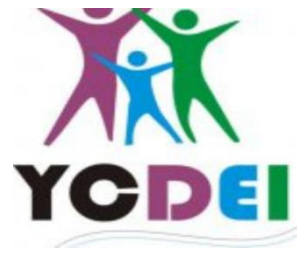


2024 ANNUAL REPORT

YOUTHCARE DEVELOPMENT AND
EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE





YOUTHCARE DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

1.0 Executive Summary

Youthcare Development and Empowerment Initiative (YcDEI) is dedicated to promoting gender equality, youth empowerment, and community development. In 2024, YcDEI successfully implemented a series of impactful programs that advanced the organization’s mission to create a safe, healthy, and equitable society for children, youths, and women. Notable initiatives included the Gender-Responsive Pedagogy Guide, which provided a framework for addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in schools, and the FID-Sponsored SRGBV project in Oyo State, which interviewed over 2000 participants including pupils and teachers on creating safer school environments. Furthermore, the organization engaged with out-of-school girls through the Learning Action Alliance for Girls Agency (LAAGA) project, further deepening the understanding of girls. Several educational outreaches were held across different schools in Ibadan, impacting over 6,000 students. YcDEI also extended its reach to mentor students in leadership positions in tertiary institutions. These efforts, along with our advocacy campaigns like the 16 Days of Activism to end GBV, strengthened YcDEI’s role as a leader in gender equality and youth empowerment in the region. The organization also marked a significant milestone by celebrating its 10th year anniversary alongside the International Day of the Girl Child.

2.0 Brief Overview

Youthcare Development and Empowerment Initiative (YcDEI) was established with a clear vision to foster a society where children, youths, and women can thrive in safe, healthy, and equitable environments. Through collaborations, evidence-based interventions, and advocacy, YcDEI works to increase inclusivity and empowerment, especially for marginalized groups. The organization’s mission is to support the development of these groups through research, capacity building, and quality programs that enhance their well-being and participation in society. This report provides an overview of the major achievements, challenges, and opportunities that shaped YcDEI’s activities in 2024, as well as the strategic direction for future growth.

3.0 Program/Project Highlights

Key Programs and Projects:

A. Policy Brief on Gender-Responsive Pedagogy Guide:

In 2024, through collective efforts of the Programs Department of YcDEI headed by Mrs Toyin Adebayo, the technical team and researchers on the NRF project headed by the Executive Director (Prof. Adefunke Ekine) who served as the Principal Investigator for the 2-year project in collaboration with Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), YcDEI was able to produce the policy brief on Gender-Responsive Pedagogy Guide.

Impact: The organization was able to establish a framework for primary schools to address GBV systematically.

B. FID-Sponsored SRGBV Project in Oyo State:

YcDEI in collaboration with the Oyo State Ministry of Education and the University of Washington, Seattle, with support from Funds for Innovation and Development, (FID), commenced the implementation of a project titled “Ending school-related gender based violence (SRGBV) in primary schools: A two-pronged approach in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria”, which aims to help improve student’s experiences at school. The project focused on learning about school-related gender based violence (SRGBV) and exploring ways to create a safer, more respectful environment for all students.

Training sessions were organized to equip enumerators with skills required for data collection for the project before the commencement of field activities.



Fig 1. Prof. Adefunke Ekine, (The Principal Investigator) Delivering a Training session to Enumerators for the SRGBV Project

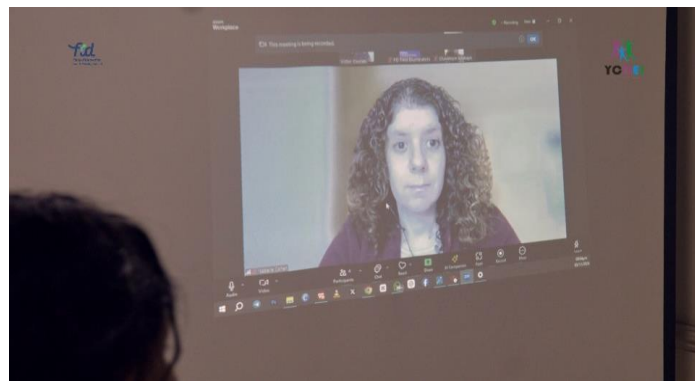


Fig. 2. Prof. Isabelle Cohen Delivering a Training Session through a Virtual Call to Enumerators for the SRGBV Project



Fig. 3. Cross-Section of Enumerators during the Training



Fig. 4. Pupils during the SRGBV Data Collection

Impact: Through this project, we have interviewed over 2000 participants, including teachers and students, fostering awareness and capacity-building to address SRGBV

C. Learning Action for Girl’s Agency (LAAGA) Project - Understanding Girls' Agency:
YCDEI collaborated with LAAGA to conduct a research with out-of-school girls between the ages of 15-19 years. The purpose of the study is to learn about their understanding of girl’s agency (how they make their decisions and factors that affect this process) for the purpose of generating information to contribute to existing girl’s education program. We explored girl’s agency through in-depth interviews, mapping exercises, storytelling and focus group discussions with out-of-school girls in Iseyin, Oyo State, Nigeria. We had two different sessions of training, where we structured how to carry out the research on the field and we also practiced the different methodologies.



Figs. 5 and 6: Training and Practice of the Data Collection Instrument and Methodology

We had meetings with one of the key community leaders (The Baale of Barracks, Iseyin) and religious leaders (Rev. Dr Faith Adekoye). These meetings aimed to introduce the research project to them and seek their approval and support to conduct the study.



Fig. 7: Facilitators with Community Leader (Baale Barracks) in Iseyin

We conducted community mapping to identify participants and ensure inclusive participation through local engagements. We went from shop to shop, house to house, street to street to recruit the girls. Participants included a variety of out-of-school girls learning hairdressing, tailoring, working to earn a living, hawking and selling as well as teenage mothers.



Figs. 8 and 9: Visiting Residential Areas in Iseyin Community to Recruit Girls



Fig. 10: Story Telling Data Collection Exercise



Figs. 11 and 12: Focus Group Discussions and Community Mapping Exercises

Impact: We collected rich qualitative data from 30 girls, providing actionable insights for advocacy and intervention design. We also distributed hygiene kits to support the welfare of the girls’.

This project was funded by the Center for Universal Education, The Brookings Institution, Washington DC as part of a collaborative research with different scholars from eighteen countries which started in 2022.

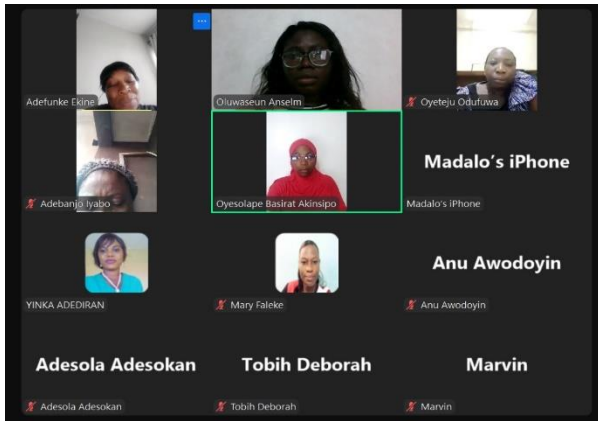
D. Empowering Girls: Fostering Leadership in Higher Education (HERS Mentoring Class)

Through YcDEI’s partnership with Tai Solarin University of Education (TASUED), a unique initiative called the HERS Mentoring Class was born out of a shared belief: to empower young women to step confidently into leadership roles, both during their time at university and afterwards. This project was not just about developing skills, but also about nurturing a new generation of female leaders who would one day shape the world. The HERS Mentoring Class focused on building self-awareness, boosting self-esteem, and teaching goal-setting to ensure that every mentee is equipped with the right knowledge to face challenges with confidence. Beyond academic success, the project aimed to help young women thrive personally and professionally, creating meaningful mentor-mentee relationships that would last well beyond the university experience.

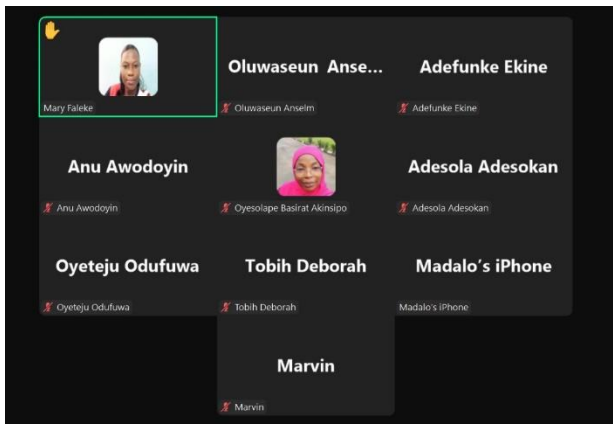


Figs. 13 and 14: Cross Section of Young Female Mentees during a Physical Interactive Session

The target group of fifty female undergraduates in leadership positions across various departments at TASUED were carefully selected. These students were chosen based on their interest in leadership and personal growth. With diverse academic backgrounds, the group represented a rich blend of experiences, perspectives, and potentials. Each mentor was tasked with guiding four mentees, providing them with personalized attention and support on their journey to becoming the leaders of tomorrow.



Figs. 15 and 16: Virtual Sessions for Mentors and Mentees



The project kicked off with the selection and training of mentors, 13 experienced professionals from different fields who shared a passion for leadership and mentoring. They were equipped with tools and strategies to foster growth in their mentees, setting the stage for a meaningful and impactful experience. The project also partnered with the Arundhuti team to integrate the Mentor To Go app, helping mentors and mentees stay connected and track their progress seamlessly.

By November 2024, the HERS Mentoring Class had launched its 10-module mentorship program. The curriculum was designed to cover a wide range of essential topics, from self-awareness and self-esteem to time management and value-based decision-making. Mentors began meeting with their mentees regularly, guiding them through the modules and offering personalized feedback.

Figs. 17: Content Syllabus for Mentorship

Content of Syllabus

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Esteem
3. Vision for my life
4. Road map to my vision
5. Youth Development
6. Introduction to leadership
7. Types of leadership
8. Importance of leadership
9. Time Management
10. Value-based decision making

As the program progresses, there are exciting plans on the horizon. The remaining modules will be completed, and a drama and one-day physical mentoring event will bring all the mentees together for a final push of engagement. March 2025 will see the culmination of the project in a grand dissemination event, where the progress and achievements of the mentees will be showcased. Post-tests, impact assessments, and feedback will be collected to gauge the program's success, and both mentors and mentees who have gone above and beyond will be recognized for their outstanding contributions.

Impact:

- The HERS Mentoring Class has already made a lasting impact, and its ripple effects will be felt long after the program concludes.
- These young women, armed with newfound skills and confidence, are ready to tackle the world, and the mentors who guided them will forever be part of their journey to leadership.

E. 16 Days of Activism to End GBV

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an annual international campaign that runs every year from November 25th to December 10th. It aims to raise awareness and encourage action to prevent and address all forms of gender-based violence. This year, 2024, our street campaign was organized to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism under the theme "**End Gender-Based Violence**". The event took place in Ibadan on December 10, 2024, with the goal of sensitizing the public, educating community members, and fostering greater awareness around the issue of gender-based violence.



Figs. 18 and 19: Participants during The 16 Days Activism Campaign



Participants included staff, volunteers, and FID supervisors. We walked for a significant distance, from the YcDEI office to BCOS Ibadan (a distance of about 8KM) lending our voices to the campaign against gender-based violence. The march was a peaceful, yet powerful demonstration aimed at raising awareness about GBV and encouraging public dialogue on the need to end GBV. We carried banners and placards with the message "End Gender-Based Violence" and other related slogans.



Figs. 20 and 21: Participants during the 16 Days Activism Campaign

Impact:

- We reached about 2,000 community members through street campaign and awareness drives.
- We distributed over 500 flyers and posters to promote the anti-violence message.
- We strengthened the organization's visibility and advocacy footprint.

F. School Outreach

YCDEI embarked on a mission to sensitize and educate students from diverse educational institutions on essential topics in personal growth and health. The school outreach programs in 2024 were structured to address pressing issues among students such as self-esteem, digital literacy, career choices, time management, personal hygiene, and health. Each outreach event included presentations, interactive sessions, and practical demonstrations. This report summarizes the key highlights from these outreach sessions and outlines the challenges and opportunities encountered during the programs.

Outreach Activities

1. Self-Esteem Outreach

- **Tenderlifts Missionary School, St. Paul Primary School, and Others:** The main focus of these sessions was on the concept of self-esteem. The students were educated on distinguishing between low and high self-esteem and encouraged to affirm their self-worth through positive self-talk.
- **Key Activity:** Motivational quotes, affirmations, and reflection exercises were used to instill confidence in the students and encourage them to believe in their abilities.

2. Digital Literacy Outreach

- **Estate Senior Secondary School and Bashorun Ojoo High School:** The outreach covered the significance of digital literacy in the modern world.
- **Key Activity:** Emphasis on being mindful of one's digital footprints and making informed decisions about online presence.

3. Career Choice Outreach

- **Bishop Onabanjo High School, Isabatudeen Girls Grammar School, and Others:** The sessions were designed to inform students about making wise career decisions based on their skills, passions, and values. Educational materials, real-life examples, and interactive activities were used to make the concept of career choices more relatable and engaging.



Fig. 22: Team at Estate Senior Secondary School



Fig 23: Team at Bashorun Ojoo High School

Key Activity: Career advice, Q&A sessions, and exposure to various professions to inspire informed decision-making.

4. Time Management Outreach

- **Tenderlifts Missionary School, Abadina Primary School, and Others:** These sessions focused on teaching students the importance of managing their time effectively. Students were taught how to set clear objectives, maintain to-do lists, and prioritize their tasks to achieve academic success.



Figs. 24 and 25: Team at Tenderlifts Missionary School

- **Key Activity:** Practical tips for avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and balancing work with leisure.



Figures 26: Team at Bodija Ashi Baptist College



Figures 27: Team at Abadina Primary School

5. Health and Hygiene Outreach

- **St. Cyprian Primary School, IDC Model School, Bodija Ashi Baptist College, and Others:** The focus was on promoting good health habits and personal hygiene. Topics covered included maintaining cleanliness, proper hand-washing techniques, and menstrual hygiene.
- **Key Activity:** Demonstrations on how to maintain menstrual hygiene and personal cleanliness, with sanitary products distributed to students.

6. Pre-Marital Sex Outreach

- **Estate Junior School, Mount Olivet Grammar School:** These sessions focused on educating students about the risks and consequences of pre-marital sex, including unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and emotional consequences. The importance of making informed and responsible decisions was also emphasized.
- **Key Activity:** Discussions on healthy relationships and the importance of sex education.

Impact

- Second term school outreach 2023/2024 (Jan – March): 15 schools were visited, and a total number of 2529 students were reached.
- Third Term School Outreach 2023/2024 (May – June): 10 schools and total number of 1070 students were reached. First Term School Outreach 2024/2025 (September – October): 11 schools were visited, and 2607 students were reached.
- The total number of students reached in the school visits for 2024 was 6206 students.

G. Celebrating the organization’s 10th year anniversary and commemoration of the International Day of the Girl Child.

On the 31st of October 2024, YCDEI celebrated her 10th year anniversary and commemorated the international day of the girl child with students from primary and secondary schools (girls and boys). The Executive Director took us down the memory line of how the organization was started by a group of five passionate women in 1997 and was officially registered in 2014, which makes it 10 years this year.



Fig. 28: The Executive Director, Prof. Adefunke Ekine giving the welcome address



Fig. 29: Cross section of guests at the event.



Fig. 30: NWTF Representative, pupils and the Executive Director

Hon. Bisi Oluranti, the Mother of the day congratulated the organization on the anniversary celebration and she gave some words of advice and encouragement to the guests. Hon. Modupe Adetiba, took the lecture session, she spoke on the theme of the event **Audacity to Dream: embracing a limitless future**



Fig. 31: The mother of the day Hon. Bisi Oluranti



Fig. 32: Hon. Modupe Adetiba, the SSA to the Ekiti Governor on Student Affairs.

During the celebration, there was an intriguing and interactive panel session moderated by Ms. Favour Suberu (Project Manager). The questions addressed centred mainly on the theme of the event: Audacity to dream embracing a limitless future. A number of questions outside the theme of the event were also entertained.

The panellists were Mrs Idara C. Daniel (Public Health Professional), Mrs Ewaoluwa (Acting Executive Director MAYEIN), Hon. Teminiola (Oyo State Youth Parliament) and Ms. Taiwo (UI Law Student).



Fig. 33: Cross Section of Panellists during an Interactive Session

YcDEI's vibrant partner, Ecobank, was well represented at the event. Friends and volunteers of the organization were also in attendance to make the anniversary a memorable event. The attendance records from the event were 12 schools, 39 school children and 76 adults.



Fig. 34 Ecobank Staff (YcDEI partners) at the Event



Fig. 35 Ecobank Staff with the Executive Director



Fig 36: Group Photo of Staff during the 10th Anniversary

4.0 Success Story:

- **The ongoing SRGBV project empowered children with tools to identify and address GBV effectively, creating safer school environments.**
- **The ongoing LAAGA project enabled the researchers to understand the decision-making process of out-of-school girls. It has also served as an evidence-based needs assessment for intervention among out-of-school girls in Iseyin LGA, Oyo State.**
- **The Gender-Responsive Pedagogy Guide developed in collaboration with other researchers has provided a framework for addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in schools.**
- **Through the ongoing SRGBV project, more than 2000 participants including pupils and teachers have been interviewed to assess the state of school-related gender based violence in Oyo state. The project increased awareness and enhanced capacity-building to address SRGBV.**
- **Through the school visitation activities, more than 6,000 pupils in schools across Ibadan have been reached with educational and developmental teachings.**
- **The HERS Mentoring Class has equipped young women with newfound skills and confidence, in their journey to leadership.**

5.0 Challenges and Opportunities

A. Major Challenges

1. Cultural Resistance to Gender-Focused Initiatives

Implementing gender-focused programs can be greatly hindered in many communities by deeply rooted cultural views and traditional gender stereotypes regarding the duties of men and women. Since initiatives to advance gender equality contradict the established quo, these cultural norms may cause resistance. It will take culturally sensitive strategies that respect local values and promote progressive change via continuous campaigning and education to overcome this resistance.

2. Funding for Some Organizational Activities

Securing consistent funding for gender and youth empowerment initiatives can be challenging, particularly when donor priorities shift or when resources are allocated to more immediate concerns. Many programs face difficulties in maintaining financial stability, leading to uncertainty in planning and execution. Limited funding often restricts the scope of activities, limiting the reach and impact of programs that aim to make systemic changes.

B. Opportunities for Growth and Development:

1. Rising International Interest in Gender Equality and Youth Empowerment Programs

There has been a global movement in recent years to acknowledge the importance of youth empowerment and gender equality. These fields are becoming more and more important to governments, foundations, and international organisations, opening up new avenues for funding and cooperation. This increased awareness offers YcDEI a chance to expand its activities and bring about long-lasting, sustainable change.

2. Increased Availability of Digital Tools for Data Collection and Virtual Training

The growth of digital technologies offers significant opportunities for YcDEI to enhance data collection, improve monitoring and evaluation processes, and facilitate virtual training. These tools also make it possible to collect real-time data, track progress, and ensure that programs are responsive to the needs of target communities.

3. Growing Networks of Stakeholders Advocating for Systemic Change in Education and Gender Issues

The number of advocacy organisations, collaborations, and individuals dedicated to resolving gender and educational disparities has significantly increased. These networks offer chances for cooperation, information exchange, and group efforts. Collaborating with groups that share similar values increases the effectiveness and exposure of advocacy campaigns and creates momentum for systemic changes in policies.

C. Strategies to Address Challenges:

1. Diversify Funding Sources through Grant Applications and Partnerships

To ensure financial sustainability, YcDEI will actively seek diverse funding streams by applying for grants from international donors, corporate sponsors, and local governments. Establishing partnerships with private sector entities, non-governmental organizations, and foundations can also provide much-needed resources and create opportunities for joint initiatives. By diversifying funding sources, YcDEI can reduce its dependence on a single source of income, maintain and expand its programs.

2. Build Stronger Community Coalitions to Sustain Advocacy Efforts

Building and strengthening community-based coalitions is essential for ensuring the long-term success of gender and youth empowerment initiatives. By bringing together local leaders, activists, and stakeholders, YcDEI can create a unified voice for advocating change. These coalitions can help sustain advocacy efforts by fostering a sense of ownership within the community, mobilizing local resources, and ensuring that gender equality issues remain on the local and national agenda.

6.0 PLANS FOR 2025

- **Broaden the Outreach Scope:** YcDEI will expand its outreach to more schools in Ibadan. The organization is committed to ensuring that the impact of its outreach is sustained by creating a strong foundation for students' personal and academic success.
- **Enhance School Engagement:** YcDEI will increase its engagement with schools through fun programs with pupils and also collaborate with schools to increase YcDEI library use.
- **Program Scale-up:** To effectively scale up existing projects, we will expand outreach efforts to reach a larger portion of our target population. This will involve increasing the geographical coverage of our programs, enhancing community partnerships, and leveraging digital tools to extend our reach. This approach will help maximize the impact of our initiatives and improve overall program outcomes.

- **Collaborate with more stakeholders:** YcDEI will work with educational authorities, health organizations, and other NGO's to provide more comprehensive programs and reach more students.



Acknowledgement

We sincerely appreciate all our partners and donors that contributed in helping us to implement our projects in 2024. The research on SRGBV was funded by Fund for Innovation in Development (FID) and was greatly enhanced by the support of the Oyo State Ministry of Education and Oyo State SUBEB. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to the supervisors, enumerators, YcDEI staff and all others who contributed in various capacities to the implementation of our programs.