

Quarterly Progress Report (January – March 2026)

Youth in Action (YIA) in partnership with BPDO

Executive Summary

In the first quarter of 2026, Youth in Action (YIA), in partnership with BPDO, advanced its enterprise support program for conflict-affected and displaced youth impacted by corridor development. Operating across seven strategic urban centers, Adama, Hawassa, Addis Ababa, Kombolcha, Bahirdar, Diredawa, and Mekele- the initiative combined psychological resilience training with capacity-building in entrepreneurship. This dual approach has proven essential in enabling vulnerable youth-led enterprises to withstand external shocks while strengthening their business acumen.

During this quarter, 105 enterprises were visited and received tailored on-site supervision. These visits allowed YIA to assess the effectiveness of prior training, identify operational gaps, and provide corrective guidance. The supervision process not only reinforced perseverance among entrepreneurs but also enhanced visibility with local governments, thereby securing institutional attention for enterprise sustainability. Furthermore, YIA convened a biannual review meeting with representatives from regional Bureaus of Labor and Skills (BOLS), the Federal Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS), and local NGOs, ensuring systemic alignment and experience sharing.

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

January - March 2026

Executive Summary

In Q1 2026, YIA supported conflict-affected and displaced youth across Adama, Hawassa, Addis Ababa, Kombolcha, Bahirdar, Diredawa, and Mekele: 105 enterprises received on-site supervision.
A biannual review meeting convened regional BOLS, Federal MOLS, and local NGOs.

Key Achievements

105

Enterprises Supported

REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING

16 Regions Participated

↑ Local Government Engagement

Analysis & Insights

Training Reinforcement

Institutional Buy-In

Psychological Resilience

Supervision Outcomes

● Progressing Slowly
● Needs Further Support

Strategic Recommendations

Policy	Programmatic	Donors
✓ Embed Youth Enterprise Support Programs ✓ Incentives for Youth Businesses	✓ Scale Mentorship & Market Linkages ✓ Digital & Financial Training	✓ Digital Finance Integration ✓ Support Digital Solutions ✓ Invest in Value Chains ✓ Long Term Funding Support

Conclusion

YIA will strengthen digital services, financial tools, and market linkages to ensure sustained growth and resilience for youth enterprises.

Empowering Vulnerable Youth for Sustainable Economic Growth

The quarter's achievements underscore YIA's role as both a direct service provider and a convener of multi-stakeholder dialogue, positioning the organization as a critical actor in Ethiopia's youth economic empowerment landscape.

Key Achievements

- **Enterprise Supervision and Support:** 105 enterprises received structured supervision visits, enabling YIA to identify operational gaps and provide corrective guidance.
- **Government Engagement and Visibility:** Enterprises gained recognition from local authorities, strengthening their legitimacy and opening pathways for policy support.
- **Biannual Review Meeting:** A multi-stakeholder platform was convened with 14 regional BOLS deputy heads, Federal MOLS professionals, and local NGOs, reinforcing government commitment and fostering cross-regional learning.

Analytical Insights

1. **Training Effectiveness Requires Reinforcement:** Enterprises thrive when training is complemented by ongoing mentorship and supervision.
2. **Government Buy-In as a Sustainability Lever:** Institutional recognition is critical for enterprise survival and integration into national youth employment frameworks.
3. **Psychological Resilience as a Business Asset:** Perseverance instilled through psychosocial support has proven decisive in enterprise continuity.
4. **Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration Enhances Impact:** Collective action reduces duplication, enhances efficiency, and strengthens systemic support for vulnerable youth enterprises.

Outlook for Next Quarter

In the upcoming quarter (April–June 2026), YIA will continue to provide targeted supervision and mentorship to ensure enterprises consolidate their gains and transition toward maturity. The focus will be on:

- **Enterprise Consolidation:** Strengthening financial management, governance, and market linkages.
- **Digital and Financial Services Development:** Introducing intensive support for digital tools, financial services, and product innovation to modernize operations and expand reach.
- **Value Chain Market Linkages:** Facilitating stronger integration into value chains to unlock new growth opportunities.

- **Sustainability Pathways:** Supporting enterprises to achieve independence and resilience.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Maintaining dialogue with government and civil society actors to safeguard institutional attention.
- **Experience Sharing:** Expanding platforms for cross-regional learning to institutionalize best practices.

Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

- **Institutionalize Enterprise Support Models:** Government should embed YIA's supervision and mentorship approach into regional youth employment strategies to ensure continuity beyond project timelines.
- **Strengthen Policy Incentives:** Introduce targeted incentives (tax breaks, subsidies, or preferential procurement) for youth-led enterprises, particularly those operating in post-conflict and displacement contexts.
- **Digital Integration:** Develop national frameworks that encourage adoption of digital financial services and value chain platforms, ensuring enterprises are future-ready.

Programmatic Recommendations

- **Scale Supervision and Mentorship:** Expand the professional supervision model to cover more enterprises, ensuring consistent reinforcement of training outcomes.
- **Enhance Market Linkages:** Establish structured partnerships with private sector actors to integrate youth enterprises into supply chains and distribution networks.
- **Capacity Building in Digital Finance:** Provide specialized training on digital financial products, e-commerce, and fintech solutions to strengthen enterprise competitiveness.
- **Cross-Regional Learning Platforms:** Institutionalize regular review meetings to foster experience sharing and replication of best practices across Ethiopia.

Donor Engagement Recommendations

- **Support Digital Transformation:** Donors should prioritize funding for digital and financial services development, enabling enterprises to modernize and scale.
- **Invest in Value Chain Integration:** Allocate resources to strengthen market linkages, ensuring enterprises are embedded within sustainable economic ecosystems.

- **Long-Term Sustainability Funding:** Provide flexible financing mechanisms that allow enterprises to transition from survival to growth, including blended finance and revolving funds.
- **Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation:** Support YIA in developing digital dashboards and reporting tools to track enterprise progress and demonstrate impact transparently to stakeholders.

Annex 1: Stakeholder engagement photos

