The transition into independent adulthood is never easy. However, for young people who cannot depend on their family as a source of support, who do not experience stable homes and social protection, finding decent employment is often a matter of creating or losing their future.

70 years of providing care to children and youth have given us a solid understanding of the support needed to help young people gain the necessary confidence, skills and networks to pave their way into a sustainable future. Based on this long-term experience, we have built innovative and effective partnerships with corporates, children and families, investors, communities, governments and peers.

The YouthCan! partnership is at the core of SOS Children’s Villages’ solutions to the global problem of youth unemployment, putting a special focus on young people without parental care. Supported by our corporate partners and their volunteers, YouthCan! creates holistic and individual employability solutions for young people. It unlocks their potential, empowering them to build a brighter future for themselves, and in turn, for their communities. This, in turn, leads to employers getting access to a young, talented and ambitious workforce who at a young age have already successfully overcome significant challenges.

We are proud of how this work contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of reducing inequality and poverty, and promoting decent work and economic growth together with our corporate partners.

With your support, YouthCan! continues to grow rapidly. Its immersive and interactive experience creates a safe and empowering environment for young people in our care. In addition, with our digital platform YouthLinks, we are able to overcome geographical barriers to reach even more young people to offer them a wider range of learning and development opportunities.

In the end, young people in our care will go forward into the world and demonstrate that together, our collective investment into their future is indispensable to enabling them to feel more confident and be better equipped to live independent lives.

Their success is our success. Their future defines ours.

Norbert Meder
Chief Executive Officer
In this global partnership between SOS Children’s Villages and the private sector, corporate volunteers share their time, skills, expertise and own career stories. These volunteers plan workshops, trainings, facilitate exposure to professional environments and act as mentors. Employees and young people can connect face to face or through our digital platform, enabling worldwide collaborative learning through online mentoring, breaking down geographical barriers.

Our unique, multidimensional and tailor-made approach

It has been shown that to make a long-lasting change in young people’s lives, a multidimensional approach is key. That’s why YouthCan! combines the three programme pillars - Mentor - Train – Practice - into one individual approach.

The programme is tailor-made to the local labour market and the individual needs of each young person and offers and includes an online dimension through digital platforms. Our partner Volunteer Vision provides a platform for cross-boarder online mentorship while Workplace supports the virtual exchange and trainings via online groups.

Mentoring in YouthCan! enables young people to build relationships with the skilled, qualified and motivated employees of our partners who share their skills and time and also become role models to the young people. Specific trainings strengthen a broad range of professional and life skills of young programme participants. In addition to that, our partners provide opportunities for the programme participants to gain practical work experience.

Young people are taking a strong role in designing, implementing and evaluating YouthCan! When consulted on the 2030 Strategy they specifically asked for a solution like YouthCan!. During the implementation on the local level, youth needs assessments, feedback sessions and evaluations are regularly incorporated into the project direction and help shape trainings. The digital communications platform based on Workplace strongly supports peer-to-peer support and exchange.

“You want to say a big thank you to YouthCan! for this great eye-opening opportunity, I’m especially grateful to my mentor, Miss Jennifer - I couldn’t ask for any other. With her experience as an HR professional, she has helped me to become a bold lady, taught me which language to use during an interview and how to overcome my fears about interviews. She has also shown me how to create an interesting CV.”

Jessica
YouthCan! participant
Nigeria
YouthCan! programmes worldwide in 2018

YouthCan! reached out to a total of 5,060 young people in 25 different countries in 2018, equally supporting boys and girls. Compared to 2017 the number of individual participants increased by 30% and 15 additional YouthCan! countries contributed to this scale up of YouthCan!.

YouthCan! participants across regions

Half of the YouthCan! participants live in Eastern and Southern Africa, with South Africa being the strongest YouthCan! country with 27% of all participants. In the Americas another 24% of YouthCan! participants can be counted, while the regions Eastern Europe, CIS and the Baltics (EUCB), as well as Asia and Middle East and Northern Africa add around 10% each. In Western Africa, Cape Verde was the first country to launch YouthCan! at the end of the year, starting with initial activities.

With the local contextualizing YouthCan! is focusing on different age groups across the regions. While in Asia and Latin America around half of YouthCan! participants are 18 years old or younger, Eastern and Southern Africa as well as EUCB report that the majority of participants is 22 or older.

Source: SOS Children’s Villages - YouthCan! Annual Reporting 2018. As of January 2019
Background of young people

YouthCan! focuses on young people without adequate parental care. For 2 in 3 participants YouthCan! comes as additional employability support, complementing the care they receive in alternative care or family strengthening programmes. Some countries like Russia, Costa Rica and Nigeria manage to take YouthCan! even further and also strongly support young people who lack parental care who have not been part of SOS programmes before.

Empowering and multidimensional approach

In order to transform young people’s lives, an individual and multidimensional approach is key. YouthCan! builds a strong relation with young participants and keeps engaging and strengthening them in multiple ways. In 2018, young participants took part in 11.4 encounters (i.e. meetings, either face-to-face or virtual) on average across the year.
The training focus

Nationally-shaped YouthCan! programmes prioritise training activities, with 60% of encounters happening in this area. Almost half of the trainings focused on life/soft skill development that is the foundation for young people to meet the challenges of an ever-changing environment. Professional skills training and career guidance resulted in the other half of encounters, whereas entrepreneurship was piloted in 4 countries only and provided a minor share of total encounters.

Mentoring and work experience

20% of all meetings and activities happened in the area of off- and online mentoring, whereas the area of internships/ job-shadowing opportunities has still potential to grow with currently providing 10% of all encounters.

The digital platform

In 2018 YouthCan! strongly promoted blended learning by integrating the digital platform YouthLinks in ten countries within its programme. As a result, the digital platform supported 15% of all global YouthCan! encounters to take place virtually.

The intensity of the YouthCan! programme differs across regions with the Americas and Eastern and Southern Africa leading with 18 and 14 encounters per participant per year. The other regions are just getting started with a lower involvement per participant.
Sustainable relationships with a broad range of corporate and support partners (NGO or public) that share their expertise and promote corporate volunteering, is the key success factor of YouthCan! With 6 global partners (AkzoNobel, Allianz, DPDHL, Johnsson & Johnsson, Siegwerk and thyssenkrupp Elevator) and over 130 local partners, YouthCan! can truly claim to be a global and local initiative of engaged partners that join forces to tackle youth unemployment. Compared to 2017, the number of partnerships increased by 12%. Many times, the renowned global YouthCan! partners created a strong pull for local partners to join in. In 2018, almost half of all partners were local corporate partners, followed by national units of global corporate partners and support partners.

Corporate volunteers that sharing their time and career experience are the key source of inspiration for young people. In 2018, across all countries 1,300 corporate volunteers actively engaged with young people in YouthCan!. On average one volunteer supported around three young people.

We can see the strong commitment of our global partners with them providing two thirds of all corporate volunteers engaged. DPDHL as longstanding founding partner even contributes more than a third of all volunteers engaged in YouthCan!.

The scope of corporate volunteers engagement strongly differs across regions. In the Americas and Asia YouthCan! engages one corporate volunteer for every two participants, while the other regions are on their way to follow this example.

"With the experience I got from YouthCan I am able to stand and motivate people, teach my peers"

20-year-old man
South Africa

"It is an enriching experience. It helped me to rebalance and see from a different perspectives my daily challenges.”
Volunteer

Source: SOS Children’s Villages - YouthCan! Annual Reporting 2018. As of January 2019

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GLOBAL AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS RESULTING IN STRONG VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

A network of over 130 national partners

Source: SOS Children’s Villages - YouthCan! Annual Reporting 2018. As of January 2019

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1,300 YouthCan! volunteers from different partners

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Volunteer
96% of young people confirm:

- We see evidence now that YouthCan! is strongly improving our care and support for young people and their transition to independence. First results show that the self-reliance rate of young people leaving care develops 7% better in YouthCan! countries compared to the global average. This shows that YouthCan! is the right investment to make the world a better place for young people, for their societies and for the generations to come.

YouthCan! leverages the self-reliance of young people

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95% of young people gain essential skills and self-confidence

Young people strongly endorse that YouthCan! boosts their skills, networks and outlook on employment.

95%* of young people confirm that through YouthCan!:
- they gained understanding of how to search for a job, apply for it and how to behave in a professional environment.
- they think more positively about their future and feel more self-confident and motivated about taking up (self-) employment

*from an online survey amongst over 500 YouthCan! participants from six countries

90% of the young people who participated in the online mentorship programme reported that they have notably increased their self-esteem, better understand which of their skills are important for their career, and that, thanks to this mentorship, they know how to set goals and how to achieve them.

95% of young people and volunteers benefit from safe win-win relations

Young people and volunteers are at the heart of YouthCan! and their enthusiasm and trust create a great benefit for both sides.

96% of young people confirm:
- that they feel safe to ask the volunteers for any professional advice, that they strongly benefit from the interaction and that they regard them as good example to follow.

Volunteers confirm:
- 95% of DPDHL and AkzoNobel volunteers confirm that they appreciate their engagement in YouthCan! and would advise their friends to also participate.
- 80% of corporate co-workers who participated in the online mentorship programme perceived a higher job satisfaction due to their volunteering engagement enabled by their employer. 72% reported that joining the programme had a positive effect towards their company commitment and 95% of them confirm that their YouthCan! engagement supports their happiness and strengthens their intercultural skills.

As of January 2019

Learn more about international corporate partnership
www.sos-childrensvillages.org/our-international-corporate-partners
A LOVING HOME FOR EVERY CHILD

A loving home for every child

SOS CHILDREN’S VILLAGES INTERNATIONAL