

Prospects, Challenges and Responsibilities of Young Surveyors; the African Perspective

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Key words: FIG, FIG-YSN, “YSN Africa”, Prospects, Challenges, Opportunities.

SUMMARY

The role of the young in any organization remains pivotal to the success of the present and the sustainability of the future of the society. In Africa, where there exists a youth bulge of about 60%, the role of the youth is more crucial to development. Yet, it is worthy of note that in many places in Africa, the number of older professionals actively involved within the surveying profession is more compared to youths. The FIG-YSN is concerned with objectives such as; improving the number of young professionals participating within the FIG, helping young professionals in the beginning of their careers with contacts, and increasing co-operation between the commissions and the students and young professionals’ network. These and other youth based roles are responsibilities needed to be championed in the African context. The FIG and its partners have extended many of its services to aid and spur African Young Surveyors into action, most importantly, the STDM training which has twice been facilitated with special consideration to Africans to aid pro-poor land management among several other benefits. At various national levels within Africa, there had been activities, success stories and challenges. Amidst like and unique challenges and encouragement experienced by the young within different countries of Africa, which has led to the strong existence and silent existence of the Network amidst African countries; issues such as starting-off, acceptance, planning, support, and other factors have been identified to necessitate the current state of the network.

In order to further the dynamic objectives of the FIG and the FIG-YSN within Africa and consequently globally, approaching the situation in a holistic manner is imperative. This was identified at the meeting of representatives of African Young Surveyors held at Addis Ababa Ethiopia on the 9th of November 2014, during the STDM ‘Training of Trainers’ workshop. The idea is to leverage on the similar and dissimilar challenges and success stories identified amidst national networks of the African Nation, so as to par the African network with other active continents. This paper is a diagnosis into Young Surveyors Networks within the African Nation, identifying the prospects and challenges of the network by examining views, scenes, predictions, projections and visions gathered from various African countries and as well identifying responsibilities that need to be engaged. Agents of change, rooms for improvement, and possibilities of partnership were identified. This is a call to obligation, collaborative participation, increased and in-depth integration within and between “YSN Africa” and other similar networks and commissions within the FIG and around the world.

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1. PREAMBLE

The need for a document to express the Prospects, Challenges and Responsibilities of Young Surveyors in Africa was identified at a meeting of African Young Surveyors held at Addis Ababa Ethiopia on the 9th of November 2014, during the STDM 'Training of Trainers' workshop. This is expected to further the dynamic objectives of the FIG and the FIG-YSN within Africa and consequently globally. The idea is to leverage on similar and dissimilar challenges and success stories from individuals and national networks of the African Nation.

Many FIG Member associations now have dedicated young surveyor streams. Unfortunately these streams are yet to identify the need for an official FIG Young Surveyor delegate. Still, there are many organisations promoting and supporting their young surveyors to attend and participate in FIG events, which is an excellent initial step (Fairlie K & Unger E, 2014).

This paper is a diagnosis into Young Surveyors Networks within the African Nation, identifying the prospects and challenges of the network by examining views, scenes, predictions, projections and visions gathered from various African countries and as well identifying responsibilities that need to be engaged. The paper further identifies the need for a Network of Young surveyors in Africa, and what the priority of the Network should be. Engaging agents of change, rooms for improvement, and possibilities of partnership are the core goals of the paper.

2. METHODOLOGY

Most significant amidst the tools and technologies used in the data gathering process was the online survey conducted on Google forms to gather input from individuals and groups of Young surveying societies within Africa. The questionnaire which was made available for responses for more than two months gained significant responses across different nationals with the help of the immediate past Chair of the FIG Young Surveyors Network; Kate Fairlie, who helped in sharing the link to the survey with several Young Surveyors across African countries. This significantly increased the number of responses per country from 7 to 12 within a relatively short period of time.

Consequent on the data gathered, responses were analyzed, results obtained from the analysis and other tools used in gathering data as input for this document are the information presented in this write-up. Below is an analysis of the responses received:

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Figure 1: Analysis of Responses

The responses gathered from the countries listed above is an indication of the presence of Young Surveyors Networks, or Young Surveyors knitted with FIG events in the above countries.

3. AFRICA and YSN

With 56 fully recognized sovereign states, nine territories and two de facto independent states with limited or no recognition, Africa accounts for 15% of the world's total population. The current Youth bulge of about 60% in Africa which is predicted to increase the more with is an interesting phenomenon that should encourage developments considering the strength and agility that lies within the youth age, yet, the par with which unemployment and other youth related challenges grow with the population is unsolicited. Within the African nation, the definition of who is a surveyor is often misconstrued with the definition of the International Federation of Surveyors. Even in places where the FIG definition is known, the connotation is often not implemented in practice. A Young Surveyor is defined by the FIG as:

- Surveyors aged 35years or under
- Students of Surveying
- Surveyors within 10 years of graduating from Bachelor or Master's Degree.

The greatest challenge with this definition is the question of 'Who is a Surveyor' The FIG describes a surveyor as a professional person with the academic qualifications and technical expertise to conduct one, or more of the following activities;

- To determine, measure and represent land, three-dimensional objects, point-fields and trajectories;
- To assemble and interpret land and geographically related information,
- To use that information for the planning and efficient administration of the land, the

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sea and any structures thereon;

- To conduct research into the above practices and to develop them.

According to the above definition, A Surveyor majorly could be any of the following among others; the Land surveyors, the Estate surveyors and valuers, the Quantity Surveyors and other practitioners of land related disciplines. The all-encompassing approach of the definition of a surveyor by the International Federation of Surveyors aids connection and collaboration amidst the actors, which has led to the advancement of the profession. In the local context within Africa nations, the term surveyor is often polarized and self-proclaimed by a part of what it should be, unlike its international federation. This is a major challenge in the constituent and composition of surveying organizations and inevitably Young Surveyors Networks within Africa. From the research carried out during this work, it was revealed that 55.6% of Young Surveyors networks in Africa are comprised by a particular professional body, while 44.4% are a mix of various surveying related professional bodies. Part of which, the ratio of the constituent members comprising the 44.4% of various professional bodies are neither evenly distributed, nor being a representation of the strength of its mother organizations. Young Surveyors Networks within the African Nation are dominated by particular professionals of the Surveying profession.

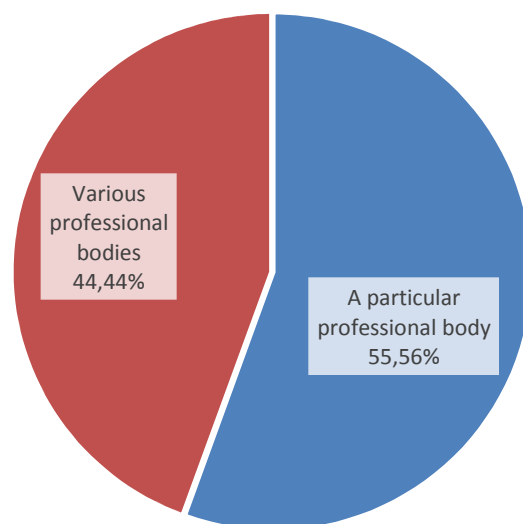


Figure 2: Composition of Young Surveyors Networks in Africa

The above indicates the need for more collaborative efforts from the various practitioners of surveying profession in Africa, to foster the need for integration, by integrating the diversities of Africa to produce a synergy.

4. YOUNG SURVEYORS NETWORKS IN AFRICA.

The online survey gained four group based responses, three of which were country based responses, representing Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Senegal. Having obtained permission

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from coordinators of the Young Surveyors Networks of the above countries, Presented below are the responses received from the coordinators.

4.1 The Ethiopian Network

The Ethiopian network of Young Surveyors is becoming stronger gradually with time. Although effective collaboration amidst the various professional bodies that should form the network is yet to be achieved, the FIG-YSN, has been a motivation and has always provided a sense of direction to the activities of the Ethiopian Network, especially during the last FIG-GLTN STDM training of trainers workshop held at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This has created a room for collaboration between members of the network.

In Ethiopia, there are lots of various networks/associations existing with the same interest. Often times, the goals and objectives of this networks and associations overlap, which eventually creates clash of interest at country levels. This is oftentimes resolved by making consultations with stakeholders.

Currently, the high demand for professionals and the need to work on a national urban rural land registration/cadastral system is an opportunity that has presented itself to the Ethiopian Young Surveyors Network.

4.1.1 Challenges

Challenges faced by Young Surveyors and the Network of Young Surveyors in Ethiopia includes the following:

- i. Inadequate infrastructures, such as; offices, tables, photocopy machines, printers, etc.
- ii. Lack of technology, knowledge and skills
- iii. Poor leadership within the various associations.
- iv. Inadequate support from regional and international bodies.

4.1.2 Motivating factors of YSN Activities

Factors that encourage Young Surveyors Activities in Ethiopia includes the following:

- i. The vast number of unutilized potentials of Young Surveyors, capable of creating advancements for associations, individuals, Ethiopia and the world at large.
- ii. Self-financing of network activities within members of the network.

4.1.3 The Ethiopian Perspective of an African YSN

If implemented, the following are factors that should form the objectives of an African Young Surveyors Network:

- i. Facilitate the need for collaboration between land professionals.
- ii. Provide career path and growth plan for Young Surveyors.
- iii. Develop training programs to increase technological knowledge and use
- iv. Organize and facilitate regular meetings, seminars, and workshops.
- v. Follow up on member associations.
- vi. Facilitate trainings "

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4.2 The Nigerian Network

YSN Nigeria, is a group of Young Surveying Professionals in Nigeria, formed with the aim of bridging the gap between the older generation of surveyors and the upcoming generation. Created official in 2012, its membership strength has risen to over 2000. A major achievement of the network is its being able to leverage on the existence of the network to share expertise and develop the strength of its members, which has had significant increase in the registration of Young Surveyors as registered surveyors within the surveying profession in Nigeria. The Young Surveyors Network of Nigeria is largely dominated by members of the Geomatics and Geodesy discipline in Nigeria.

An important factor that encourages the membership strength and participation of young surveyors in Nigeria is the existing structure of the Nigerian Institution of Surveyors, and the recognition given to the network as the Network of Young professionals within the association. This has significantly increased the membership strength of the network within the society, but commensurate increase has not been observed in other Survey related professional bodies in Nigeria. Attempts have been made to intimate and if possible integrate the potential Young Surveyors (according to the FIG definition of a Surveyor) of other land related disciplines with the activities of the FIG-YSN, only little have been achieved in this area. Most significant of the attempt was the efforts made during the FIG working week held in Abuja Nigeria in 2013 at both National and state levels, yet the success recorded from such an attempt was inconsiderable.

Most significant amidst of our challenges at the National level is the problem of insufficient funding, which makes the planning and implementation of Young Surveyors activities difficult at the National level of a populous and youth dominated country like Nigeria.

4.2.1 Challenges

Other notable challenges include the following:

- i. "Poor Funding
- ii. Inadequate Mentorship

4.2.2 Motivation for YSN Activities

Factors that encourage activities of Young Surveyors in Nigeria includes but are not limited to the following:

- Decentralized authority
- Support from National association (NIS)
- Efficient communication between members of executives."

4.2.3 The Nigerian Perspective of an African YSN

The proposition for an African Young Surveyors Network is a welcomed development, of which hands of member countries especially Nigeria should be on deck. Points that should form the objectives of such a network includes the following among others:

- i. Develop training programs to increase technological knowledge and use
- ii. Create a voice for championing the African YSN Course
- iii. Develop training programs to increase technological knowledge and use.

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- iv. Create Peer leadership groups and programs

4.3 Senegalese Network

The Senegalese Young Surveyors Network was created in 2012 after the Africa Task Force's meeting held in Ghana in October, 2012. After its creation, the network was recognized by the Senegalese national association of surveyors in 2013. Meetings are organized almost once in a month. The Senegalese network comprises about 300 members from different bodies of the surveying profession. There are 16 young survey Engineers, around 70 technicians and the others are students in surveying or Geomatics.

4.3.1 Challenges

Challenges of the Senegalese Young Surveyors Network is categorized into

Short term challenges:

- i. The integration of young people in professional circuits
- ii. The design and implementation of projects submitted to the expertise of qualified members
- iii. Training and capacity building
- iv. Internships and jobs in foreign countries
- v. Referral to funding agencies
- vi. Partnerships with training institutes, businesses, the government of Senegal, NGOs.

Long term challenges:

- i. Relevance of the professional bodies
- ii. The consistent increase in the number of qualified surveyors and GIS specialists in the country;
- iii. The reduction in the unemployment rate;
- iv. Building a balanced and prosperous society.

4.3.2 Motivation for YSN Activities

Activities of the Senegalese Young Surveyors Networks are encouraged by its members from various associations, the national organisation of Surveyors in Senegal and the help of some of registered surveyors.

4.3.3 The Senegalese Perspective of an African YSN

YSN in Africa is the beginning of a crucial partnership of surveyors in Africa. This will be a more robust platform to channel the benefits of the FIG and the FIG YSN to its members, and as well to institute collaboration in future activities.

5. THE NEED FOR AN AFRICAN YSN

The distinctiveness of the African nation necessitates an African perspective in solving African related issues and challenges. Like the European young surveyors network of the FIG that serves as an European umbrella of Young Surveyors and Young Surveyors Networks in Europe, thereby leveraging potentials across its member, and acting with the capacity of a more robust network of Young Surveyors to carryout activities with such strength and

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proress, there is need for such a larger network of African Young Surveyors, to handle the specific need which does not exclude the following:

- Uniting its country based Young Surveyors Networks to produce a synergy in achieving its aims and that of the FIG,
- Providing a platform where voices of countries with no Young Surveyors Networks could heard,
- Representing and replicating the FIG definition of Surveyors within Africa.

Other reasons that necessitates the need for an African Young Surveyors Network includes the following, as obtained from the survey conducted:

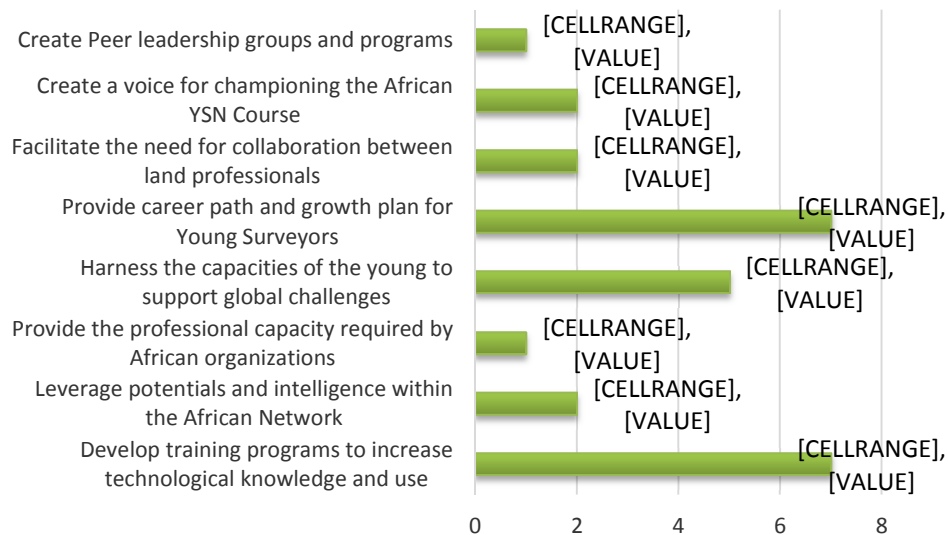


Figure 3: Core Goals of African YSN.

The above figure shows the priority given to each goal after the selection process by Young Surveyors across Africa, in an attempt to determine a core goal for an African Young Surveyors Network. If the network is to have a one point agenda, from the above, "Providing career path and growth plan for Young Surveyors" and "Developing training programs to increase technological knowledge and use" rank highest amidst the objectives identified to formulate the core goal of an African Young Surveyors Network. The tie between the above objectives is an interesting phenomenon. The result displayed above was from the analysis of responses obtained from responses to a question of "What Should be the core goal of an African YSN?". Furthermore, When each respondent was allowed to add three additional goal to the core objective of an African YSN, the table below shows the analysis of reponses obtained.

From the figure below, 88.89 % of respondents believe that African Young Surveyors Network should be involved in developing training programs to increase technological knowledge and use, while the second tie in the core goal determination got 85.19% votes from respondents of the questionnaire.

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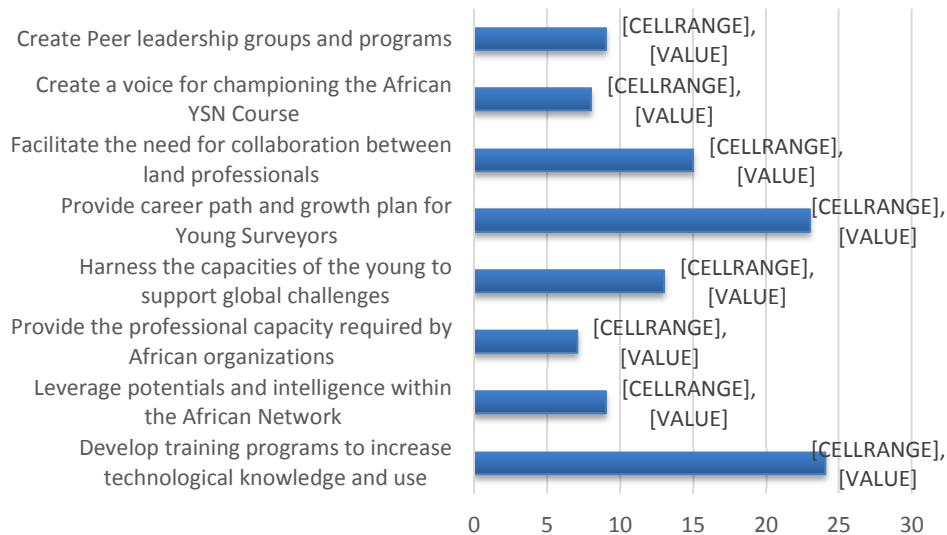


Figure 4: What should be the Priority of African YSN.

6. CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN YOUNG SURVEYORS NETWORKS

A challenge could either be seen as a problem or as an opportunity. Most important is that; a challenge need to be solved. As shown below, 74.07% of African Young Surveyors identified “*Poor funding*” has a challenge in the course of their activities, while only 1 out of the 27 respondents, which amounts for 3.70% believed *Maladministration* is a challenge facing the African Young Surveyors Network.

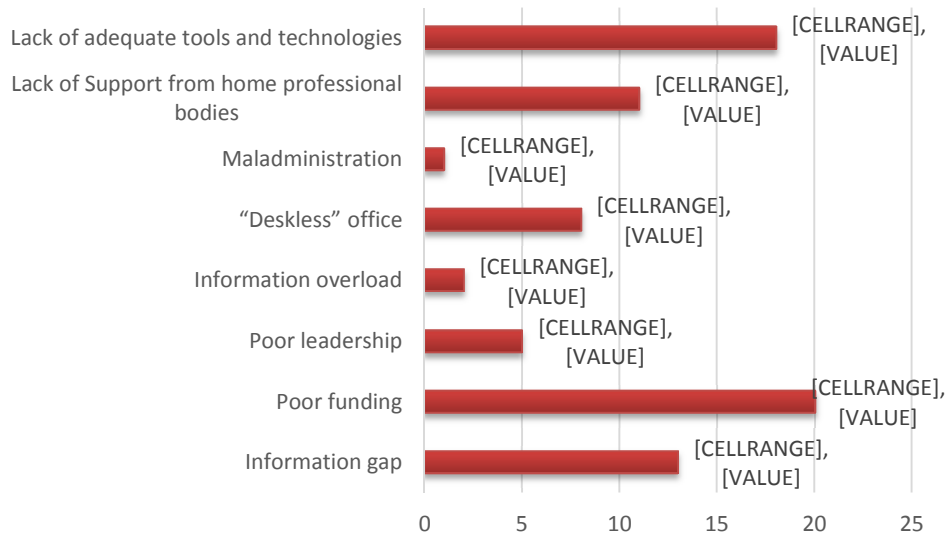


Figure 5: Challenges that affects African Young Surveyors and Young Surveyors Networks.

The above is the result from the analysis carried out on the various challenges faced by Young Surveyors in Africa and Young Surveyors Networks in Africa. ”Poor Funding, Lack of Israel Taiwo, Eric Yeboah, Eshetu Erkihune, Yusuf Aro-Lambo, Adamar Sarr, Banura 9/14 Constance, Chukwubueze Onwuzuligbo, Blessing Umanu. Prospects, Challenges and Responsibilities of Young Surveyors; the African Perspective (7699)

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adequate tools and technologies, and information gap are the most significant, more significant and significant challenges faced by a typical young surveyor network in Africa, while Maladministration ranks lowest amidst the factors that affect a typical YSN in Africa.

6.1 Poor Funding

The FIG Foundation and the local professional bodies are the sources of fund usually explored by Young Surveyors for Young Surveyors initiatives in Africa. Africa has received significant financial support from the FIG and its foundation relatively to other regions. As we expect more from the FIG, and as we scout for more funding opportunities outside Africa, there is need to look inwards and tap the resources within Africa. Taking a clue from the European Network of Young Surveyors, their first European Young Surveyors meeting held in Portugal 2013 was proudly supported by the FIG, FIG Young Surveyors Network, FIG Foundation, Council of European Geodetic Surveyors, and jointly sponsored by several international and European based organisations, such as Trimble, Topcon, Leica, Kadaster, etc. There are vast organisations operating at the level of the African continent and internationally; whose resources need to be explored, or better explored for the purpose of Young Surveyors in Africa and Young Surveyors initiative in Africa.

Hence, the need for a body to represent the voice of African Young Surveyors to explore more sources of funding with the African capacity.

6.2 Other Challenges

Lack of Adequate Tools and Technologies, ranks second amidst the challenges affecting activities of Young Surveyors. A joint and more robust effort is needed towards knowledge sharing and dissemination within this Africa. Information gap as well is a characteristics of the African Young Surveyors Network. There is need to saddle a body with the responsibility of disseminating information to the Young Surveyors and Young Surveyors Networks in Africa. The current strength of the African Young Surveyors may seem significant, but it still does not represent the true strength of Africa, considering the number of countries yet to have representations in Young Surveyors events as revealed by the results of this survey and the number of prospective Young Surveyors in Africa. The present structure of Young Surveyors Networks in Africa, could be seen as a factor that creates such information gap. It is high time the African Young Surveyors Networks had a platform to relate and share information.

Lack of support from home professional bodies is as well a significant challenge faced by the African Network of Young Surveyors. Despite the support acclaimed to be received from local organisations, the survey reveals that there are significant cases where supports are not received from some local professional bodies.

7. OUR ABILITIES

In order to proffer solutions to the above stated needs, and challenges, Young Surveyors across Africa were requested to identify assistance they could render to support the objectives of the FIG and that of the FIG-YSN first locally and then in the continental level of Africa. The below is an analysis of response obtained from the research:

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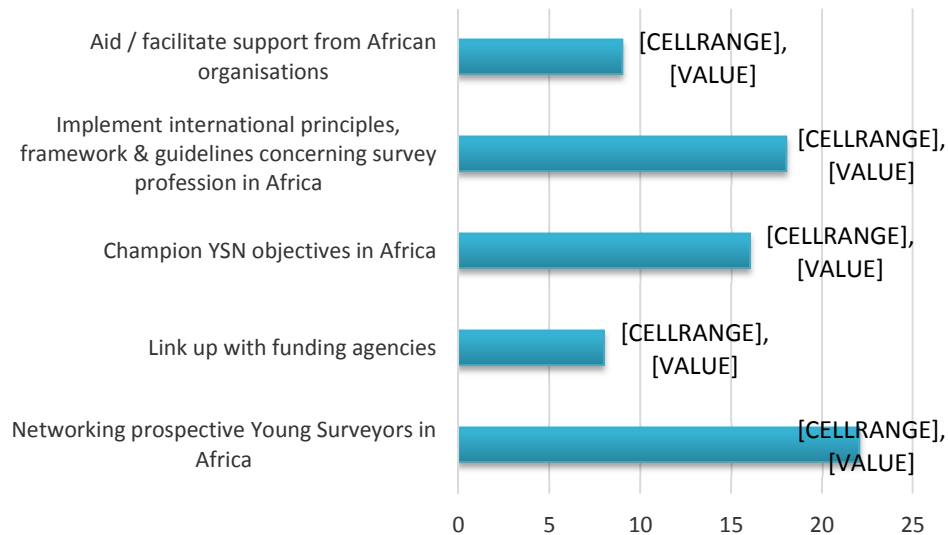


Figure 6: Supports to be rendered by African Young Surveyors

The above 81.48% of respondents ready to Network Young Surveyors in Africa indicates a possibility in the future expansion of the Network, and a need for future collaboration between the networks. “Implementing international principles, frameworks and guidelines concerning survey profession in Africa” and “Championing YSN objective in Africa” rank next as supports ready to be rendered by Young Surveyors in Africa. This is an urgent issue considering the various differences observed in survey practice and land management internationally and locally in African countries. Currently, the help of Young Surveyors in Africa are needed to help the society by supporting the FIG and the FIG-YSN in solving tenure security related challenges. There are other organizations with the financial capacity to support Young Surveyors activities of the African Nation, and some other organisations with the need of services of Young Surveyors and Young Surveyors Network, such as Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) of the UN Habitat, civil societies, communities and individuals. When the needs of this entities are met, the organisations and individuals may then be happy to engage the challenges of the network and thereafter support initiatives that would improve the networks.

8. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, Young Surveyors Networks in Africa is not a moribund society, yet, there is need for improvement within the Networks. The need to fortify the prospective Young Surveyors Networks and the existing networks within the African nation is indispensable. Moreover, as observed during the data gathering process of this paper, the African Young Surveyors network was a welcomed idea by all and sundry that had access to the idea. Challenges were identified, such as pertaining to larger networks of young minds, and such ones peculiar to Africans. Yet, the advantages of having a more robust network of African Young Surveyors far exceeds the reasons why an African Young Surveyors Network should not exist.

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This is a call to obligation, collaborative participation, increased and in-depth integration within and between “YSN Africa”. The success stories of some networks are the challenges currently faced by some other networks. The need for connection and collaboration cannot be overemphasized.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research carried out and the results obtained, the following recommendations are made to further the objectives of the FIG and that of the FIG-YSN in Africa, and beyond:

- Emphasis is to be laid on the formation, inauguration and recognition of Young Surveyors Networks in countries without Young Surveyors Networks at FIG delegates meetings.
- There is need for the creation of an African Young Surveyors Network, which should be saddled with objectives not excluding the below outlined, in the following order of significance from most to least significant:
 - Develop training programs to increase technological knowledge and use within the African Network
 - Provide career path and growth plan for Young Surveyors within Africa
 - Provide the professional capacity required by African organizations
 - Facilitate the need for collaboration between land professionals within Africa
 - Harness the capacities of the African Young Surveyors to support global challenges
 - Leverage potentials and intelligence within the African Network
 - Create Peer leadership groups and programs
 - Create a voice for championing the African YSN Course
- Member associations of the FIG are to be advised to have YSN delegates as recommended in the report of the 2011-2014 report of the immediate past chair of the FIG Young Surveyors Network.

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