



YOUTHBANK INTERNATIONAL NETWORK: (A COMPANY LIMITED BY
GUARANTEE)

DIRECTORS' REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

CONTENTS PAGE

Reference and Administrative Information	3
Forward from our Chair of Trustees	4
Operational Review	5
Director's Report	17
Independent Examiner's Report	22
Statement of Financial Activities	23
Balance Sheet	24
Statement of Cash Flow	25
Notes to the Accounts	26

Company Registration Number NI625358
Charity Number NI101341

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS DIRECTORS
AND ADVISERS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2023.

STATUS

The company is limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its articles of association dated 25th June 2014 and as such does not have any share capital. Every member of the company undertakes to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 each to the company's assets if it should be wound up.

DIRECTORS

Norman Leet (Chairperson)

Lisa Rose

Navjot Johal (resigned 10th February 2023)

Jawad Amin

Ollie Walsh

Niamh Harkin (appointed 15th June 2023)

COMPANY SECRETARY

Vernon Ringland

REGISTERED OFFICE

Community House

City Link Business Park

6a Albert Street Belfast,

BT12 4HQ, Northern Ireland.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Christy Lau FCCA CTA DChA

Slade & Cooper Limited

Beehive Mill, Jersey Street

Ancoats Manchester M4 6JG

BANKERS

HSBC UK

25-29 Royal Avenue

Belfast, BT1 1FB

Wise

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER

NI625358

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER

NIC101341

YBI's IP and Trade Mark Attorneys

Hanna-IP, 58 Howard Street, Belfast, BT1 6PJ

Foreword from Chairperson of the Trustees

The executive team at YouthBank International (YBI) has once again made great progress in securing the long-term future of our organisation. This year, we have successfully developed and launched a fully-tested learning platform that has received great feedback. Our ongoing Alumni programme continues to connect and reconnect young people within our network. We are also excited to announce the 10-year celebration of YBI, planned for September 2024 in Como, Italy, made possible by the generous support of Fondazione Cariplo and Fondazione Provinciale della Comunita Comasca, Italy. Additionally, the release of our YouthBank Go package (details on our website) now makes running a YouthBank more accessible and affordable worldwide. We have a promising pipeline of opportunities ahead. The trustees of the board extend heartfelt thanks to our entire team for their incredible hard work and dedication, often exceeding expectations.

The trustees wish to thank Navjyot Johal for her service as a board member over the last two and a half years and welcome Niamh Harkin as a new member. The board remains committed to recruiting individuals who reflect our user group's experience, diversity, and age. This approach is central to our long-term strategy, ensuring we stay true to our values and build a sustainable future led by young people. As the world becomes increasingly uncertain, the leadership, networking, and shared values of young people are more important than ever. YBI is proud to be among the many great organisations globally striving to achieve this vision.

Looking forward, the challenge is to remain focused on growing our network and enabling young people the chance to make a real impact in their own communities by creating the change they want and need. We encourage those who have had their time or favour less connected and collaborative approaches to step aside, allowing space for the young to invent and take ownership of their future.

Norman Leet

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

YouthBank International
Chairperson

Operational Review

Formally established in June 2014, YouthBank International (YBI) started as a simple idea with the vision of a world where all young people have the opportunity to lead change and make a difference in their communities and neighbourhoods in every country.

Our mission is to work with organisations who want to give young people authentic leadership, decision-making and community building opportunities while growing the network and supporting young people through grant-making. We have developed a framework, training and resources that enable organisations to provide the necessary support.

We provide practical contribution to the transformative #ShiftThePower movement, where young people have decision-making power over how real money is spent in their communities. We seek to build an ecosystem of individuals, organisations and businesses that share our values and our aim of bringing decision making opportunities to young people.

We stand for the redistribution and allocation of budgets from private and public sources to support young people's agenda for change in their communities. We encourage organisations and their partners to enhance or change their operating structures to support young people as critical thinkers, team players, and decision makers who can be active leaders in their communities.

In 2023, the executive team continued to carry out several key functions:

- To build and grow the YouthBank International network, bringing it to new jurisdictions and organisations interested in developing authentic leadership opportunities with young people

- To extend and develop the capacity and capabilities of organisations using YouthBank as a flexible model to facilitate the active participation of young people in the communities they serve

- To harness digital technologies to improve data collecting systems and procedures that tell the story of YouthBank, its impact and contribution to improving the quality of life for young people

- To mobilise resources and secure varied income streams to sustain the longer term development of the organisation.

Numbers in 2023

14 networks using the YouthBank model: Belgium, Bosnia Hercegovina, Croatia, England, Georgia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Moldova, Romania, South Africa, Ukraine and USA.

115 locations with an operating YouthBank allocating an estimated £818,814 in grants across their local communities.

764 funded projects meeting identified agendas for change

925 young people in leadership roles as grant-makers, 364 male, 561 female

Above 30k primary beneficiaries.

Primary objectives

We retained our three primary objectives from the previous year:

To build a sustainable Business Model.

To maintain and grow the YouthBank network with the primary goal to keep growing the YouthBank network by engaging the YouthBank alumni and establishing a diverse training team of associates.

To establish best practice with practitioners and young people in grant-making and civic engagement with a focus on new work in England, India, South Africa and five individual locations in Asia.

1. To build a sustainable Business Model. The reset in YouthBank International's future, as defined in its 2022-2026 Business Plan, was predicated on an entrepreneurial approach by generating revenue for services that create value to our partners and raising income for specific funded growth projects. YBI offers a distinctive asset - a mechanism where partner organisations can support young people to initiate, shape and direct the form of a YouthBank, its priorities, its decision-making and its impact.

This shift also meant adopting a Business Plan that would spell out how growth and scaling the organisation over the next five years would look like. Sales of our services would have to increase by converting potential prospect organisations into investors, to become allies and persuaders to build greater momentum and visibility in new markets and locations.

In June, we worked with the board of trustees to focus on network development and the financial sustainability of our operating model. This led to new ideas and proposals on promoting and packaging the YouthBank offer. We identified the challenge of securing funding for our larger subscription packages across multiple sites. In response, we introduced a streamlined subscription model called 'YouthBank Go', which offers an annual fee of £2,000 per individual organisation, with reduced rates after completing training. This adjustment addresses the financial constraints of potential host partners, allowing for a more flexible and manageable approach.

2. To maintain and grow the YouthBank International Network.

Partner organisations coordinate local YouthBank networks and are the primary relationship for YBI 'on the ground'. Our purpose is to develop and support the partner organisations' capacity to sustain continuous cycles of young people by developing the necessary and associated competencies and skills for running their own YouthBank. YBI is also in transition to becoming a more sustainable organisation, conveying an optimistic vision for the future.

YouthBank online training

During the reporting period, we tested several iterations for delivering the key content of the YouthBank model's five phases and eighteen steps. We shifted from a condensed training delivery timeline to a hybrid approach, resulting in 26 hours of online learning content. This new method offered greater flexibility, addressing the challenges faced by youth workers who missed in-person training sessions. The training combined live taught sessions with a self-paced, do-it-yourself approach, providing a platform for discussion as needed. This continuously updatable online resource now serves as a key tool in our ongoing support for future YouthBanks, with Italian YouthBank practitioners being the first to benefit from this adapted format.

Additionally, we introduced a short online training programme titled "Secrets to Success," aimed at enhancing the skills of 10 YouthBank practitioners. This programme included five 60-70 minute episodes focused on design, presentation, and facilitation skills, specifically tailored to help practitioners open, close, and review online YouthBank workshops effectively.

Senior Associates Team

Under this broad goal of maintaining and growing the YouthBank network we were able to establish a small Senior Associates Team.

In the reporting year, we have made modest steps towards achieving our key performance indicators, which focus on establishing a diverse and skilled Senior Associate Team (SAT). While it is essential to acknowledge that some performance indicators have only been partially met or not met entirely, we view these outcomes as valuable opportunities for learning and refinement in our approach.

Recruitment for Senior Associate Team (SAT) members has been highly successful, surpassing our target of six by adding three additional members. In June, the first SAT get-together of practitioners from Australia, Croatia, England, Ireland and South Africa came together in Zagreb, Croatia.

Skill development and competency among our associates are areas where we need to make notable progress. While not all members have had the opportunity to demonstrate their skills fully, many have showcased their commitment by translating materials into their own language and have undertaken other training and presentation work on behalf of YBI at events in England - Edel, Norman and Peter; Georgia - Helena, Edel, Damir; India and Indonesia - Vernon; Ireland - Edel; Moldova - Katja; Saudi Arabia - Peter and Vernon; South Africa and Tanzania - Jeremy, and the USA - Helena, Edel and Norman.

Alumni

In 2023, we aimed to harness the untapped potential of thousands of YouthBank alumni, a missed opportunity we sought to address. We began by recruiting Kakhi Gigauri, a former grant-maker and trainer in the Georgian YouthBank network, whose involvement has been instrumental in shaping the development of our alumni network. With his invaluable perspective and technical abilities. A consultation group of former grant-makers to deliberate on the network's structure to build a network that facilitates mutual learning, provides pathways for alumni to give back, and offers opportunities for personal and professional development, all while supporting YBI in achieving its mission.

Additionally, to capture and broadcast the essence and impact of YouthBank, we embarked on content creation initiatives. We highlighted examples from alumni spanning over 20 years, showcasing how YouthBank has significantly influenced their personal and professional lives.

Kakhi Gigauri: https://youtu.be/o_ekDKx34fA

Erin Wright: <https://youtu.be/sp4G4M6nQ6c?si=NBKT8poYvShLM5QH>

Tornike Kikishvili: <https://youtu.be/7nYV0ZDsXdY?si=ctsUeR4vHISPGZCn>

Consolidating Gains and Expanding Influence

In October as part of YouthBank training delivered online and face-to-face in Kachreti, Georgia, four Georgian alumni members were recruited as co-trainers to work with YouthBank International Associate Training team members to facilitate specific face-to-face inputs from the YouthBank toolkit.

Another stand-out initiative in November was the involvement of YouthBank alumni members from the UK nations, Ireland, Ukraine and Belgium in the Messines Youth Symposium to create a collective, contemporary peace pledge as part of the 25th anniversary of the Island of Ireland Peace Park. The Symposium was also supported by the City of Messines, the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels, the Embassy of Ireland in Brussels, the British Embassy in Brussels, the International School of Peace Studies, Messines Peace Village, and the Barr and Harte families.

The primary funders of the symposium were Streekfonds West Vlaanderen Community Foundation - a partner of YouthBank International in Belgium and The Corrymeela Community, Northern Ireland who facilitated the whole event.

Regarding infrastructure, we established an online forum on Wix to facilitate interaction and collaboration among alumni. This digital space has become a hub for discussions, resource sharing, and strengthening community ties. Data collection through surveys, interviews, and other means is an ongoing endeavour that will provide us with valuable insights into the preferences and expectations of our alumni.

Looking ahead, we have positioned ourselves for the public launch of the alumni network in 2024. This launch coincides with the introduction of key roles and functions within the network, ranging from potential associates and board members to connectors, network weavers, and PR influencers. We will launch new content across social media channels that are coming directly from young people (reels, Instagram posts, TikTok) and will tap into the skill sets of the alumni.

However, the last twelve months weren't without its challenges. Capturing stories and testimonials proved slower than anticipated, primarily due to the reliance on individuals' goodwill and availability. This has underscored the need for more streamlined processes and a more diverse range of alumni-related stories.

The 'Know-Now' webinar series

The 'Know-Now' webinar series has been a cornerstone of YouthBank International's strategy to maintain and expand its network in 2023. These five online webinars, delivered by a combination of YouthBank trustees and members of the Executive team, were designed to address critical areas of peer support, governance, communication, and outreach. Helena Habdija, from the Executive team, initiated the series with insights into providing peer-to-peer mentoring, emphasising the value of mutual support and shared learning. Lisa Rose, a trustee, tackled the complex subject of holding difficult conversations, equipping participants with the skills to navigate challenging interpersonal relationships effectively. Norman Leet, the Chairperson and trustee, focused on governance, clarifying roles and responsibilities within an organisation, thereby ensuring accountability and transparency.

The inclusion of storytelling and social media campaigns in the webinar series highlighted YouthBank International's commitment to innovative and engaging approaches to community engagement. Edel Maughan and Katja Palaic, from the Executive team, led a session on storytelling, demonstrating how personal narratives can be powerful tools for advocacy and education. Trustee Ollie Walsh concluded the series with a practical guide on social media campaigns, providing attendees with strategies to amplify their impact to reach a broader audience.

Community of Practice for Practitioners

The establishment of a Community of Practice has been pivotal in addressing specific challenges faced by YouthBank Network practitioners. During the reporting period, four online meetings were held, each focusing on a particular practice challenge or issue. These meetings served as a platform for practitioners to share experiences, seek advice, and develop solutions collaboratively.

Technical and digital improvements

The Google Workspace donation helped YBI build most of our systems and processes. As the network expands we will need to build more complex processes in order to maximise our effectiveness, which will need more powerful tools.

We have continued to populate the Learning Platform using WiX to host our training resources of toolkits, materials and video recordings for the anticipated growing number of registered practitioners. There has been a positive response from practitioners who have accessed the Learning Platform to help with designing their own YouthBank workshops.

“The Youthbank platform is very useful and structured amazingly. It's easy to navigate around it.” Lauren Philander, Initiative for Community Advancement, South Africa.

“I used the platform, I found it very useful to structure the steps of the YB methodology.” Corina Erhan, Orhei YouthBank, Ukraine.

“The resources were very good and worth learning. I suggest you update the materials every 2-5 months minimum.” Reuben Amewuda, Abor YouthBank, Ghana.

3. Work with existing network organisations: To establish best practice with practitioners and young people in grant-making and civic engagement. In 2023, YouthBank International focused on strengthening our collaboration with fourteen network organisations to establish and disseminate best practices in grant-making and civic engagement. By working closely with both practitioners and young people, we aimed to refine and enhance the effectiveness of our programmes. This collaborative effort was pivotal in ensuring that our initiatives met the evolving needs of our partners. The following section highlights our key achievements and strategies in fostering these essential relationships throughout the year.

The Future Rising Programme

Towards the end of 2022, YBI received confirmation from a private donor of a three year investment in a programme we have called *Future Rising*. This will enable us to:

continue to develop YouthBank in locations that are not able to meet the cost of the support package we provide.

bring together a team of experienced YouthBank practitioners who will take the revised toolkit and materials out to new partners around the world as well as co-training and mentoring a wider network of YouthBank Associates who will take the YouthBank model into new regions and contexts

leverage the wide range of alumni who have contributed to YouthBank's successes over the years. An alumni network will be created to take on a number of initiatives to support the overall mission.

We have reported in previous sections about the emerging Alumni and Associate training initiatives under specific funding from a private donor. In the last quarter of 2023 we were able to work with new partners, Yukas Vikas in Balasore, India, the Initiative for Community Advancement in South Africa and Untuk Kemanusiaan, Ika, Indonesia. To provide a flavour of the work we were able to create, please read the case statements.

YouthBank for Communities, England.

In the previous year, we reported on our initial efforts to revitalise YouthBank operations in England, which led to the official registration of YouthBank for Communities (YBC) as a Community Interest Company (CiC) made possible with a one-year grant from the Dulverton Trust. During the reporting year, Edel Ryder, a YouthBank International Associate, played a key role in providing development, training, and support, dedicating two days a week to work with YBC volunteers and seven implementing partner organisations.

The partner organisations brought variation in locations and organisational form. These formative experiences brought forward many insightful learning experiences. The YouthBanks in Norfolk were predominantly situated in rural areas, the rest were located in inner-city environments. In Manchester, the majority of young people came from the Muslim community, with one YouthBank focusing primarily on working with young people who were not part of any formal institution. Liverpool's YouthBank presented yet another contrast, with its membership drawn from the Alder Hey Hospital, Children's Forum, many of whom grapple with chronic illnesses.

Training and development opportunities were provided through toolkits, webinars, workshops, and one-on-one support. External expertise was introduced to enhance the young people's skills and knowledge in their chosen agendas for change. The organisational challenges for partner organisations included recruitment difficulties, especially in rural areas, and the need for additional resources to support travel and face-to-face events.

For YouthBank partners operating in a sector with multiple participation opportunities for young people the early experience from YouthBank for Communities recommends capitalising on these existing structures to integrate the YouthBank approach into them,

reducing the time spent on recruitment and boosting efficiency. They go on to state that “securing funds for a network or individual YouthBanks poses a significant challenge...simply approaching organisations to establish YouthBanks may not be the most effective strategy”.

Georgia

Towards the end of October an extended version of the hybrid training programme was delivered for the Europe Foundation, in Kachreti, Georgia. 110 new YouthBank members took part in an online weekend programme of ten workshops, some live and the rest completed in their own time. The following week, a three-day face-to-face programme completed the training, to enable the continuation of 18 YouthBank sites across Georgia.

Lessons from Don Guanella Foundation operating in Abor, Ghana and East and West Flanders Community Foundations, Belgium.

In the reporting year, both organisations discontinued support to their own local operational partners. In Ghana, any continuation was dramatically cut short by a change in governance arrangements and a prolonged strategic review process of priorities announced by its board of trustees. It was noted that the costs of the yearly subscription and the time it demands to run and support a YouthBank were prohibitive given the organisation’s revised priorities and limited resources. Additionally, the strategic review highlighted a need to reallocate funds and efforts towards core activities that align more closely with the organisation’s newly realised goals and immediate community needs. This reallocation of resources underscores the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by host organisations who were dependent on resources from outside their jurisdiction.

In Belgium, the situation involved a period of reflection and reassessment by the Community Foundations regarding their operational partnerships. The foundations recognised that the time and effort required to establish and sustain a YouthBank had been underappreciated initially. The process of building a YouthBank can be complex and time-consuming, far from a simple "meat in, meat out" operation. Establishing a successful YouthBank demands significant investment in time, resources, and continuous support, which was not fully anticipated at the outset. As a result, the Community Foundations decided to pause and reassess how best to align their operational partners with the demands of running a YouthBank, ensuring that future collaborations are built on a clear understanding of the commitments involved and that there are no hidden surprises.

Agendas for Change and Videos for Change

The emphasis on using the term Agendas for Change rather than priorities was used to highlight the importance of a team enquiry to identify issues, threats or concerns as a focus for a YouthBank fund. This approach enabled YouthBank members to pinpoint pressing concerns such as climate action, environmental improvement, safer

communities, entrepreneurial initiatives, and mental health this year. By aligning these Agendas for Change with the funding cycle, each YouthBank encourages young people to apply for grants to support projects that address these key issues. This approach not only ensures that the funding is directed towards the most relevant and urgent needs but also encourages young people to learn how to undertake meaningful research and advocacy within their communities. Setting Agendas for Change statements has effectively sharpened the focus and understanding of partner organisations and practitioners, emphasising the importance of YouthBanks in driving local change.

The Videos for Change competition was an exciting extension of work to identify each YouthBank's Agendas for Change. This competition provided each YouthBank with the opportunity to create a one-minute video statement on their identified agenda, whether it be an issue, threat, or concern. These videos serve as powerful advocacy tools, allowing young people to articulate their perspectives and rally support for their causes. The competition also fosters creativity and innovation, encouraging young people to use multimedia as a means of expression and activism. By showcasing these videos, YouthBank International will be able to highlight the diverse challenges faced by different communities and the steps taken by young people to address them. This initiative not only amplifies the voices of young people but also builds a library of compelling content that can inspire and inform future projects within the network.

In December eight videos had been submitted and at the time of reporting were being assessed by trustees of YouthBank International.

Case Statements

Yukas Vikas, Balasore, Orissa, India: The YouthBank Money Game.

The four-day workshop held in October opened as a day-long money game, a personal exploration to draw out hidden behaviours and assumptions to explore the habits and beliefs of 40 young people and their relationship to money. The hot sun of Balasore filtered through the upper deck of the college classroom, where four tables, each with ten places, were arranged. The ground rules were laid out: respect, a willingness to experiment with new behaviours and strict adherence to the game's phases. Each participant was given 500 rupees in various denominations, the currency clinking and rustling in their eager hands.

Round one commenced in absolute silence. It was a dance of strategy and hesitation as each participant took turns taking money from one another, their expressions mixing guilt, amusement, and surprise. Without the ability to speak or resist, the dynamics of power and vulnerability were starkly illuminated. Arjun, the most assertive of the group, quickly gathered a substantial amount, while Priya hesitated before making her moves, ending up with the least. The silence was heavy, punctuated only by the sounds of shifting coins, rustling notes and the scrapping of chairs and tables against the concrete floors. And there was some laughter, too.

In round two, the atmosphere shifted. Now, they were to give money freely to whoever they chose. This round unveiled their personal biases, affections, and grudges. Rohan, who felt wronged in the first round, gave generously to everyone except Arjun. Meanwhile, Anaya, who had maintained a middle ground regarding what money she had collected, decided to distribute her money evenly, seeking to balance the scales. This round brought to light the complexities of giving and taking and favouritism, as well as the joy and disappointment that can accompany giving.

Round three allowed for conversation, and the classroom buzzed with negotiations, pleas, and strategies. This was where the real test lay. Some, like Vikas, tried to appeal to the group's sense of fairness, while others, like Divya, negotiated shrewdly to end up with more. The dynamics of persuasion, power, and empathy played out intensely. Friendships were tested as participants decided whether to prioritise their gain or the collective good.

As the game concluded, some felt a sense of triumph; others of loss. Still, all were united in a newfound understanding of the complex emotions and ethical dilemmas money could evoke.

The game had laid bare the conflicting human impulses of being selfless, selfish, and the struggle between self-interest and communal well-being. It revealed how money, a mere tool, could become a profound symbol of trust, power, and relationships. The YouthBank money game had been a mirror reflecting their deepest values and fears.

A shift from the personal to the collective is made by introducing a foundational YouthBank principle: shared understanding. This dynamic approach utilised diverse tools and techniques to amplify youth voice and agency. It focused on cultivating leadership skills, decision-making authority, and opportunities for participants to consider what lay behind creating their own YouthBank fund.

Indonesia Untuk Kemanusiaan, Ika, Indonesia: Organisational Learning. Organisational learning embodies a commitment to constant improvement and adaptability. It forms a cultural bedrock characterised by ongoing self-reflection, learning from missteps, embracing novel ideas, attentive listening to young people and exploring more efficient ways to effect change.

The YouthBank leadership team, under the guidance of IKa Indonesia, has undertaken efforts to raise funds for an institution dedicated to supporting women who are victims of violence. This initiative represents a significant step towards actively mobilising young people to engage with critical societal issues. While the funds collected, approximately \$90, may not be substantial, they marked the initial phase of a broader mission aimed at channelling the energy and commitment of young people towards providing tangible support for pressing social concerns.

In addition to fundraising, the YouthBank team led by IKa Indonesia effectively organised cross-community performances. These performances served as a public statement that young people are actively engaged in addressing prevailing social issues to communicate the urgency of addressing these challenges. Their unwavering commitment to human rights, social justice, and environmental sustainability, coupled with their support for diverse communities in the heart of Southeast Jakarta, was not without its very real challenges.

The following Agendas for Change were identified by young people from five youth communities in South-East Jakarta as their overarching priorities:

- a) Proactive Action to Support Voice in Public Action: This priority emphasises the active participation of young people in public actions related to social issues, humanity, and natural sustainability. The YouthBank team is committed to supporting and amplifying the voices of their peers leading these actions, thereby fostering a sense of agency and influence.
- b) Youth Festivals for Humanity: This priority agenda seeks to organise and promote youth-oriented festivals/campaigns dedicated to celebrating the values of compassion, empathy, and social responsibility. The arising activities are to serve as a platform for young people to showcase their talents while promoting unity and a shared commitment to addressing social and environmental challenges.

In a recent critical review process (October 2023), considerable attention was devoted to addressing the equitable distribution of resources to these agendas. This endeavour led to a significant shift towards a greater co-production approach, employing innovative tools like 3D models and interactive drawings. These tools will serve as vehicles for garnering feedback and fostering improvements in future funded initiatives.

Initiative for Community Advancement (ICA) South Africa: Shared Power and Authority-

“Every player can experience leadership opportunities, on the ball and off the ball, not just the captain”.

A defining feature of distributed leadership is the range of decision-making within an organisation. It's about who should make decisions, what powers they hold, and their responsibilities. It requires accountability, often pushing us out of our comfort zones.

“Marshelay de Klerk, was a shy and reserved participant in YouthBank at the beginning of the year. Through her involvement, she gradually developed confidence in expressing her ideas during group discussions and proposing project initiatives. Marshelay's transformation became evident when she took the lead on project plannings. This initiative not only showcased her newfound leadership skills but also demonstrated her empathy and commitment to addressing social issues”.

Organisations that embrace the sharing of power and authority often create a 'greenhouse effect' by nurturing each team member, helping them grow in leadership through coaching and mentorship. Take the YouthBank network in South Africa, comprised of five Community Foundations where young people are beginning to experience real power - by setting priorities and, in 2024, allocating funds. It's not some theory, not a board game brought out on a Tuesday evening and put back on the shelf at the end of the evening; it's about money with a mission as a tool to address the changes they want to see in their communities. This experience is beginning to boost young people's confidence, leadership skills and decision-making abilities.

Pecha Kucha is a Japanese term meaning "chit-chat". This method facilitates discussions on critical themes like power, control, and accountability. Pecha Kucha is essentially a storytelling technique that allows no shortcuts, encouraging deep and meaningful exploration of complex issues.

Some YouthBanks in the South African network integrate Pecha Kucha with an examination of the 'YouthBank Golden Rules', or core values. Nine Golden Rules unfolded as a quick 20-second story that opens into a plenary session to identify and understand personal and collective power and accountability. It's a crucial step before delving deeper into the implications of these concepts in the management and operation of a YouthBank.

What has remained a stubborn obstacle for existing YouthBank networks and prospective organisations is a prevailing culture where what they want to achieve is not always widely understood. Supporting young people to organise can be a great deal more difficult to do, especially when their role is to identify the things they would like to see changed in their communities and give away money to those causes and issues that matter to them. The challenges for organisations to enable this to happen as a contribution to community building against a backdrop of balancing their books is very real and for some, as we have found, easier to stop doing.

New relationships and opportunities

University of Technology, Sydney, UTS, Australia. Initial work began in November 2023 and will culminate in August 2024. In collaboration with the University of

Technology's Law Department, Allen's Law Firm, Sydney, Australia and US-based software company Neota Logic - <https://neota.com/about-neota/>

We have the opportunity to develop a mobile application as part of a Law Tech Challenge run by UTS. This project will involve five law students designing an app tailored to YouthBank International's specific needs. We intend to create a tightly defined brief with law students working with Neota Logic as mentors and designers to translate this into a useful product for young people over at least a two-year period.

The starting point challenge is to design a tool that takes a local YouthBank Agenda for Change and examines it against any of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ashoka Europe, Austria. This was a three-month pro bono consultancy from May 2023 to support us in exploring our business model and strategies to replicate and scale what we do.

Golin Marketing, London, England. The offer of pro bono support for six months came from Ashoka UK and Ireland, who negotiated a series of corporate support packages to build institutional capacity. This offer aims to revamp our branding and communication tools, making them more appealing and relevant to young audiences.

YBI and Comasca Community Foundation, Italy: It has been five years since the last global assembly of the YouthBank network was held in Istanbul, Turkey. Recently, this initiative gained new impetus when the Comasca Community Foundation in Como, Italy, expressed interest in hosting an international event. Throughout the summer, this concept evolved and has now culminated in the planning of an event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of YouthBank International.

This event is scheduled from Monday 9th September - Wednesday 11th September, 2024, in the Teatro Sociale, Sala Blanca, Como, Italy. It is expected to host approximately 120 young people, practitioners, and guests, primarily from Italian organisations and other European organisations.

YBI and King Fahd University, Saudi Arabia: In December, YouthBank International was invited by King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dammam to conduct a workshop on the YouthBank model and present on YouthBank's role in fostering youth leadership at their annual Non-Profit Organisations Conference. Following our presentation, the university, which also sponsors the Non-Profit Donors Forum in Saudi Arabia, has requested the development of a pilot programme to introduce YouthBank in Saudi Arabia over the next 3-5 years.

Directors' Report

The Directors of the company, who are also Trustees for the purpose of charity law, present their report and the unaudited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 3 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

The Trustees present the financial results for 2023, acknowledging the challenges faced during the year. There was a deficit for the year of -£25,940 (-£17,049 attributable to Restricted Reserves and -£8,891 attributable to Unrestricted Reserves). Reserves at the year-end were £16,776 comprising restricted funds of £12,951 and unrestricted funds of £3,825.

The Trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of YouthBank International, for keeping proper accounting records and producing relevant financial statements. This was the second year of the restructured business model, allowing income to be sustainably generated as we look to expand the YouthBank network in line with our mission.

Trustees meet to agree strategic direction, receive reports, approve budgets and finance reports and endorse and review policies. Trustees are required to disclose all relevant interests and register them with the Company Secretary.

All newly appointed Trustees receive instruction on the activities of the charity and their responsibilities as a Trustee. Trustees are required to disclose all relevant interests and register them with the Company Secretary.

Public Benefit Statement

Trustees have complied with their duty under Charity Law with regard to the Charity Commission Northern Ireland's Public Benefit Guidance when exercising any powers and duties to which the guidance is relevant. The public benefits are:

The enhanced personal development of young people who participate in YouthBank initiatives, building their self esteem and confidence and providing them with an opportunity to learn new skills in leadership, teamwork, decision-making, problem-solving, communication, negotiation, event management and many other skill sets

The articulation and consideration of issues and concerns relevant to young people and the communities they live in

The provision of grants to improve the quality of young people's lives.

These benefits can be evidenced in records kept by country host organisations

who coordinate their local YouthBank sites. Survey reports, feedback, networking events and training are organised by YouthBank International to build the capacity and capability of stakeholders to advance youth-led grant-making and decision-making.

The public benefit requirement has informed the activities of YouthBank

International in this reporting year and no harm or potential for harm has resulted from our purposes. Trustees review their public benefit and charitable status on an annual basis.

Structure, Governance and Management

In the reporting period one trustee, Navjyot Johal resigned to take on an advisory role to support the development of YouthBank in England and graduate student, Niamh Harkin, joined the board of trustees. The joining process included several meetings with the chairperson of YBI, discussions with a number of the executive team and attendance at a trustee meeting before appointment. Upon appointment, trustees are provided with the latest trustee papers containing the relevant information to familiarise themselves with their responsibility as a trustee, the work of the charity, operating procedures, the business plan and financial performance.

The board of trustees met online on 23rd March, 12th October and 14th December and held a face-to-face meeting with members of the Executive team on 14th -15th June in Zagreb, Croatia.

The Board of Directors, who are the charity's trustees give of their time freely and no director received remuneration in the year.

A risk register covering key strategic risks is maintained and updated at least twice a year and more frequently where risks are known to be volatile.

Organisations in the YouthBank network support between 1 and 52 community based YouthBanks to address issues that matter to them in their communities.

The Charity's objects ("Objects") are to create learning and participation opportunities for young people to be grant makers, decision makers and leaders in their own communities and in wider society by:

- assisting the setting up and development of new local YouthBank initiatives and YouthBank Networks.

- providing and coordinating the provision of technical support, training, advice, information, materials and resources and generally enhancing the capacity, effectiveness and sustainability of existing local YouthBank initiatives, YouthBank Networks and YouthBank Host organisations.

providing and maintaining an international forum where members of the Charity can find mutual support, engage in training, exchange views, share common issues and information and create a collective voice.

YouthBank International Network is a company limited by guarantee, registration number NI625358 and it complies with corporate law, files annual returns and notifications of changes to board members/trustees, people with significant control, articles of association, name changes and other salient corporate information.

The company is registered with the Northern Ireland Charities Commission (CCNI), registration number NIC101341 and complies fully with all CCNI law and guidance, including the provision of an annual report on its finances and activities.

Trustee liability insurance, travel and professional indemnity insurance are provided through Marsh Ltd Insurance Intermediaries, Belfast.

YouthBank International Network's conduct is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The minutes of Trustees' meetings clearly record all decisions taken and financial income and expenditure reviewed at each meeting.

Risk Register

Trustees have a risk register in place which addresses the major governance, operational, financial, reputational, legal and regulatory risks that might impact upon the core purposes and key objectives of the organisation. These risks are reviewed on two occasions per year and designed to minimise any potential impact on YBI should those risks materialise.

Financial controls and procedures are a shared responsibility between a trustee and a designated executive team member. Trustees agreed to retain the services of Slade & Cooper Limited as Independent Examiners.

Reserves Policy

Trustees began preparing a reserves policy statement to ensure the organisation's financial stability and sustainability. At the time of reporting the statement hadn't been approved. This policy will outline the necessary reserve levels to safeguard against future uncertainties and support ongoing operations.

Statement of responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees (who are also directors of YouthBank International Network for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Board of Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities and recognise that attention to governance issues is critical for the maintenance of an accountable and respected organisation.

Additionally YBI trustees have agreed to:

- Setting the strategic direction of the charity and ensuring the direction is in keeping with the objects and principles
- Being responsible in law for the charity
- Acting with integrity and in the best interest of the charity
- Confidently promoting the work of the charity and young people
- Contributing skills, knowledge, expertise and support to the work of the charity.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime of the Companies Act 2006.
Approved by the Board of Trustees on Thursday 20th June 2024.

Signed on its behalf.

Chairperson
Norman Leet

