



Public-private Partnerships Benefit Youth

Youth in Kericho County benefit from a partnership between the SACCO and Balloon Kenya.

Photo: Denis Koech, USAID/Kenya



From left: Aaron Cheruiyot, bookkeeper of Kericho County Youth Bunge’s SACCO; John Ndehi of Balloon Kenya; and Naomi Rono, chair of Kericho County Youth Bunge’s SACCO.

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— John Ndehi,
Balloon Kenya

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Kericho County Youth Bunge’s Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO) is one of several set up by USAID/Kenya under the Yes Youth Can (YYC) project to empower Kenyan youth through low-interest loans and grants. “We have issued 64 boda-boda (motorbikes) and 81 normal loans worth 13.8 million Kenya Shillings (Ksh) (\$149,000),” said Naomi Rono, the SACCO Chair. As of March 2015, the SACCO boasted Ksh 5 million (\$54000) in member savings.

Boda-bodas enable youth to run profitable businesses. Through a SACCO contract with the motorbike manufacturer, members can purchase a boda-boda at a reasonable price, including insurance for one year.

“Since we issue loans to our members, we usually follow them to the ground to see if the loans are uplifting them. However, we do not have the capacity to train them on all entrepreneurship skills, and that is why we partnered with Balloon Kenya,” Rono said.

Balloon Kenya runs entrepreneurship and business design programs. The organization recruits young people aged 15 to 25 in Kenya and the United Kingdom.

“The program enables us to identify brilliant business ideas. Those doing well in business are usually given a kitty of up to Ksh 50,000 (\$540) to boost the business,” said John Ndehi, Balloon Kenya Project Coordinator for Kericho County.

By March 2015, 43 youth who completed the training program had received loans worth Ksh 860,000 (\$9300) from Balloon Kenya through the SACCO. When issuing the loans, Balloon Kenya adopts the SACCO’s procedures and loan policies. The partnership is a step toward sustainability of the youth SACCO.

The USAID-funded Yes Youth Can project’s main objective is to strengthen Kenyan youth organizations to be agents of positive change in their communities. The program empowers young people and grassroots youth organizations to achieve a greater voice in national policy by creating livelihood opportunities. YYC’s integrated approach includes community mobilization, civic engagement, economic development and gender integration.