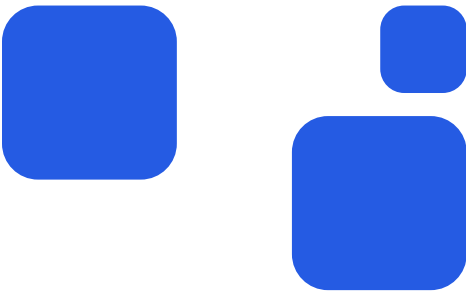




Citi Foundation



Pathways to Progress:

Impact Report



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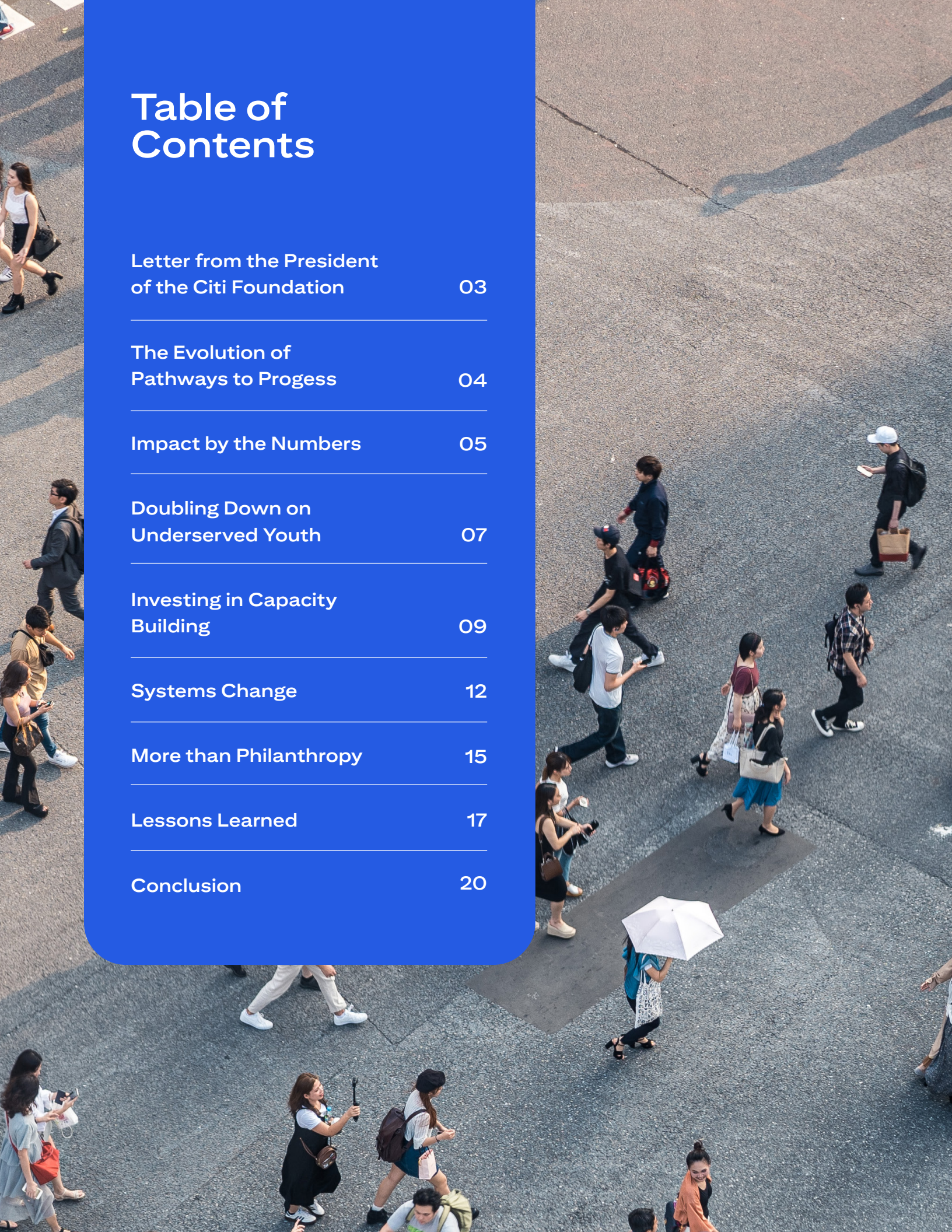
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About Pathways to Progress

Launched in 2014, Pathways to Progress is a job skills-building initiative that addresses the persistent, global issue of youth unemployment. Through a combination of Citi Foundation philanthropic investments, Citi employee volunteers, and research, Pathways to Progress aims to address the skills mismatch and equip young people, particularly those from underserved communities, with the skills and networks needed to succeed in the rapidly changing economy.

To our grantees and collaborators, we remain humbled by the opportunity to play a role in the work you lead and the impact you have on the lives of millions of young people every day.

Letter from the President of the Citi Foundation

In 2014, the Citi Foundation launched Pathways to Progress (Pathways), a job skills-building initiative to address the persistent issue of youth unemployment. At the time, our goal was to provide \$50 million across 10 cities in the United States reaching 100,000 young people.

Fast forward to 2023 – the Citi Foundation has invested more than \$300 million globally in workforce preparation and entrepreneurship. But how did we get here? And what have we learned along the way?

A hallmark aspect of the Pathways to Progress evolution has been the way we have sought to learn from our grantees, co-create programs that address critical needs and listen to young people and the data.

In addition, we have been able to bring Citi's resources in service of the Foundation's philanthropic dollars and grantees. This included bringing in Citi subject matter experts to lead workshops, convenings and to support grantees through technical assistance; engaging over 10,000 Citi colleagues to volunteer as [mentors](#) or [coaches](#) and equipping young people with skills and knowledge to pursue successful careers; funding [research](#) that elevated young people's voices; and leveraging Citi's communication platforms to highlight the work of [non-governmental organization \(NGO\) leaders](#) and young people's [stories](#) globally.

As we grew the reach and scale of Pathways, we also evolved our approach to grantmaking alongside it. Over the years, we placed greater emphasis on bringing young people and community leaders voices into our strategy formation, on being a stronger partner by increasing the flexibility of our grants so they can better build the capacity, agility and sustainability of our grantees partners, and issuing a series of Request for Proposal (RFP) programming in the U.S. for a more equitable approach to sourcing ideas for funding. In 2020, the effects of the pandemic, coupled with a focus on racial justice in the U.S. pushed us to rethink our approach at an even faster pace.

Which is why we announced a \$100 million expansion to support young people facing an uncertain and challenging economic future, focused on young people from underserved communities globally including young people of color in the U.S.

We also had to rethink how we fund community organizations. The pandemic brought forth unprecedented challenges in delivering job skills programs. The Citi Foundation responded by providing flexible support to Pathways grantees so they could pivot their operations. We focused on building collaborations with community organizations on mutual trust and worked closely together to help ensure young people received the support they needed to prepare for an increasingly challenging economy.

While we're proud of our impact and evolution, our team is most proud to witness the tangible impact our grantees had on the young adults they served – including [Rehab](#), a Syrian refugee, who started a sewing business to support her family, [Rafael](#), an entrepreneur based in Vietnam finding ways to make prosthetics more accessible to amputees, [Karla](#), a young woman of color in Maryland entering the tech industry, or [Juwon](#), a British apprentice, who is on her way to a career in the financial services industry thanks to the combination of an internship and mentorship.

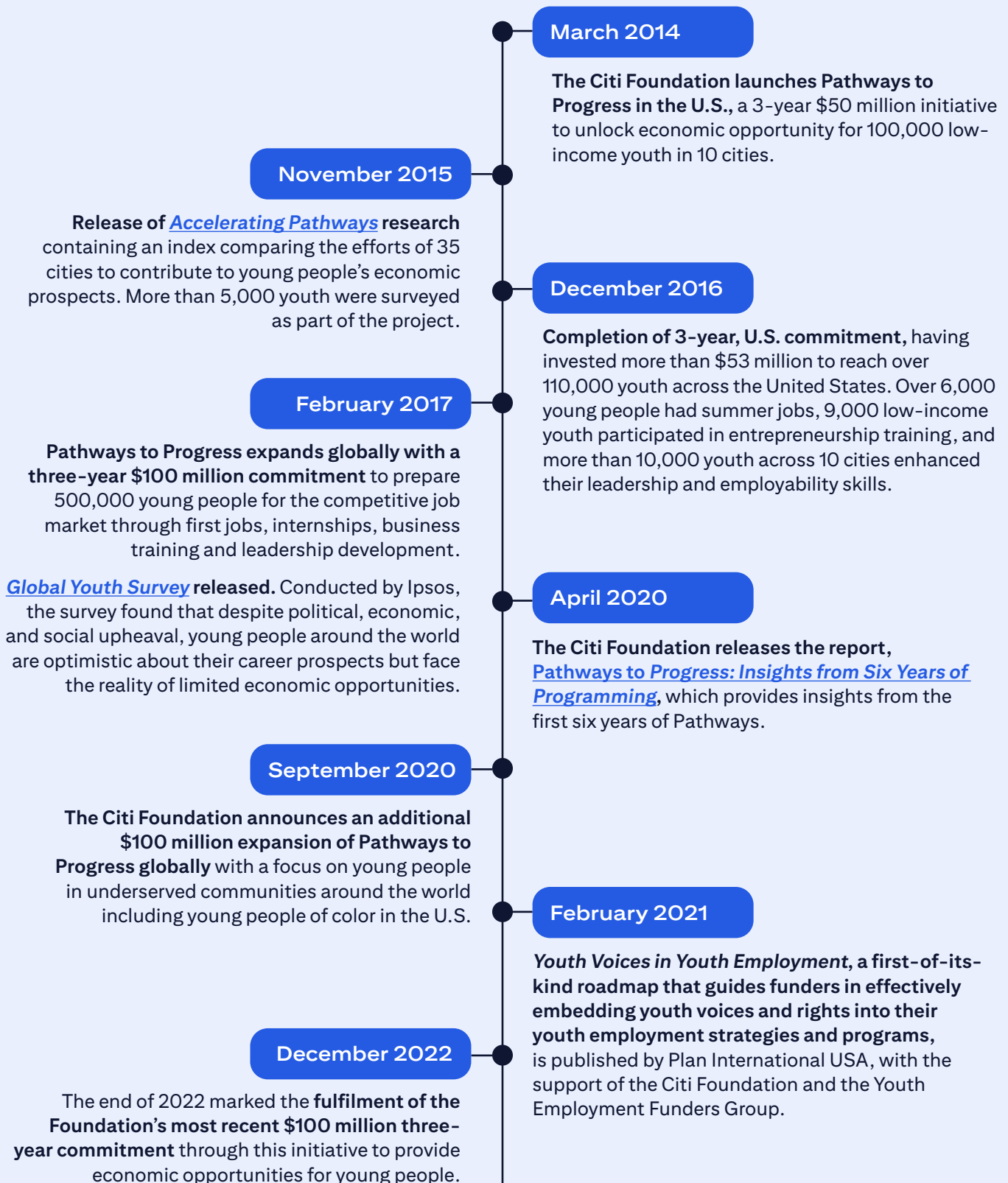
When we first launched Pathways, we set out to support the next generation. This generation is here and the young people we've supported throughout these years are now shaping the world. Their stories show us that, through trust, collaboration and incorporating youth voices, we can all help build more resilient and equitable communities.

Brandee McHale

President, Citi Foundation
Head, Community
Investing and
Development, Citi



The Evolution of Pathways to Progress



Impact by the Numbers

OUTPUTS

\$300+ MILLION

Provided by the Citi Foundation

250+

Unique Organizations Supported Globally

10,000+

Citi employees engaged as volunteers

OUTCOMES

1 MILLION

Youth Obtained Employability Skills

60,000

Youth-led Businesses Created or Expanded

950,000+

Young People Mentored



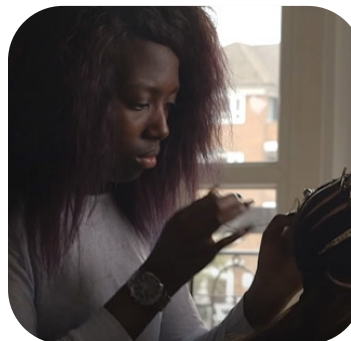
Meet Moussa
Through the Citi Foundation's support for the IRC, he received mentoring and funding to kick-start his restaurant business.



Meet Nancy
A former iMentor participant who navigated the college application process for her dream school with Mary, a Citi volunteer in New York City.



Meet Grace
A former Summer Jobs Connect participant in Miami, who learned how to save while gaining job skills.



Meet Buki
A London-based entrepreneur who started her own hair extension business and has employed several others.



Meet Anuar
A young person in Singapore with an ambitious start-up focused on developing accessories to keep cyclists safe.

DELIVERING MULTI-LAYERED IMPACT

Since the launch of Pathways to Progress, youth employability has been our north star.

We knew along our journey that to support youth employability we would need to invest across multiple levels. Over the years, we sought to understand the impact of our grant making across the following levels:

Individuals

As a job skills-building initiative, improving economic mobility for young people is at the core of Pathways' impact. We have sought to support grantees whose programs result in meaningful, measurable economic advancement for the young people they serve.

Organizations

We have provided catalytic funding in capacity building efforts, enabling organizations to hire, transform their technology, create new strategic plans, embed DEI into their organizations, expand operations into new markets and more. This type of investment – in the organizations themselves – helps ensure that impact they have on communities isn't just for a single grant period, but instead is long-lasting and sustainable.

Systems

Back at the program start, several Pathways grantees were operating local projects. Today, several grantees are at the forefront of the youth employability ecosystem, many of them now informing policies or practices in their countries and regions. Pathways funding has had a multiplier effect; supporting organizations as they expand, scale and deepen impact has had beneficial ripple effects on the ecosystem as a whole.



Doubling Down for Underserved Youth

Nearly a decade ago, the Citi Foundation launched the Pathways to Progress initiative to help equip young people with the skills and experiences to forge a successful future. At the time and today, youth are being confronted with a vast array of challenges, including lack of quality education and jobs, increasing economic inequality and increasing political tensions.

In 2020, when it came time to strategize our most recent Pathways commitment, youth were facing an expanded set of challenges brought on by the global COVID-19 pandemic. In the U.S., we also took a hard look at ourselves to examine how we could help close the racial wealth gap in the communities we serve. In a time defined and driven by change, we recognized our responsibility to invest in the ideas and the people that were at the forefront of equitable progress. In September 2020, the Foundation [announced](#) an additional investment in Pathways programming globally. Through this work, we continued to support low-income and underserved youth around the world.

To increase economic opportunity and help close the racial wealth gap in the U.S., we expanded employability and entrepreneurship programs serving young people of color. We deepened our long-time support for organizations leading this work such as Echoing Green, which scales up support for social entrepreneurs serving young people of color through a [Racial Equity Philanthropic Fund](#). Another example is [UNCF](#), which is strengthening the pipeline of Black student leaders and scholars, and [demonstrating](#) the positive impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. We also supported [Thurgood Marshall College Fund](#), which launched an incubator program to support first-year students determine their career aspirations and develop roadmaps for success.

In other regions around the world, we continued to deepen our support for underserved youth populations. For example, in Brazil, where high school drop-out rates are almost 20% higher for young Afro-Brazilians, the Citi Foundation provided support

“The Citi Foundation’s investment has had a significant impact on UNCF’s ability to engage HBCU students in our UNCF TechVentures Fellowship program. Because of this investment, our program has been able to expose students of color to the principles of design thinking and Lean Startup with the goal of preparing HBCU students to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset. Further, the investment has enabled UNCF to prove the TechVentures program model, which is now poised to expand and scale.”

— Chad Womack, Vice President, STEM Education and Innovation, UNCF

to Baoba to promote inclusive education for Afro-Brazilian high school students. The program provides training in preparatory courses for university admission exams, psychosocial support, vocational guidance, participation in cultural activities and travel, food and internet stipends to reduce dropout rates.

We continued to invest in impactful and agile youth employment programming for displaced and refugee youth across Europe, Middle East and Africa. With over 100 million refugees and internally displaced people around the world, earning a reliable income is critical for refugees to survive, to rebuild their futures and to contribute to the communities around them. Since 2017, the Citi Foundation and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) have led the Resilient Futures program to provide refugees and vulnerable young people in Greece, Jordan and Nigeria with business training and startup grants. In 2019, the program expanded to cities in Germany, Lebanon and Cameroon and in 2021 it expanded to Mexico. To date, the program has empowered more than 6,000 refugees, internationally displaced people and youth from the host community, like [Nour](#) to open and expand their own businesses.

The countries and programs vary, but the Citi Foundation’s goal has remained the same: to empower young people and positively effecting the economic opportunities of global youth by providing them with the building blocks they need to forge their careers.

CASE STUDY

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have long played a crucial role in the U.S. education system.

In 2021, the Citi Foundation collaborated with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) to launch the HBCU Career Incubator Program on HBCU campuses to help first-year students gain a strong foundation to establish their career aspirations and skillset early in their college tenure. Support for TMCf allows HBCU students to participate in career readiness prep, mentorship, academic support and financial coaching to reach their full potential. In 2023, we invited 50 of those students to the Citi global headquarters for a three-day immersive session.



“When I go back on campus and when I go into my job, I want to embark on opportunities that other people may not look towards to set myself apart.”
— Bryce Farebee



“I learned networking and great relationships are a good investment. We invest in money, we invest in assets, we can invest in people. That is human investment.”
— Lucius Nwakamma

CASE STUDY

In 2023, Citi commissioned three films created by young London-based artists from the Mayor’s Fund for London’s Creativity Works program, which provides young Londoners from underserved communities with access to technical education on topics such as podcasting, content production and photography alongside work placements and entrepreneurship training to help prepare the next generation of creatives.

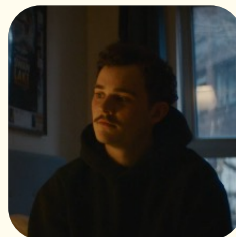
This project sought to support Citi Foundation grantees by promoting their impact on the lives of young people. Most importantly, it raises the voices of young film makers and entrepreneurs.



In Uganda, **Stella** is defying gender norms in the welding industry. She received training from TechnoServe. [Watch](#) artist Konadu Gyamfi’s retelling of Stella’s pathway to financial independence.



In London, **Dami** is both the artist and subject of his film. He’s also an alumnus of the Creativity Works program. [Watch](#) his self-directed short film, *The Run*.



In Italy, **Thomas** struggled with feelings of isolation and despair, which led to him to leave his job. Thomas accessed mental health support and employability training through Progetto Itaca. [Watch](#) artist Julia Zlotnick’s depiction of Thomas’ journey back into employment.



Investing in Capacity Building

Throughout Pathways to Progress, we have increasingly focused on our role to provide catalytic and capacity building support to enable our grantees to increase their reach and position themselves for long-term, sustainable impact. From expanding operations, to building infrastructure, to growing networks, our grants have supported a wide variety of capacity building approaches that move grantees to the next level of influence and execution.

For many non-profits, new programming and scaled impact requires an intentional focus, strategic planning and additional hiring. One such organization is Career Ready. For twenty years, Citi Foundation support and active involvement from Citi volunteers have been instrumental in Career Ready's growth as they seek to help young people aged 15-18 from under-represented backgrounds across the United Kingdom unlock their potential. Most recently, our funding support has enabled Career Ready to significantly invest in their intentional growth through staffing, which has been key in their strategic plan to increase the reach and impact of their social mobility program and has helped reach their goal of increasing the number of paid internships for Career Ready students. Through our support, they hired a Chief Operating Officer, three new regional managers to deliver programming across the UK, a new business development and fundraising team member to manage the increased number of corporate partnerships and a communications officer. They also increased coverage within their finance team and expanded responsibilities for two regional managers to cover process control and regional development. By focusing on human capital and capacity, Career Ready is now well on its way to achieving their expansion goals.

Other grantees, especially in response to COVID-19, have onboarded technology to boost their capacity to serve their communities. Yet, while technology advancements are increasingly fundamental to serving youth, cost is often a large barrier. In the U.S., Break Through Tech, an

initiative of Cornell Tech, invested in a variety of capacity building projects to enhance and improve efficiency and drive engagement in their programs. With our support, they invested in the design, development and deployment of a robust platform to manage corporate partnerships and engage with students nationally. They have built their social media audiences and are also moving from an informational website to an interactive website and learning management system that can host webinars, info sessions, courses and deliver programming at scale. This transformation exemplifies how technology has the potential to deepen program execution and expand reach.

Our capacity building support also enabled organizations to deepen or expand their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts within their programming as well as within their own organizations' operations. One example of capacity building support towards DEI work externally is the European Disability Forum (EDF), an umbrella organization of persons with disabilities in Europe, which was able to expand inclusion of youth with disabilities. EDF collaborated with member organizations in Central and Eastern Europe to strengthen the participation of youth with disabilities into both the youth and the disability movements as well as create accessible communications and improve knowledge and use of European Union and international policies and programs. Results included more than two dozen youth with disabilities attending conferences, three new websites, one organization rebrand, trainings and activities for hundreds of youth with disabilities, dozens of public campaigns and events, four research reports, the development of more than a hundred resources and hundreds of online communications actions. This wide range of materials and resources required comprehensive investment and time to ensure that outreach was performed in a localized and appropriate way for people with disabilities that speak a range of languages and face a variety of accessibility challenges. Another example is that of Junior Achievement USA. Through our support, the organization established DEI resources such as videos and on-demand training for their regional affiliates, staff, school partners and students around the country.

Organizations also benefit from investments that help expand or deepen their programs. In the U.S., the Citi Foundation's support for Covenant House helped them expand a pilot workforce training program in Information Technology. In Mexico, Sin Fronteras provides migrant persons, mostly young, with psycho-legal care, basic needs care and job skills training to help them integrate into their new communities. With the support of the Citi Foundation, Sin Fronteras implemented their program in Mexico City and expanded their activities to Monterrey City and Durango, enabling them to support an average of 700 migrants annually. In Taiwan, our support helped Mustard Seed Mission continue its Yes, We Can! Vocational Training Program that provides employability training to low-income Taiwanese youth and connects them to jobs. In a recent iteration of the

program, the Foundation's support helped deepen their interventions by integrating financial education courses that help participants with financial planning as they plan their careers.

At the Citi Foundation, we view support for capacity building as an essential component of our funding. We are investing in visionary leaders, new technology, pilot programs, geographical expansion, DEI integration, staffing and more. We believe that our capacity building funding approach is one of the reasons why many of our grantees were able to go from hyper-local programming to multi-market, comprehensive initiatives that drive impact for low-income and marginalized youth. We're proud to have been supportive partners along the way, investing in tailored approaches that will continue to drive impact long after any single grant.

CASE STUDY



Only six out of ten women of working age in Latin America are part of the labor market. In higher paying sectors, such as technology, they are even more under-represented. Laboratoria seeks to eliminate the barriers women face to accessing high-quality jobs in the growing digital sector. Since 2016, the Citi Foundation has supported Laboratoria to train and connect low-income young women to high-paying careers in technology in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Mexico. Participants acquire skills in Front-End Development or UX-Design and gain confidence and life skills for a successful transition to employment in a formal and highly competitive sector. Approximately 70% of applicants report they are unemployed at the time they apply to Laboratoria's bootcamp. Graduates who were employed before Laboratoria's bootcamp,

often start earning more than triple their previous income, empowering them economically and changing their views of what they see possible for their future and for their families.

In 2020, Laboratoria built out its core internal technology and shifted its programming to a fully digital format. By transitioning to virtual, Laboratoria has been able to increase its operating capacity and reach more women from more locations. As a result, they have made the virtual format a permanent approach. The Foundation's support was fundamental to this transition, enabling the organization to redesign and adapt its internal technology and data processes to improve user experience for students, graduates and staff members.

"At Laboratoria, we have made great strides towards incorporating data into Laboratoria's day-to-day culture, investing in our technology, and empowering our teams to manage data and use it as a tool to improve processes. This has allowed us to make better informed decisions that have led to stronger results and a more valuable experience for our students and companies. Citi Foundation's support directly contributed to these results by providing funding for the development of evaluation tools and helping us analyze our programming results. This has allowed us to continuously improve our work, a value that is central to Laboratoria's culture and success."

— Karen Kelly, Partnerships Director, Laboratoria

CASE STUDY



Education For Employment (EFE) is a leading non-profit job placement network in the Middle East and North Africa, giving youth the hope and opportunity that can transform their future and the world around them. By matching the businesses that need qualified employees with young women and men seeking employment, EFE helps families, communities and companies in the region thrive. The Citi Foundation's support for EFE helps young people in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE develop in-

demand soft and technical skills as well as skills for a successful job search. The Foundation's support has helped strengthen EFE's capacity building in a variety of ways, such as infrastructure, strategic direction and program development. In Morocco and Tunisia, EFE integrated e-learning into their programs and a new platform to provide real-time feedback on participant performance. In the UAE, funding supported EFE's 2020 strategy discussions on future impact, sustainability and scale, which resulted in the development of new and expanded partnerships, pipeline and advisory network.

“Beyond providing direct program support, Citi Foundation has played a unique role in enhancing the impact of the EFE Network. Citi Foundation has enabled EFE to expand programming into new countries, improve systems for partnership management and Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning, invest in innovative tools for market analysis and youth sourcing, and much more. Citi Foundation's support has contributed to the EFE Network's success in reaching the key milestone of over 175,000 youth connected to the world of work by the end of 2023, 59% of which are young women.”

— Ms. Ana Martiningui, CEO-Europe, Education For Employment



Systems Change

When we launched Pathways to Progress, many of our grantees had the ambition and drive - yet not the resources - to expand their influence and operate at larger scale and with deeper impact. With our support several of our Pathways grantees today, have further established themselves as thought leaders in the field, informing policy and practice in their countries and regions.

This evolution wasn't an accident – it's a result of intentional investments that have focused on 1) helping organizations expand their work, 2) encouraging and funding best practice sharing and 3) supporting research, data management and networks to support and inform policy and practice.

In the U.S., Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund (CFE Fund) has collaborated with the Citi Foundation since 2014. The CFE Fund designed and implemented Summer Jobs Connect (SJC), a robust effort that enables urban youth across the U.S. to build 21st-century workplace skills and secure first jobs. But with first job experiences come first-time paychecks and all the financial management that comes with them. The CFE Fund and the Citi Foundation recognized an opportunity to embed financial capability into one of the most expansive employability programs and the impact that could have. Through SJC, CFE has worked with municipal governments in 25 cities to provide low-income youth with summer jobs, financial education and access to safe and affordable financial tools like safe banking accounts to help create a platform for their financial future. The program combined the influence of U.S. municipal mayors with the Citi Foundation's support, which played a catalytic role in embedding a focus on financial health that ultimately enriched and deepened the scope of the program. The result? Almost a decade later, more than 950,000 youth have participated, 125,000 youth have opened a bank or credit union account, over 300,000 youth received their paycheck via direct deposit, and more than 16,500 young people have been provided with jobs – all enhancing their financial prospects. In addition, the program has received numerous awards

“The Citi Foundation's significant and sustained support in the CFE Fund's Summer Jobs Connect program took a straightforward but ambitious idea – embed safe banking products and financial education at the 'just in time moment' of a first summer job. Now structurally embedded within these dozens of public programs, to date over 300,000 youth received their paycheck via direct deposit, 125,000 youth have opened a bank or credit union account, and more than 16,500 young people have been provided with job opportunities. The Citi Foundation's collaboration also has enabled us to develop detailed and generally-applicable best practices regarding banking access integration, the prime strategy for the CFE Fund's national Bank On initiative and support of 100 local, regional and state coalitions across the country.”

— Jonathan Mintz, Cities for financial Empowerment Fund President and Chief Executive Officer

and recognitions, including from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and has sparked local and federal interest in how cities can leverage existing resources to support economic opportunity for low-income youth. Most importantly, by adding value through financial education and banking access timed with summer jobs, Summer Jobs Connect has created exponential positive economic results for young people.

As youth employment has become an increasing focus around the world for many organizations, best practice sharing has become increasingly important to fostering innovation, progress and programmatic efficiencies. Through Pathways, the Citi Foundation supported many grantees as they documented their programmatic learnings to support field-building. One example is YouthBuild USA, the non-profit support center for a global network of YouthBuild programs. In YouthBuild programs across the U.S. and around the world, opportunity youth — young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are neither in school nor employed — pursue their education, prepare for future careers, and grow into community leaders, building brighter futures for themselves and

their neighborhoods. YouthBuild USA strengthens YouthBuild programs through technical assistance, leadership development, innovative program enhancements and advocacy. Informed by its High-Demand Career Pathways Initiative, they published a white paper emphasizing work-based learning as an essential tool for partnering with opportunity youth as they build the skillsets and mindsets that lead to their success. The report focuses on the strategies, practices, and partnerships that YouthBuild programs and industry experts have developed and how these elements can be integrated further.

Organizations are also using their voice to influence standard practices and policies at national and international levels. For example, in the UK, youth violence across London has risen at an alarming rate, with lack of employment opportunities as a contributing factor. In 2018, as part of a four-year initiative in London called Save London Lives that included the Evening Standard and the UK Government, the Citi Foundation's funding to the London Community Foundation reached 57 grassroots youth organizations and impacted 64,000 young people. The funding supported the creation of improved structures, systems and strategic thinking as well as a stronger network of youth organizations and government agencies tackling violence affecting young people. The initiative combined core funding for organizations with a learning and development program, which increased their stability and capacity, enabled them to better respond to the needs of young people in their communities, and facilitated best practice sharing on how to operate a public health model to prevent youth violence. This investment meant organizations were also able adapt and be more resilient during the pandemic. Several grantees also have advocated for viable alternatives to formal education as pathways to economic opportunity. In Latin America, Citi Foundation's support for Laboratoria began as a pilot investment

in Peru and grew into a multi-country initiative. Their approach to train young women in technology at low costs exemplified what many see as a standard today for affordable training for youth that helps grow their incomes without incurring debt in higher education.

In the U.S., through its 40x22 initiative, NPower harnessed several multi-sector thought leadership approaches to drive awareness, conversation and industry investments to support the advancement of women of color in tech. They instituted a "Women of Color in Tech Day" in New York City, which later gained recognition from elected representatives in New Jersey, California, Maryland, Texas, Michigan and New Orleans. And in 2023, March 24th was designated as "National Women of Color in Tech Day" via a bipartisan senate resolution. Through its report, "[Breaking Through, Rising Up](#)", NPower examined how to improve the engagement, recruiting and retention of young women of color in tech and provided recommendations on how stakeholders, funders and policy makers can make the tech sector more inclusive. This momentum paved the way for NPower's Command Shift coalition, a national consortium of business leaders, corporations, non-profits and community organizations that help address issues that women of color in tech face in order to advance their economic opportunity. In its first two years, the coalition garnered nearly 1 billion media impressions and raised awareness through more than 60 articles to influence systemic change. Read more on NPower's approach [here](#).

When we think about non-profits as "change makers," we aren't just speaking about their direct impact in community. Our aim as a funder has been to provide funding that is catalytic – creating a multiplier effect for our grantees to evolve their work and to expand their scale and influence. Pathway to Progress grantees like the ones mentioned above exemplify the role that non-profits can play in systems change and advancing the field.



CASE STUDY

YOUTH CO:LAB

The Asia Pacific region is home to 60% of the world's youth, but around 160 million of them are not in employment, education or training, and face many interconnected barriers that limit their economic, social and political inclusion, including rising economic insecurity, shrinking civic space and educational inequality. Many young people are left out of decision-making processes, which further contributes to their marginalization and exclusion.

Co-created in 2017 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Citi

Foundation, Youth Co:Lab was launched to break down the systemic barriers that constrain the empowerment of young people in the region and limit their potential. It aims to establish a common agenda for countries in the Asia-Pacific region to empower and invest in youth. By developing 21st century skills, catalyzing and sustaining youth-led startups and social enterprises across the region, Youth Co:Lab is positioning young people front and center to solve the region's most pressing challenges. Today, the program is one of the region's most recognized effort aimed at empowering youth to accelerate the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship.

Outputs

National and regional dialogues, social innovation challenges, incubation programs, mentorship matching, social enterprise support hub and other events to foster social entrepreneurship

Youth Empowerment Alliances to connect young entrepreneurs with resources and guidance to develop their ideas

Youth-oriented and youth-friendly policies on a national and regional level through thought leadership and multistakeholder engagement

Action-oriented research that informs and improves engagement with the youth participants

Reach & Impact

28
Countries & Territories

280,000
Participants reached

19,000
Young social entrepreneurs supported through activities

2,600
Youth-led social enterprises created or improved

310
Youth-ecosystem partners joined Youth Empowerment Alliance

Spotlight on Youth Led-Enterprises



Vulcan Augmetics is a startup in Vietnam that is transforming the lives of amputees by creating affordable, functional and modular prosthetic products using 3D-printing. [Watch the video.](#)



AI4GOV is a startup based in the Philippines that focuses on improving access to information and local services through artificial intelligence (AI). [Watch the video.](#)



More than Philanthropy

Day in and day out, Citi colleagues volunteer in a variety of ways to give back to the communities where we live and work. When it comes to collaborating with non-profit partners, the Citi Foundation has harnessed the spirit of giving back, recognizing that Citi colleagues have an opportunity to reach out to young people and leverage their expertise as corporate professionals to prepare young people with tools and knowledge to build successful career pathways.

Citi employees across the world have engaged their time and talent in Pathways programming through activities like mock interviews, resume reviews, career coaching and advising youth entrepreneurs. Further, Citi volunteers often become champions of the events and organizations that they get engaged with. Whether it is a one-day engagement or a longer opportunity, our colleagues use their expertise and platforms to help propel grantee organizations and the youth they serve forward. This engagement has been a strong and important complement and value add to the Foundation's philanthropy throughout the last decade.

For example, strong mentoring relationships are a critical component of connecting young people to the onramps that lead them to college and career success. In New York City, iMentor has a proven track record of matching high school students with a committed college-educated mentor, equipped to guide that young person on their journey to college graduation. The Citi Foundation's philanthropic support was instrumental in expanding their model to reach thousands more students – supporting their growth in NYC and Chicago, their expansion to the Bay Area, and ultimately their journey to becoming a national organization. In addition to the Foundation's philanthropic support, more than 200 dedicated Citi colleagues have volunteered as mentors, establishing long-term relationships with mentees that have made lasting impressions on both mentors and mentees.

Another example of our “more than philanthropy” approach is our work with NPower. From 2018 to 2022, the Citi Foundation and NPower set out to boost economic opportunity for women of color in tech through 40x22: Advancing Young Women of Color in Technology. The initiative engaged young women of color from underserved and low-income communities for up to 20-weeks of training and a paid learning experience. What's more, in addition to grant funding, the Foundation engaged the human resources department and diversity networks at Citi to involve employee volunteers in the launch of NPower's national mentoring program. To respond to COVID-19, Citi colleagues participated in NPower's Remote in Tech program, offering a series of online learning classes and mock interviews for students to refine their skills and prepare for a virtual work landscape.

To harness the spirit of youth entrepreneurship, Citi colleagues have often played vital roles as coaches and judges in competitions led by Pathways grantees. In the U.S., NFTE (Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship) helps prepare young people to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and join an entrepreneurial workforce. Over 800 Citi colleagues and executives have engaged as coaches, mentors and judges through more than 1,400 engagements totalling nearly 5,000 hours of service.

In the face of COVID-19, Citi and the Citi Foundation quickly worked with Pathways grantees around the world to pivot volunteer opportunities to virtual settings. With many Citi colleagues working remotely, this opened opportunities for volunteers to participate from all across the world and provide additional value add to the Foundation's grant making. As volunteer activities are returning to in-person, we aim to continue driving as much impact as possible by volunteering both in person and virtually.

CASE STUDY



Women-owned businesses attract less than five percent of venture capital funds globally. Further, up to 70 percent of formal women-owned small- and medium-sized enterprises in Latin America and the Caribbean report lack access to capital. To help close this gap, women need support to access networks and mentors that can help open opportunities. Vital Voices' Central American

Chapters aim to do just that by offering online Mentoring Clubs that help entrepreneurial young women across El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica strengthen their business plans.

Jennifer Taylor, Chief Compliance Officer, Citibank N.A., Banking & International at Citi serves as a member of the Vital Voices board of directors. She has been a key leader in the Global Ambassador Program, mentoring an incredible NGO founder supporting children in Afghanistan.

“As the Co-Chair of the European Board, and Global Board Member, I’ve championed Vital Voices’ mission to invest in women solving the world’s greatest challenges. Through organizing mentoring walks connecting community leaders with women entrepreneurs, future leaders and change makers, I’m proud to have created a space where our community can share stories and empower the next generation of leadership.”

— Jennifer Taylor, Chief Compliance Officer, Citibank N.A., Banking & International



Lessons Learned

In our last report, we shared [initial learnings](#) from the first six years of Pathways to Progress. At the time, we understood that empowering young people, providing early work experience and financial knowledge, incubating an entrepreneurial mindset, creating networks and access to role models, and driving systemic and structural changes to the field of work are each integral to helping the next generation build stronger futures for themselves, their families and their communities. These findings continue to ring true today. But as the global landscape has evolved, so have our lessons learned. Below, we explore our most recent learnings.



Youth Voice: From Listening to a Seat at the Table

When creating Pathways, we made it a priority to hear from youth and apply what we heard to our programming. In 2015, we commissioned [research](#) that evaluated the economic environment for youth in 35 cities around the world. In 2017, we commissioned [research](#) that polled young people in 32 countries to gain a better understanding of how young people were preparing for their future and the barriers they face. In our most recent commitment, we sought to understand and support programming that engaged youth from needs assessment to program

implementation. For example, True Colors United's National Youth Forum on Homelessness (NYFH) is a group comprised exclusively of young people to contribute to the growing national dialogue on how to make youth homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring. With the Citi Foundation's support, NYFH helps ensure that strategies to end homelessness are generated by youth and young adults themselves. Forum members, all of whom have experienced homelessness, use personal experience, research and data to assess the effectiveness of programs that assist homeless youth and advocate for change.

Another example is MENTOR, which created a program to help their local and state affiliates better involve youth in their programs, including youth co-designed curriculum, co-facilitating training and engaging in conversation with participants throughout all training programs. The affiliates also gained expertise to help other local youth serving organizations incorporate a youth voice as well.

These grantees and programs bring youth into the decision-making process – from integrating participant voice and feedback to hiring people who have gone through the programs to bring them into the strategic thinking of how a program should grow. By including and engaging youth throughout all levels of programming, these organizations are modeling inclusive development.

Build Partnerships for Pipelines

Many stakeholders across the public, private and non-profit sector invest in initiatives in support of youth economic opportunities, but these efforts can sometimes operate in silos. We are facing increasingly complex challenges in today's interconnected world, which require collective actions from philanthropists, investors and policymakers to invest in partnerships and solutions that can bring about systemic impact.

Together, through multi-sector collaboration, we can catalyze career pathways through internships, apprenticeships, and other hands-on work experiences that result in tangible workforce pipelines.

Tapping into government programs is one vital way

to approach this. In the Philippines, the Foundation’s funding enabled Philippine Business Education (PBE) to work with the local government in piloting the JobsNext Program, which provided industry-relevant skills based training to young people to help in preparing them for jobs of the future. PBE co-designed the curriculum and established a strategic oversight council within select localities. The training and activities were delivered by the local government’s Public Employment Services Office. This successful model has since been replicated and is now implemented in 7 localities (four cities, two municipalities and one province) around the Philippines. In Thailand, the Education for Development Foundation (EDF) implemented an entrepreneurship-focused community development program in three Thai provinces: Nakhon Pathom, Samut Prakan and Nonthaburi. They trained local colleges, vocational school students and community members in technology and digital skills for business development, including business strategy development, e-commerce and digital marketing. The seed grants were provided to support local colleges and vocational school students to develop their products, business and skills. Then, EDF worked with the Department of Community Development to pair participants with local small business owners who needed help building an online presence.



Funder Collaboration Accelerates Growth

Programs are often supported by more than one funder. And yet, the funders providing support do not usually convene or share lessons learned with each other. This approach limits progress. In 2020, the Youth Employment Funders Group (YEF) came together to share learnings and ideate on how to move the space forward. YEF is a network of over twenty multilateral organizations and international donors collaborating to create and share evidence-based knowledge on what works in the field of youth employment. The Group capitalizes on experiences of its members to increase knowledge on what works and why, improve global coordination, leverage donor

investments and support dissemination of findings and lessons learned. In 2021, Plan International USA, with the support of the Citi Foundation and the Youth Employment Funders Group, published [Youth Voices in Youth Employment](#), a first-of-its-kind roadmap that guides funders in effectively embedding youth voices and rights into their youth employment strategies and programs. This roadmap identifies the “who,” “why,” “when” and, most importantly, “how” when it comes to involving young people as partners. It was developed to support funders and practitioners in their efforts to embed youth voices and rights into their programming by considering two key research questions. First, what are the key phases of youth engagement in the planning, governance, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment programs? And second, what concrete steps can funders take to strengthen their own youth engagement strategies? This effort aligned funders, therefore improving efficiency, collaboration and opportunity for philanthropy in the area of youth employment.

Lay the Groundwork for Compensation and Innovation

In 2018, we also commissioned [research](#) to explore the internship and apprenticeship landscape and methods to make compensation an innate part of those opportunities. The learnings from this effort led the Citi Foundation to support several paid internship programs with Brooklyn Museum, Cincinnati Museum Center, the Park Avenue Armory and Pérez Art Museum Miami in the United States to engage college students from low-income or under-represented backgrounds. Participating students gained exposure to prestigious cultural institutions, wrap-around support and career coaching to prepare them for success in the sector. During the pandemic, the transition to remote engagement forged new opportunities for participants in the internship programs. The museums, which historically sourced interns locally, were able to open their programs to larger geographies and therefore a wider set of participants. They also got creative with their offerings: the programs featured more sessions with senior leaders, guests from museums around the world, multi-market engagement between internship programs, and more inter-museum “cohort” collaboration. Today, even as the museums have returned to in-person internships, they continue to supplement the program with virtual benefits and opportunities for networking.



Flexibility is Vital for Resilience

In 2020, as one result from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Citi Foundation accelerated the degree to which we were embedding flexibility into our grants to boost resilience in the programs and organizations we were funding. We worked with our grantees in multiple ways, including clarifying our approach to overhead, expenses, enabling longer term no-cost extensions to grant terms and providing additional capacity building and flexible support for organizations to more easily pivot to virtual and/or address more immediate relief efforts. It required that we lean in and listen to our Pathways grantees that were close to the ground and understood how to serve their community which was faced with the unprecedented circumstances and in return, for us to be more flexible in our approach to grant making.

For example, in Mexico, the Citi Foundation supported Fundacion Pro Universitaria to increase young people's employment and immediate job performance through training and internship placements. However, because of COVID-19, millions of Mexicans lost their jobs; in response, Fundacion Pro Universitaria created a new module on entrepreneurship to support participants who needed to pivot and create new economic opportunities for themselves. Stories like this demonstrate how more flexible support and systems for our grantees enabled them to be nimbler to continue serving their communities.

“We had to adjust the delivery of the programs under the Asian Youth for Impact initiative due to the pandemic. Citi Foundation provided a space for discussion and offered AVPN the opportunity to adapt the form of our program while retaining the spirit of the impact we sought to create. The trust Citi Foundation provided enabled AVPN to meet the shared outcomes we envisioned for empowering young people even during the pandemic.”

— Naina Subberwal Batra, CEO, AVPN

“Thanks to the flexibility shown by the Citi Foundation, the ONCE Foundation was able to reallocate a grant that, due to the pandemic, could not have been implemented, and instead cover the essential needs of the most vulnerable people with disabilities during lockdown.

The Citi Foundation grant allowed us to produce and distribute thousands of protection items for people with disabilities and their carers, to provide home care services to around 50 homes with people with disabilities, including food and medication, and to adapt a space to host people with disabilities who needed to stay in isolation, and healthcare staff. Additionally, we developed specific contents to support disability organizations to deal with the COVID-19 crisis and foster their recovery after the pandemic.”

— Sabina Lobato, Director of Training, Employment and Operations, ONCE Foundation

Conclusion

From its start, Pathways to Progress has been about unlocking solutions and catalyzing collaborative interventions that boost youth economic opportunities.

A decade later, while the Citi Foundation's Pathways to Progress commitments have been fulfilled, the impact of these investments – and the paths they have created in this space – will continue. As we evolve our approach and programming, we will remain committed to empowering young people. We are taking the lessons learned from this initiative to inform our grant making efforts in the future.

To follow our next phase of programming and journey, visit citifoundation.com.

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