depth EIDM mentoring programme. The AEYL vision is to support a more effective and equitable practice of EIDM on the continent by providing the next generation of EIDM leaders with the inspiration, networks, and support systems to innovate and create EIDM in Africa.

The AEYL project is funded by the BHP Foundation for a period of 12 months, from June 2023 to July 2024. The AEYL serves as a pilot to establish the viability of convening such youth leagues as an approach to transforming the practice of using evidence for education decision-making. In this report, we provide insights on the first six months of AEYL implementation and activities. It includes a review of key milestones, progress towards the intended impact, as well as our learning along the project journey.

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2. What Have We Achieved?: AEYL Milestones

2.1 AEYL Foundation

AEYL members

The AEYL brings together a cohort of 45 emerging evidence education leaders from 15 different countries across the continent. These individuals were sourced from the membership of the Africa Evidence

Network, other research, data, and education organisations from the continent, and some were recommended to us by key players in the field. The general membership criteria were as follows:

1 Age: emerging leaders had to be between the ages of 18-35 years

2 Location: emerging leaders had to be based in an African country

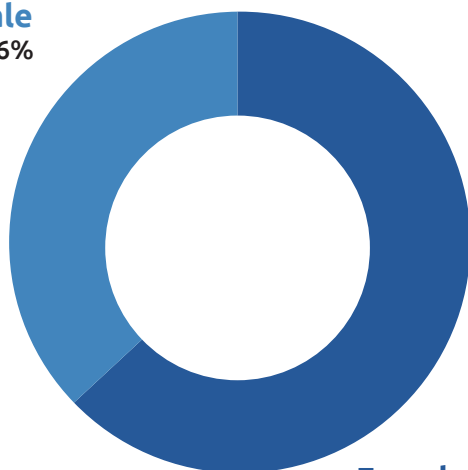
3 EIDM/education: emerging leaders had to be either (1) working in EIDM with an interest in education or (2) working in education with an interest in EIDM

The intention was to ensure inclusivity and diversity across broad dimensions. We were careful to include emerging leaders from different countries, sectors (e.g.,

government, academia), and roles (e.g., teachers, researchers). The cohort was also diversified by gender, language, and academic qualifications.

See a breakdown of the AEYL members by country (Figure 1), age (Figure 2,) and gender (Figure 3) below, and more information on their organisational home in Appendix 1.

Male
35.6%



Female
64.4%

Figure 1: AEYL gender distribution

Africa Evidence Youth League (AEYL)
Half year report

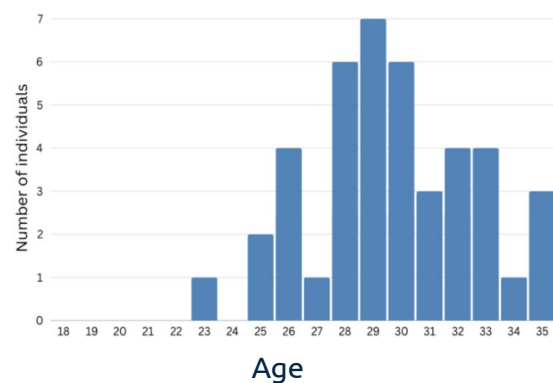


Figure 2: AEYL Age distribution

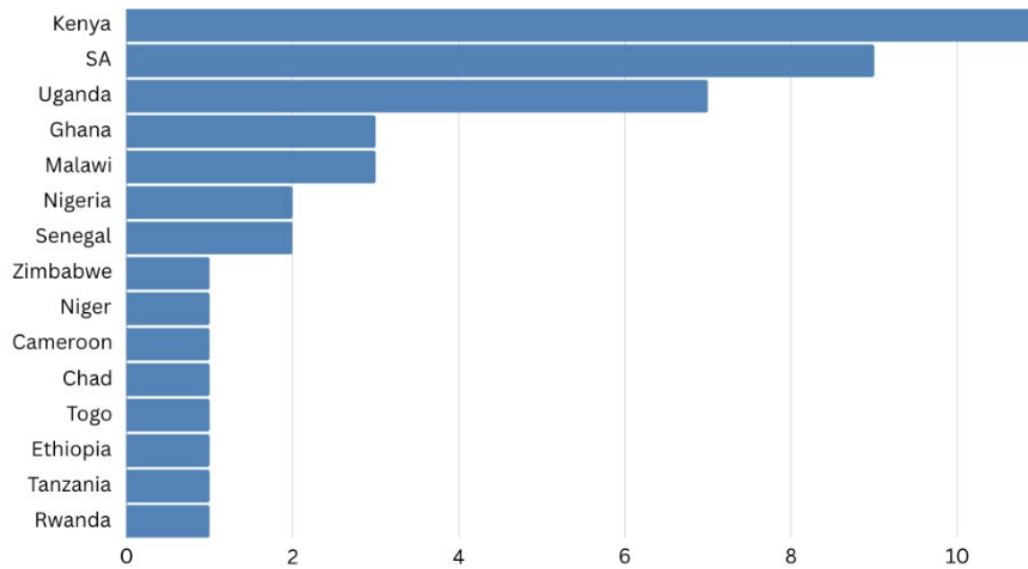


Figure 3: AEYL country distribution

To learn more about the research interests of the members of the AEYL, [click here](#).



2.2 AEYL Launch Event

Preparation

While preparing for the AEYL launch event, the Mastercard Foundation demonstrated an interest in supporting the Youth League. They therefore provided funding for an additional group of young people affiliated with their Foundation to participate in the in-person launch of the AEYL. The Mastercard Foundation was then also a part of the joint planning of the launch event. Notably, they were a part of the briefing meetings which were held online before travels. Agenda items covered in these briefing meetings are as follows:

1 An introduction to the Africa Evidence Youth League (AEYL)

2 What is EIDM, why the Africa Evidence Network, and participation in Evidence2023

3 Travel and logistics

AEYL launch event

The fun launch of the AEYL was held on the 12th of September 2023 in Entebbe, Uganda.

The objectives of the launch were to:

1 Officially launch the Africa Evidence Youth League

2 Facilitate connections between AEYL members

3 Develop a shared vision and mission for the league

4 Establish a common understanding of the way forward for the league

5 Collectively develop the AEYL manifesto

The AEYL fun launch was therefore planned in a way that would encourage engagement, relationship building, and collaboration; this was done through a series of games and group work activities. A total of 41 participants were present at the launch event, with a few of the other candidates arriving

the next day because of travel issues. One key outcome from the launch event was the development of the main ideas that would be included in the AEYL manifesto. These ideas were to be uploaded online for further collaboration after the launch. The highlights from this launch event can be found [here](#).

AEYL Participation in the broader Evidence2023 event

AEYL members were further exposed to learning and networking opportunities through the Evidence2023 event that took

place over 3 days (13-15 September 2023). Here are some of the key sessions that the Youth Leaguers attended:

Session 6:
Networking for new emerging leaders

Session 14:
Education and youth employment Part A:
Building the evidence architecture for youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa

Session 16:
Education and youth employment Part B:
Evidence for education

Session 22:
What does the evidence future look like?
Mastercard Foundation reception: featuring a speech by a Youth League representative



2.3 AEYL Manifesto

A manifesto that is more than just words but a collective vision and a call to action

The AEYL manifesto is the AEYL's declaration of our shared vision and commitment. The objectives of the manifesto are to:

1 Inspire the AEYL members

2 Foster accountability among AEYL members

3 Challenge EIDM norms of how young people want to be capacitated

The AEYL manifesto is a 13-page document that opens up with an introduction to the AEYL and the purpose of the manifesto. This is followed by a section that explains why AEYL members think EIDM is the best route to strengthening the continent's education system. The manifesto also elaborates on the AEYL's vision, mission, core values, objectives, and key activities. Additionally, the manifesto examines prevailing issues within the current African education system and offers recommendations for transformative change.

The full AEYL manifesto can be found on the AEYL website, in both [English](#) and [French](#). The AEYL Manifesto was officially launched on the 7th of December 2023. The launch webinar was attended by 78 participants. The launch webinar aimed to introduce the AEYL, elaborate on the process of writing the AEYL manifesto, and highlight some key takeaways from the manifesto. The recording of the manifesto launch can be found [here](#).



2.4 AEYL Online Platform

The AEYL online platform serves as a dedicated space for the Youth Leaguers to exchange ideas, foster innovation, and

collaborate effectively. The AEYL platform has the following key functionalities:

1 EIDM news feed: provides a tailored feed of EIDM-related content and activities curated to members' interests and preferences.

2 My profile feature: enables participants to create and manage their profiles and to share information about their interest in EIDM.

3 EIDM spaces feature: allows participants to create smaller spaces for specific discussions. For instance, a group of five Youth Leaguers collaborating on a paper can create a space dedicated to discussing and developing the paper collaboratively.

4 EIDM library feature: enables participants to contribute to the library and access a wide range of open-access EIDM resources.

5 Create a post feature: where participants can write posts, comment on others' posts, and react to the content shared by fellow members.

6 Member directory feature: where participants can view everyone on the platform, and access their email address and WhatsApp number for direct communication.

7 EIDM Mentoring: This feature allows participants to search for and explore potential mentors or mentees. In addition to manual matching, an algorithm also provides mentor-mentee suggested matches based on information provided and activity on the platform.

8 Gamification: The platform has a range of build-in gamification features to promote engagement with the provided EIDM resources.



2.5 AEYL Communications and Brand Identity

Internal and external AEYL engagements

Since the launch of the AEYL, the league's members have been able to meet virtually monthly to share ideas and build connections. The AEYL also has a WhatsApp group where members share opportunities, their

professional achievements, and make quick decisions. For external engagements, the AEYL has set up various platforms for engagements:

1 AEYL website (English/French):
<https://africaevidenceryouth.org/>

2 LinkedIn page:
Africa Evidence Youth League

3 X (Twitter page):
@AfricaAEYL

4 Tiktok page:
@africaevidenceryouth

5 Call to action email address:
getinvolved@africaevidenceryouth.org

These external platforms were set up after a strategic workshop that focused on developing a communications strategy for the AEYL. The workshop was facilitated by a youth-led communications agency that specialises in organisational branding, website design, social media marketing, and data-

driven audience engagement. A key output from these discussions was the adoption of an AEYL [branding kit](#), which was chosen by AEYL members, as well as a dedicated AEYL communications strategy comprised of the following key campaigns:

1 AEYL launch campaign (completed)

2 AEYL Manifesto launch campaign (completed)

3 AEYL partnerships with schools and universities campaign

4 AEYL mentorship campaign

5 AEYL education landscape report launch campaign

6 AEYL award campaign

Friends of the AEYL

In addition to the various organisations which are represented in AEYL (see Appendix 1), there are other organisations that have shown interest in providing training, partnering

to produce outputs, giving AEYL members preference for opportunities, and thinking about 'what's next'. We are currently in discussions with the following organisations:

1 International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

2 African Youth Philanthropy Network (AYPN)

3 Education Sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA)

4 Education.org

5 Mastercard Foundation

6 Alliance for Living Evidence

7 eBase Africa

8 Tanzania Enlightenment Development Innovations (TEDI)



2.6 AEYL Partnerships with high schools and universities

In order to inspire the next generation of EIDM leaders, the AEYL is planning to implement various projects aimed at partnering with schools and universities to raise awareness for EIDM as a career path

for young people. All AEYL members were encouraged to team up with fellow Youth Leaguers in the same country to write the proposal and implement the project.



3. How is the AEYL making an impact on its intended outcomes?

Intended outcomes	Impact made
A cohort of emerging education evidence leaders in Africa to advocate for EIDM in the continent's education sector and ensure EIDM remains future-fit and relevant to Africa's education decision-makers.	We have been successful in recruiting a cohort of relevant emerging education evidence leaders who have the potential to be thought leaders in the near future. These leaders have actively contributed to the advancement of EIDM in education through research and various education advancement projects. They are therefore individuals who will continue to play a key role in advocating for EIDM. The League is providing them with the platform and support to launch their advocacy, for example through the AEYL Manifesto, webinars, and social media.
Enhanced evidence capacities of emerging education evidence leaders facilitated through peer-learning and EIDM mentoring.	This will be achieved through the implementation of the AEYL mentorship programme, scheduled to commence in February 2024.
A formal platform and forum for emerging education evidence leaders to showcase innovative solutions and foster collaboration and networks.	The AEYL online platform is set to undergo a pilot phase starting in February. This platform will provide Youth Leaguers with the opportunity to exhibit innovative solutions, collaborate, and establish networks.

Some testimonials on the achieved outcomes:

"Being part of the AEYL has provided me with the opportunity to feel seen and heard. Before joining, I felt like a lone voice advocating for the use of evidence to inform interventions, especially in the education sector. Since becoming a part of AEYL, I can confidently say that I no longer feel this way. I am now connected to other young people from across the continent, from whom I can learn and collaborate to advance the cause of Evidence-Informed Decision Making (EIDM) in the field of education in Africa" **Ochanya Okoh, AEYL member**





Intended outcomes

Enhanced visibility and space for the voice of young leaders and their priorities for EIDM in education in Africa.

Nurturing young people's interest in and understanding of EIDM as a profession and career path.

AEYL championing a growing multisector youth EIDM movement.

Impact made

AEYL members were given visibility and a space to have a voice at Evidence2023. This visibility was expanded through diverse channels, including webinars, podcast episodes, blogs, presentations, and the AEYL award. AEYL members were further able to express their priorities for EIDM in the continent's education system through the AEYL manifesto.

This outcome will be accomplished through the partnership with high schools and universities projects, which will be implemented between February and June 2024.

The AEYL has been successful in recruiting a diverse cohort spanning multiple sectors. The indication of potential growth is evident from the increasing number of requests from individuals expressing interest in joining the youth league. Moreover, several organisations, including the African Youth Philanthropy Network, have expressed a keen interest in forming partnerships with the AEYL.

Some testimonials on the achieved outcomes:

As an educational psychologist, using evidence to inform the interventions I design for specific learning needs was a given to me. I now feel empowered learning that this is a movement and that youth are being encouraged to be active in the EIDM ecosystem. Knowing that our voices as youth are valued fills me with hope for the future of education on the continent. Furthermore joining the AEYL will and already has broadened my perspectives on the use of evidence beyond the individual students I interact with. I look forward to learning more through the upcoming mentorship program.

"En tant que psychologue scolaire, utiliser des données probantes pour éclairer les interventions que je conçois pour répondre à des besoins d'apprentissage spécifiques était pour moi une évidence. Je me sens maintenant responsabilisé en apprenant qu'il s'agit d'un mouvement et que les jeunes sont encouragés à être actifs dans l'écosystème de l'EIDM. Savoir que nos voix en tant que jeunes sont valorisées me remplit d'espoir pour l'avenir de l'éducation sur le continent. De plus, rejoindre l'AEYL a déjà élargi et élargira davantage mes perspectives sur l'utilisation des preuves au-delà des étudiants individuels avec lesquels j'interagis. J'ai hâte d'en apprendre davantage grâce au programme de mentorat". **Mary Anne Aluoch, AEYL member**



4. What Have We Learned?

4.1 Challenges



Challenge: At the time of the inception of the AEYL, all AEN staff were English-speaking. We did not have any French speakers on the team. This made communication with French speakers in the AEYL challenging.

Adaptation: We tried different methods to make up for this language barrier; various tools were used to aid communication, e.g., Google Translate and ChatGPT, live simultaneous interpretation was organised for the launch event, and we have used the live interpretation features on Teams and Zoom for online meetings. However, ensuring that communication in all formats is effective in both English and French has emerged as a non-negotiable to ensure the success of the League.

Lesson learned: The lesson learned here is the importance of making provisions for diversity. As a solution, we have since hired a bilingual French and English speaker to be a part of the team (she was recruited from the AEYL), a key member of staff has also committed to learning French, and we are also investing in how we can better use AI tools to break this language barrier.

Challenge: The proposals submitted for the partnerships with schools and universities were intended as small activation activities but were approached as stand-alone projects by the Youth Leaguers.

Adaptation: To mitigate this we developed a more prescriptive proposal template and have committed additional funds to the activities. We are also planning to meet with all the individuals who have submitted proposals and set up a half-day workshop.



Interest from other youth members

Challenge: We received a larger demand for AEYL membership than we could cater for within the grant. This included large interest from other AEN members who are not part of the current AEYL cohort as well as members of the wider EIDM community that learned about the League through our communications channels. We welcome this interest from young and emerging leaders; however, as this is a pilot, we are wary of increasing the number of members at this stage of the project. We therefore did not adapt to this challenge.

Lesson learned: There are a lot of young people who need support to succeed in their career paths, and we are aware of the demand and need. We are taking this opportunity to learn how best to build a sustainable youth league that can accommodate more participants in the future. Young leaders are an essential part of the education and EIDM community and have many wonderful views and perspectives to offer to keep African organisations current and adapt to the times. In future, we would like to build additional organisational and administrative capacity to accommodate such demand.

4.2 What worked well



Co-design and ownership

As an initiative of the Africa Evidence Network, the AEYL functions on principles of relationships, collaboration, and community. This fundamentally means that relationship-building is at the center of all that we do and we also incorporated these principles into the co-design approach of all the AEYL activities. The co-design approach of the AEYL has resulted in a sense of ownership from the members. This is exemplified, for example, by the collaborative creation of the AEYL manifesto in which 12 members voluntarily assumed leadership roles in finalising its content.



Fun launch

Organising the launch of the AEYL as a fun launch with a relaxed atmosphere and incorporating games provided Youth Leaguers with the freedom to express themselves openly. The fun approach also facilitated relationship-building, which was one of the key objectives of the launch event. The launch event featured various games that effectively maintained a vibrant energy throughout the day. The diversity in the group facilitated easier collaboration, as the Youth Leaguers brought unique perspectives to the discussions.



Membership selection

The AEYL membership selection took place under significant time constraints due to the need to organise travel and visa for all members to the Evidence2023 event in Uganda. We therefore did not launch an open call for applications but relied on partners and networks to suggest members. Being guided by a clear selection framework assisted us in recruiting a cohort of relevant emerging evidence education leaders who have the potential to be thought leaders in the near future. These leaders, conversely, also see the value of the AEYL. If given a bit more time, we would suggest combining a network-centric recruitment strategy with an open call for application.



Building the community and its identity first

The initial workplan of the AEYL assumed a 'research-heavy' start to the project including a landscape report and identifying related research partners. In practice, we almost instantly commenced with an in-depth process of community building for the AEYL. This emphasised rapidly convening the young leaders and allowing them to form their own community and driving the agenda in terms of outputs. As a result, the AEYL manifesto and brand development of the AEYL took precedence over the structured research activities. In hindsight, this approach worked well and has increased the exposure of the Youth Leaguers and the AEYL to the wider community.



Communications

Since the AEYL is a new project, we felt the need to 'announce it to the world', through various platforms. We were also intentional about doing things differently, instead of utilising our existing communication resources, we worked with a communications agency that brought a fresh, young perspective. The communications agency was key in helping us to develop the AEYL website, social media, and branding based on the insights provided by AEYL staff and AEYL members who had background in communications.



5. Implementation Overview

Month	Implimented Activities	Outputs
September	AEYL launch preparations AEYL launch event	Travel risk plan AEYL launch event
October	AEYL manifesto drafting and finalisation AEYL branding	AEYL branding kit
November	AEYL manifesto design and translation AEYL manifesto launch planning	AEYL manifesto in English and French AEYL website AEYL social media accounts AEYL launch podcast episode
December	AEYL manifesto launch webinar	AEYL launch webinar

Month	Planned Activities	Outputs
January	AEYL online platform launch AEYL Mentorship programme planning	Half year/6months report AEYL online platform
February	AEYL partnerships with high schools and universities launch AEYL Mentorship programme	Youth networks in Africa mapping report
March	AEYL Mentorship programme Education landscape report	
April	AEYL Mentorship programme Education landscape report	

Month	Planned Activities	Outputs
May	AEYL Mentorship program Education landscape report.	AEYL landscape report: Mapping African Education EIDM needs
June	AEYL Mentorship program AEYL award	12 months report AEYL EIDM Mentoring technical programme report



AEYL

Africa Evidence Youth League

6. Sustainability

We are making proactive efforts to diversify funding sources for the AEYL and to ensure the continuity of the other phases of the project. This will be done in three ways:

- 1 Intentional engagements with other potential funders:** We will engage with funders who have previously demonstrated an interest in supporting the AEYL with the aim of securing funding for the upcoming phases of the AEYL.
- 2 Prioritising partnerships and collaboration:** We will persist in building partnerships with organizations that align with the AEYL’s interests. These collaborative efforts can lead to joint funding opportunities and shared resources, enhancing sustainability for the AEYL.
- 3 Communication and advocacy:** We will continue to invest in the communications activities of the AEYL with four further campaigns being planned in 2024. Part of this wider communications strategy is also the attendance of key evidence events such as the Afrea 2024 conference as well as the 2024 Global Evidence Summit



Appendix A

The following organisations are represented in the AEYL:

Organisation	Sector
Afrobarometer	NGO
Clonehouse	NGO
Human Science Research Council (HSRC)	Research Institute
Pan-African Collective for Evidence (PACE)	NGO
Ethiopian Public Health Institute	Research Institute
Reddford House	School
Kenyatta University	University
Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Program	Research Institute
Education Sub Saharan Africa (ESSA)	NGO
Partnership for African Social and Governance Research	NGO
Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP)	NGO
Provide Equip	Consultancy
Research+	Research Organisation
University of Development Studies	University
Vanguard Economics	Consultancy
Department of Water and Sanitation South Africa	Government Department
Effective Basic Services (eBASE) Africa	Research Organisation
Tanzania Elightenment Development Innovations (TEDI)	NGO
Benita Williams Evaluation	Consultancy
Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Childeren	Coalition
Twende Mbele	Network
PACKS Africa	NGO

<https://afrea.org/conference/registration/>

<https://www.globalevidencesummit.org/>



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