



1st Annual EmpowerRise NextGen Summit 2026

Post-Event Narrative Report

Organization: EmpowerRise Hub

Project Title: 1st Annual EmpowerRise NextGen Summit 2026

Theme: Youth Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment

Date of Event: 15 June 2026

Reporting Date: July 5, 2026

Location: Falco Inn, Mogadishu, Somalia

1. Executive Summary

On 15 June 2026, EmpowerRise Hub successfully organized the first Annual EmpowerRise NextGen Summit at Falco Inn in Mogadishu. The summit brought together young entrepreneurs, banks, government institutions, universities, private companies, development partners, and civil society organizations to discuss the future of youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment in Somalia.

The summit created an important platform where young people could directly engage with financial institutions, policymakers, and business leaders to discuss the barriers affecting youth-led enterprises and identify practical solutions.

The event focused on six major themes:

- Entrepreneurship Education
- Financial Inclusion
- Enterprise Development
- Policy and Governance
- Disability Inclusion
- Private Sector Engagement

More than 150 participants attended the summit alongside over 10 expert speakers and institutional representatives.

One of the highlights of the summit was a young female entrepreneur who showcased and sold homemade air fresheners, perfumes, and body fragrances produced from locally sourced materials. Her success demonstrated how providing market opportunities can immediately benefit young entrepreneurs.

2. Background and Rationale

Somalia has one of the youngest populations in Africa, with many young people turning to entrepreneurship because of limited employment opportunities. However, youth entrepreneurs continue to face significant challenges, including:

- Limited access to finance



- Lack of business development support
- Weak institutional linkages
- Limited practical entrepreneurship education
- Few opportunities to connect with investors and financial institutions

The EmpowerRise NextGen Summit was established to respond to these challenges by creating a platform where young entrepreneurs and key stakeholders could meet, exchange ideas, build partnerships, and explore practical solutions for strengthening Somalia's entrepreneurship ecosystem.

3. Objectives

The summit aimed to:

- Strengthen Somalia's youth entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- Improve access to finance for young entrepreneurs.
- Promote dialogue between youth and financial institutions.
- Enhance entrepreneurship education and practical business skills.
- Promote inclusive entrepreneurship, including disability inclusion.
- Identify policy gaps affecting youth-led enterprises.

4. Key Thematic Areas

4.1 Entrepreneurship Education and Human Capital Development

Participants discussed the gap between academic education and labour market needs. Speakers emphasized the importance of integrating entrepreneurship, innovation, and practical business skills into educational institutions.

Special attention was also given to disability inclusion. Participants agreed that education and entrepreneurship opportunities should be accessible to everyone from the beginning rather than treating inclusion as an afterthought.

4.2 Financial Inclusion and Access to Capital

This session focused on one of the biggest barriers facing young entrepreneurs.

Young entrepreneurs highlighted challenges such as:

- Lack of collateral
- No credit history
- Difficulty accessing loans
- Limited financial literacy

Financial institutions explained the risks associated with lending to new businesses.

Participants recommended:

- Youth-friendly SME loan products
- Financial literacy programmes
- Continuous engagement between banks and youth-led businesses
- Stronger trust-building initiatives



4.3 Governance and Enabling Environment

Government representatives and entrepreneurs discussed policy and regulatory challenges affecting small businesses.

Key recommendations included:

- Simplifying business registration
- Improving coordination among government institutions
- Supporting micro and small enterprises through fair taxation
- Creating more youth-friendly business policies

4.4 Private Sector Development and Business Growth

Private sector experts shared practical advice on:

- Branding
- Marketing
- Supply chain management
- Procurement
- Digital commerce
- Business growth strategies

The session focused on practical experiences rather than theory.

4.5 Applied Entrepreneurship and Market Linkages

A major highlight of the summit was the participation of a young female entrepreneur who exhibited homemade perfumes, air fresheners, and body fragrances produced from locally available materials.

She shared her entrepreneurial journey, including the challenges of raising capital, expanding production, and reaching customers.

During the summit, participants purchased her products directly, demonstrating how entrepreneurship events can create immediate market opportunities while building confidence and visibility for young businesses.

5. Key Results and Outputs

The summit achieved the following results:

- 150 young entrepreneurs, students, and innovators participated.
- More than 10 expert speakers and institutional representatives contributed.
- Stronger dialogue was established between financial institutions and young entrepreneurs.
- Increased understanding of SME financing and investment readiness.
- Greater awareness of disability inclusion in entrepreneurship.
- Real-time market opportunities were created through direct product sales by youth entrepreneurs.



6. Operational Challenges

Several challenges were experienced during implementation.

Venue Capacity

More than 200 people registered for the summit, but the venue could only accommodate approximately 150 participants.

Extended Sessions

High audience engagement resulted in discussions and question-and-answer sessions exceeding the planned schedule.

Limited Resources

Resources for professional media coverage and post-event business incubation were limited.

Funding Constraints

Additional financial support will be required to expand future editions of the summit.

7. Lessons Learned

Two major lessons emerged from the summit.

First, young entrepreneurs highly value direct engagement with banks, government institutions, and the private sector. These interactions help build trust and strengthen partnerships.

Second, entrepreneurship programmes become more impactful when they include real market opportunities rather than focusing only on training. The successful sales made during the summit demonstrated the importance of linking learning with business opportunities.

8. Conclusion

The 1st Annual EmpowerRise NextGen Summit 2026 successfully strengthened collaboration among young entrepreneurs, financial institutions, government agencies, universities, and the private sector.

The summit provided a practical platform for dialogue, learning, networking, and market access while highlighting the continuing need to improve access to finance, entrepreneurship education, and inclusive economic opportunities.

EmpowerRise Hub remains committed to expanding this initiative into an annual national platform that supports innovation, inclusive economic growth, and sustainable youth entrepreneurship throughout Somalia.

8.1 Acknowledgement

The successful implementation of the summit was made possible through the exclusive Lead Sponsorship of **SomBank**.

SomBank's generous support enabled the successful delivery of the summit and ensured free participation for youth entrepreneurs, students, innovators, and key stakeholders. In addition to its financial contribution, SomBank actively participated in the summit through senior leadership



engagement, sharing valuable insights on SME financing, financial inclusion, and investment readiness.

EmpowerRise Hub sincerely appreciates SomBank's commitment to empowering Somali youth and strengthening the country's entrepreneurship ecosystem. This partnership serves as a strong model for future collaboration between the private sector and youth-led development initiatives.

Level	Indicator	Baseline	Results Achieved
Impact	A stronger youth entrepreneurship ecosystem in Somalia	High youth unemployment and weak institutional linkages	Improved cross-sector ecosystem dialogue established; inclusion principles introduced
Outcome 1	Active youth participation in entrepreneurship dialogue	Very limited structured engagement platforms	150 young people directly engaged in the summit programme
Outcome 2	Stronger engagement between youth and the financial sector	Weak youth-finance linkages	Active banking industry dialogue established, with SomBank as lead sponsor
Outcome 3	Inclusion integrated into the entrepreneurship agenda	Limited disability inclusion in programming	Universal design and inclusion principles introduced into summit design and discussion
Output 1	Multi-stakeholder summit convened	No previous EmpowerRise NextGen Summit conducted	1 summit held with 150+ participants and 10+ experts
Output 2	Real-time market linkage for youth enterprises	No structured market exposure for youth	Sales generated during the event by a young female entrepreneur and other youth-led businesses

10. Recommendations

- Strengthen youth access to finance through youth-friendly financial products and startup support.
- Establish business incubation, mentorship, and post-summit enterprise support programmes.
- Integrate practical entrepreneurship, innovation, and financial literacy into education curricula.



- Strengthen collaboration between government, financial institutions, the private sector, and development partners.
- Promote inclusive entrepreneurship by ensuring equal participation for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups.

Appendix A: Media Coverage and Online Publications

List the media outlets and include the links:

- **Kalsan TV** – Facebook Post: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1BTRnx9rkr/>
- **SomScreen TV** – Facebook Post: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1Bkryucugm/>
- **Business Connect Somalia** – Facebook Post:
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1Gc8kf9ePM/>
- **Hogal** – Facebook Post: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/14jwL9M2Ak/>
- **EmpowerRise Hub** – Facebook Post:
<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1EZjxNFxTF/>
- **SomBank** – Facebook Post: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/194XDXZkCo/>