



## Research Report

# Study on current youths unemployment trends and sustainable livelihood options to generate evidence for policy advocacy



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Findings and conclusions presented in this report reflect a summary of consultations with the communities in the target areas, ActionAid International Uganda and its partners, and other key stakeholders, complemented by the review of project-related documents.

## **Disclaimer**

The views contained in this report do not necessarily represent those of ActionAid International Uganda and its entities. All reasonable precaution has been taken by the report editor to verify the information contained in this publication. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or extracted lessons expressed in this report are those of the author.

### **The document must be attributed as:**

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**Cover picture taken by Okoth Dean Perez** (*Youths focus group discussion, Pakwach Town Council, Pakwach District, 19 September 2022*).

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## Glossary of Acronyms

<b>AADK</b>	ActionAid Denmark
<b>AAIU</b>	ActionAid International Uganda
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GoU</b>	Government of Uganda
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>SACCOs</b>	Savings and Credit Cooperative Society
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>SPA</b>	Strategic Partnership Agreement
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference

# Executive Summary

## Strategic Partnership Agreement Project, West Nile and Northern Uganda.

### Project Background and Context

ActionAid International Uganda (AAIU) with funding from ActionAid Denmark (AADK) is implementing “Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)”, a four-year project (2022–2025) in West Nile and Northern Uganda, aimed at ensuring young people, especially young, marginalised women, enjoy basic human and democratic rights, improved livelihoods, resilience, and protection including in climate disaster and protracted crisis contexts in Uganda. This study was conducted under objective 2 which looks at young women and marginalised people in West Nile and Northern Regions enjoying improved sustainable livelihoods through climate accountable Governments, communities, and a green private sector. The study looked at current Youths Unemployment Trends and Sustainable Livelihood Options to generate evidence on policy advocacy.

### Description of the assignment

The study ascertained the current youths unemployment trends, and sustainable livelihood options, which findings and recommendations were supplemented by other secondary data on West Nile and Northern Regions as evidence for advocacy on sustainable livelihood options. Aligned to the AAIU’s Institutional Outcome 4, the study will support the SPA project to ensure that women and young people have improved opportunities for decent work and livelihoods. The overall objective of the study was to provide evidence for policy advocacy on youths unemployment and sustainable livelihood options for young people especially women and marginalised groups in West Nile and Northern regions.

### Research Methodology

This research adopted a cross-sectional study using mixed methods approach. The choice was because mixed methods meaningfully integrate qualitative stakeholder engagement methods with quantitative outcome-based oriented approaches to provide a rigorous methodological foundation. The mixed method approach has a critical role of advancing knowledge of adaptation, implementation, and dissemination which increased the breadth and depth of understanding pertinent issues related to youths unemployment and, thus, supported production

of more valid outcomes. The research questions were developed for the different stakeholders, which questions had quantitative and qualitative statements in line with the study objectives. Desired questions were in the form of “what, why, how” meant to provoke and elicit a broader contextualisation of the underlying factors that determine unemployment. The questionnaires were reviewed and approved by AAU.

## Findings

Youths unemployment rate in the five districts was at 50% with more males at 60% compared to females at 43% primarily because females do not shun or undermine any available job opportunities. There are more unemployed youths in rural areas (64%) compared to 44% in urban because youths in rural areas do not consider farming as a business and which would qualify them to be considered as employed.

### 1) Determinants and drivers of youths unemployment

Findings revealed that several factors determine youths unemployment in the five districts, and these include: existing social norms and repugnant social practices where women do not inherit land and girl-child early marriages which perpetuate unemployment problem since such girls are married off without education; sexual harassment and rape. A female FGD participant in Pakwach observed that “in our culture, a lady is not supposed to own any land. For me, I am the only child to my parents but cannot own land because I am a woman. Several times, my relatives have told me that when my parents die, they will take our land because my land is where I will be married.” There are also restrictive work environments and religiosity where some employers do not allow breastfeeding mothers in workplaces or religious leaders deny Youths work in certain places (bars, alcohol selling businesses). Findings also indicated high level of segregation, discrimination, nepotism and corruption where jobs are ring-fenced for youths from a particular district (other tribes not accepted) and youths asked to pay to be interviewed or enhance their chances of job offers. Family background and poverty was also highlighted because youths from poor backgrounds were denied opportunities regardless of their level of education and those from prominent families were given preference or favoured. Youths who failed to pay bribes were denied jobs which reinforced poverty for these youths and their family persisting to the next generation.



Other determinants included negative mindsets and attitudes of Youths since they shun certain jobs (agriculture, armed forces) as not classy or opportunities in areas outside their places of origin. Some youths simply walked out of jobs alleging low pay, unfriendly/bad working conditions, overworking or job not good enough. Political affiliation and reward where some youths were openly denied employment due to their political participation and activism. If a Youths supported another candidate who didn't win an election, the opponent chose to reward those who supported him/her. In some instances, party affiliation played out against youths as political appointees ensured only those who supported their party were rewarded/employed. Lastly, climate change was key because Youths involved in agriculture have had their crops either drying up or flooded by heavy rains resulting in losses to the farmer youths. In some districts, water bodies burst their banks which covered gardens and disrupted business which set Youths back.

## **2) Available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options for young people**

The study established that there are over forty (40) sustainable livelihood options available to the Youths in the five districts. Some options are available but youths are not engaged in due to inadequate information, shun them or simply lack skills/training in that area. In terms of ranking based on scores by youths, the top twenty options were crop farming, retail trade/shop (general merchandise), livestock keeping, poultry keeping, financial services (mobile money and agent banking), salon services/beauty parlour, charcoal selling, firewood selling, transport services (motorcycle/bicycle), restaurant and hotel, tailoring, brewing and selling alcohol/local brew, market vending, baking (cakes, pancakes, cookies, chapatti), brick making, building and construction services, food vending along roadsides, bar waiter/waitress, carpentry and joinery and metal works and welding.

## **3) Options and Strategies for livelihood diversification among youth**

The main formal and informal livelihood options for Youths included 'traditional' options including crop farming, retail business (general merchandise), livestock and poultry keeping. Other options in addition to what youths already engaged in were crop farming, retail business (general merchandise and wholesaling), transport (motorcycle/bicycle), salon/barbershop, bakery, poultry and livestock keeping, market vending, financial services (mobile money, agent banking), restaurant/food vending, gambling and sports betting, brick making, tailoring,

borrowing from friends and relative and charcoal selling. Others included handcraft making (weaving mats, shoes and baskets), casual works (digging, porter work at construction sites), collecting and selling firewood, fish processing (smoking, sun drying, frying) and selling, vehicle and motorcycle repairs and mechanics, Agro-input dealer (fertilizers, tools, seeds), agro-processor (milling cereals), cutting and selling grass, quarrying and stone works for builders, sand mining, gathering and selling wild vegetables and kitchen gardening.

#### 4) Difficulties faced by the Youths in the labour market

This research found that there were difficulties faced by the Youths in the labour market both formal and informal. Findings showed youths had mental health and suicidal tendencies, exacerbated by COVID-19. Youths testified experiencing increased mental health cases which led some to think of suicide due to failure to get a job or mockery from community members. The problem of Drug and alcoholism was due to frustration resulting from failure or inability to get jobs, leading youths to resort to drug abuse and alcoholism with attendant consequences. Violence and aggressive behaviours were prominent among youths due to economic and psychological interest of work, especially because unemployment represents a deeply frustrating event: unemployment contains a variety of frustrations including economic suffering, perceived unfairness, and decline of social status. Findings showed about eight in ten youths lack employable skills. Employability is a skill that individuals should have to continue their career in life and lack of which is frustratingly burdensome.

Other difficulties included sexual harassment/abuse and rape where perpetrators have become bold and daring. Girls and young women seeking employment have been asked for sex in exchange for favours at interviews or job offers. Some were raped to get appointment letters or salary increases. This was coupled with early marriage and attendant difficulties where Youths involved or affected by early marriages start bearing children without any jobs making them susceptible to many socio-economic conditions including inability to provide for their family resulting in escalation of gender-based violence (GBV). Women in early marriage usually have low educational attainment which reduces their likelihood of entering the labour market and adversely affect the type of jobs they engage in.

There was inadequate access to information about job opportunities due to residence (rural and urban) and other factors. In some cases, malicious people within the districts conceal job opportunities to narrow down competition. Findings indicated about eight in ten youths have either attained primary or secondary

education which does not make them competitive for jobs. This implies that the level of education among Youths was low, yet education is a key determinant factor in exposing one to employment opportunities. The required experience demanded by potential employers for various job openings were disadvantageously too high that they eliminated youths without it.

### **5) Impact of COVID-19 on Youths and their SMEs**

Assessment for impact of COVID-19 included looking into SMEs, SACCOs, Cooperatives and VSLAs. Impact of COVID-19 were both positive and negative with the latter outweighing the former. Positive impacts included tapping into new business opportunities like selling sanitisers, masks and making liquid soap. There was also opening new employment doors where some youths became police constables. Frequent handwashing with soap and water improved hygiene and health status of Youths and community members.

Negative impacts included increased cases of teenage pregnancy, halting of Youths group activities and savings, reduced household income and savings, loss of dignity and increased vulnerability, distorted family harmony which escalated GBV, loss of jobs by youth, collapse of businesses, inability of youths to pay back loans, reduced quality of life by many households and increase in mental health cases.

### **6) Relationship between youths unemployment and labour rights violations**

About eight in ten youths in the research area believed their labour rights were respected, a finding supported by nine in ten Youths who have not left any job because their labour rights were violated. Some case studies indicated labour rights violation coupled with sexual harassment/rape at work. Notwithstanding these exceptions, the proportion of youths who believed their labour rights were respected represented the majority. We can conclude that there was no relationship between youths unemployment and labour rights violations in the research area.

### **7) Relationship between youths unemployment and climate change**

Youths in the research area demonstrated how climate change affected their wellbeing, livelihoods and employment levels. For example, flooding cut off roads, water bodies burst their banks causing outbreak of water borne diseases like cholera and typhoid. Climate change has had a largely devastating impact on the livelihoods of the people. People's gardens, sources of livelihoods, land have been destroyed by flooding waters and in some cases, crops dried up in gardens

resulting in losses to farmers who depended on their gardens. Climate change's negative impacts are being felt through increasing temperatures, weather variability, shifting agroecosystem boundaries, invasive crops and pests, and more frequent extreme weather events. On farms, climate change has reduced crop yields, nutritional quality of major cereals, oilseeds and lowering livestock productivity. We can conclude that there is clear relationship between youths unemployment and climate change.

## Conclusions

Youths unemployment continues to be a serious concern for government, civil society organisations and development agencies. Findings from this research showed that unemployment rate among the Youths remains high. From a policy perspective, this matter must be given the necessary attention because of the adverse effects of unemployment on life satisfaction which increases with the time spent unemployed since the negative effect of the unemployment experience will last for a very long time. Health impacts of unemployment included physical, mental, and psychological well-being, substance abuse, depression in young adults, and suicides implying need for immediate attention. Unemployment is a threat to national security because unemployed individuals sometimes lack food, essential services and means of survival. They often resort to crimes in order to make ends meet. But more importantly, when people's livelihoods are threatened for reasons such as subjugation, injustices, marginalisation, unfairness in resource allocation, it automatically leads to discontents.

Drivers of unemployment have been assessed which require intervention of different stakeholders, and difficulties faced by the Youths in the labour market have been explored. Determinants of unemployment and difficulties faced by the Youths have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and related lockdown measures. Fortunately, there are many available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options for the young people as well as options and strategies for livelihood diversification among Youths that can be exploited to address the unemployment question. The study found no relationship between youths unemployment and labour rights violations. Conversely, there was a clear relationship between youths unemployment and climate change where gardens for Youths either dried up due to drought or destroyed by flood waters. Markets, roads and Youths livelihood options have been messed up by climate change.

## Recommendations

Youths unemployment remains a big challenge for stakeholders. Drivers of unemployment require actions and policy interventions to urgently address them especially since there are available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options matched by options and strategies for livelihood diversification. Care must be taken to avoid difficulties faced by the Youths in the labour market. Consequently, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a) Findings indicated half of the Youths either have no education (3%) or attained primary (47%), with male (2%, 30%) and female (5%, 59%) respectively and 36% attained secondary education; and most of the youths were between 20-29 years. Policymakers to fast-track vocational education training, consistent with skilling Uganda programme, to avert the growing unemployment threat.
- b) Social norms and repugnant cultural practices (e.g., women's cannot inherit land, early child marriages) be eliminated by promoting women's land rights by empowering women to overcome suppression and discrimination rooted in cultural practices and traditions.
- c) Support informal sector with policies focused on a regulatory framework that supports the sector to create secure livelihoods and generate employment opportunities for the unemployed.
- d) Corruption is a huge hindrance to Youths employment. There is need for polices to introduce reorientation programme to educate people on the crucial need to eradicate corruption in all sectors of an economy and socio-political systems.
- e) Eliminate sexual harassment/abuse by strengthening legal, judicial and investigative systems through establishing stronger accountability mechanisms around both prohibition and prevention. This will improve women's entry in labour market to help employers increase the diversity and overall quality of their workforce.
- f) Involve private sector in marketable employable skills development programmes since Uganda is a private sector led economy. Interventions for skilling Youths be designed with private sector or umbrella organisation.
- g) Mental health is increasingly becoming a concern amongst youths. Policymakers and programme planners establish appropriate strategy

for prevention, early detection and management of depression among unemployed young adults including community-based prevention efforts.

- h) Climate change is having devastating impact on youths unemployment through loss of jobs exacerbating the already bad situation. Over the past 20 years, northern Uganda has experienced more frequent and longer-lasting drought conditions. Under a high-emission scenario, monthly annual precipitation is expected to decrease in the northern areas of Uganda. However, increase in rainfall is projected in the region causing heavy precipitation events which are expected to become more intense due to intensified water vapour holding capacity of a warmer atmosphere. This increase could have strong impacts on agriculture, especially with respect to tree crops (e.g., coffee) and post-harvest activities such as drying and storage. The implication of changing rainfall trends/patterns, and more especially increased droughts, will increasingly affect both urban and rural areas of West Nile and Northern Uganda. The Northern region has been experiencing more frequent and longer-lasting droughts than seen historically; with the number of hot days forecasted to increase. This coincides with an increased risk of wildfire events which also affects agriculture. Need to invest in low carbon, climate resilient and sustainable agriculture practices such as agroecology e.g. climate resilient seeds, animals and fodder varieties, developing sustainable rainwater-harvesting systems that can contribute to increased water availability as well as the resilience of water resources, clean energy technology, post-harvest handling, storage, value addition and marketing, afforestation and reforestation, agroforestry, to enhance cycling and integrated pest management and other initiatives to create green jobs to address youths unemployment while eradicating poverty and climate change. Agro-ecological practices involve soil and water management, soil fertility management, weed management, pasture and agricultural land management, crop yield, integrated pest and disease management, ecological land use management, post-harvest handling and storage etc.
- i) Unemployment hasn't affected Youths equally. Policymakers and labour agencies should better address groups of young adults (marginalised women, people with disability) most endangered by unemployment through more effective, inclusive and tailored education (including vocational education, life skills trainings) and labour market policies as well as specific counselling support services for career orientation and development.

# 1 Project Background and Context

## 1.1 Introduction

ActionAid International Uganda (AAIU) with funding from ActionAid Denmark (AADK) is implementing a four-year project (January 2022–December 2025) titled; “Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA)”. The project targets West Nile and Northern Uganda, and aims at ensuring that young people, especially young women living in marginalisation, enjoy basic human and democratic rights, improved livelihoods, resilience, and protection including in climate disaster and protracted crisis contexts in Uganda.

The project is characterised by 3 Specific Objectives and intended to conduct a study under objective 2 which looks at young people especially women and marginalised people in West Nile and Northern Regions enjoying improved sustainable livelihoods through climate accountable Governments, communities, and a green private sector. This research was conducted to study the current Youths unemployment Trends and Sustainable Livelihood Options to generate evidence on policy advocacy.



Youths during FGD in Apac Municipality, 28 September 2022.. Photo credit: Okoth Dean Perez.

## 2 Description of Assignment

### 2.1 Justification

The main intention for conducting this study was to ascertain the current youths unemployment trends, and sustainable livelihood options, upon which the findings and recommendations were supplemented by other secondary information across the country, especially in West Nile and Northern Regions as evidence for advocacy on sustainable livelihood options. There is a very strong alignment of this study and its results to the AAIU's Institutional Outcome 4, which ensures that women and young people have improved opportunities for decent work and livelihoods.

### 2.2 Development Objective

The overall objective of this study was to provide evidence for policy advocacy on youths unemployment and sustainable livelihood options for young people especially women and marginalised groups in West Nile and Northern regions.



Youths in Pakwach Town Council during FGD, 19 September 2022. Photo credit: Okoth Dean Perez.





*Dr. Akite Irine, Gulu University contributing to the discussion during validation workshop at Acholi Inn, 13 April 2023. Photo credit: Andrew Onapito*

## 2.3 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research study were:

- a) To assess the unemployment determinants among the urban and rural Youths in the districts of Nebbi, Amuru, Terego (Imvepi Refugee Settlement), Pakwach and Apac.
- b) To examine the underlying drivers of unemployment among urban and rural Youths in the districts of Nebbi, Amuru, Terego (Imvepi Refugee Settlement), Pakwach and Apac.
- c) To assess the available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options for young people.
- d) To document options and strategies for livelihood diversification among unemployed Youths in the districts of Nebbi, Amuru, Terego (Imvepi Refugee Settlement), Pakwach and Apac.
- e) To assess the difficulties faced by Youths in the labour market both informal and formal sectors
- f) To assess how covid-19 has negatively impacted young people SMEs and suggest possible solutions.
- g) To determine the relationship between youths unemployment and labour rights violations.
- h) To determine the relationship between youths unemployment and climate change.

### 3 Labour Force Trend in Uganda

Projection indicates that Uganda's population by mid-year 2022 is 43.7 million (UBOS, 2022)<sup>1</sup>. More than 75% of Uganda's population is below the age of 30, with the country having one of the highest youths unemployment rates at 13.3%—the number of youths actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labour force—in Sub-Saharan Africa (Among & Munavu, 2019). The UN defines a Youths as someone between the ages of 15 and 24 years old. In Uganda, the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development defines Youths as persons aged between 18–30 years. Globally, Youths experience the highest rate of unemployment of any age group. Unemployment rates are even greater for young women than young men. The ILO estimates that labour force participation for young men aged 15–24 in 2019 was 41.2%, while the rate for young women was only 32.8% and men 49.1% (ILO, 2020). The unemployed are defined as people without work but actively seeking employment and currently available to start work.

Youths unemployment stands at between 64% and 70%, and about 400,000 youths are released annually into the job market to compete for approximately 9,000



Youths of Nebbi Municipality during FGD, 21 September 2022. Photo credit: Okoth Dean Perez.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ubos.org/uganda-profile/>

available jobs (OECD, 2022). In Uganda, National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU), indicates that there is need for more jobs in the market because there are too few jobs for everybody, including between 400,000–800,000 young people who enter the job market annually, for a mere 80,000 new jobs each year. About 30% of the youths who are institutionally qualified in Uganda are unable to find jobs, and the situation is even worse for semi-skilled and unskilled youths. Youths who remain unemployed or underemployed and do not exploit their full potential, are often associated with high incidences of drug abuse and gambling.

Youths unemployment is determined by the overall characteristics of Youths labour markets. A person is considered to work in the informal economy when he/she is engaged in a business or enterprise that does not keep books of account, has less than 10 workers, has no business/enterprise license and works at least four hours a week. Nearly half of Ugandans drop out of school before completing their education. In Uganda in 2019, the population of the Youths was estimated to be 8 million which was 21% of the total population estimated, and about four million Youths were in employment. Of the employed youth, 60% resided in rural areas. Youths in employment refers to the population aged 18–30 years, who are engaged in any activity for at least one (hour) to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit (UBOS,2019).

Over the years, unemployment rate has been steadily increasing for Youths aged 18–30. In 2013, it was 4.5% and 4.9% in 2015 which doubled to 13.3% in 2016/17 compared to the decline in the national unemployment rate to 9.2% in 2016/17 from 11.1% in 2012/13. The Unemployment rate among Youths was 17 percent in 2018/19; with higher unemployment rates among females than males; and it can be said that youths form the bulk of unemployed and are a burden to national security. Inherently, if the rate of unemployment in a country is high, it creates an alarming situation which could promote social vices some of which are kidnapping, armed robbery, child trafficking, Cultism, Drug peddling and ritual killing (Ogbuanya & Ofonmbuk, 2015).

The study by AAIU on current youths unemployment trends and sustainable livelihood options to generate evidence for policy advocacy is one step towards addressing the unemployment question in West Nile and Northern Uganda regions. Findings, conclusions and recommendation will be used in ensuring that women and young people have improved opportunities for decent work and livelihoods.

## 4 Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design

This research adopted a cross sectional study using mixed methods approach to the survey tools, data collection, analysis and reporting. The choice of this approach was because mixed methods meaningfully integrate qualitative stakeholder engagement methods with quantitative outcome-based oriented approaches to provide a rigorous methodological foundation. The mixed method approach has a critical role of advancing knowledge adaptation, implementation, and dissemination. Mixing quantitative and qualitative methods within this study increased the breadth and depth of understanding of the pertinent issues related to the process of knowledge translation and, thus, produced more valid study outcomes.

The research study questions were developed for the different stakeholders interviewed. The questions were both quantitative and qualitative statements designed as open-ended questions in line with the objectives of the study. Desired questions were in the form of “what, why, how” meant to provoke and elicit a broader contextualisation of the underlying factors that determine/drive unemployment, difficulties faced by the Youths in the labour market both informal and both sectors. The questionnaires were reviewed and approved by AAIU.

### 4.2 Sample Size and Method

### 4.3 Quantitative Methods

The study aimed at Youths between 18–35<sup>2</sup> years but outliers like Youths (below 18 years) who are household heads were included. Population data for the National Population and Housing Census 2014 was used to determine number of youths in the four districts but also used the UNCHR (2020C) data for Terego-Imvepi Refugee Settlement, resulting in total derived population of 273,800<sup>3</sup>. The systematic sampling method was used. For each selected youth, s/he was required to consent to take part in the study before the interview took place. If the selected Youths did not consent, the next Youths was used for the survey. If the next was not available, a replacement was provided by the supervisor in

2 *In Uganda, the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development defines Youths as persons aged between 18-30 years, and thus the legal range. However, for this study, the age range was adjusted to include Youths at 35.*

3 *Derived Youths population as per Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016, The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Main Report, Kampala, Uganda*

consultation with the Team Leader. The research used the Taro Yamane (1967) formula. The Yamane formula is given below:

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1 - p)N}{Z^2 p(1 - p) + N(e)^2}$$

Whereby;

**N** = computed total number of Youths (273,800)

**e** = Level of precision or acceptable error which is assumed to be 0.04.

**Z** = Value of the standard normal distribution given the chosen confidence level of 95% such that z= 1.96 at 95% level of confidence).

**P** = Proportion of Youths in the five districts estimated=0.5

**n**= Calculated sample size for the youths (599).

For non-response estimation, we adjusted sample size by taking the minimum response rate (10.3%), to arrive at the calculated sample size to 661 Youths i.e., 599+62 (allowance for non-response rate). Planned sample size was 661 (Apac 86, Pakwach 79, Nebbi 140, Amuru 90 and Terego 163) but achieved 612 (Apac 86, Pakwach 64, Nebbi 133, Amuru 76 and Terego 253) translating to 93% of target. The research achieved fewer actual sample size than planned most key informants (KIs) were unavailable or had conflicting schedules. Secondly, it was due to theoretical saturation - the point at which gathering more data about a theoretical construct reveals no new properties, nor yields any further theoretical insights about the emerging grounded theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

**Table 1: Sample size of Youths in the Five districts**

District	Total Population <sup>4</sup>	Proportion of total Population	Planned Sample Size	Actual achieved
Apac	78,236	29%	189	86
Pakwach	32,856	12%	79	64
Nebbi	57,870	21%	140	133
Amuru	37,399	14%	90	76
Terego (Imvepi Refugee Settlement)	67,439 <sup>5</sup>	25%	163	253
<b>Total</b>	<b>273,800</b>		<b>661</b>	<b>612</b>

Source: Field data Collection, 2022

<sup>4</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016, The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Main Report, Kampala, Uganda

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR, 2020c

Terego-Imvepi refugee settlement had more youths (41%) participating in the research followed by Nebbi (22%) and lowest was in Pakwach (11%). More youths in urban (67%) participated as compared to rural (33%) while more female (58%) responded compared to male (42%). The mix between gender, residence (urban and rural), host communities and refugees therefore were reasonable to enable decipher the constituent components under investigation for this study.

## 4.4 Qualitative Methods

The research team applied purposive sampling methods in identifying respondents for KIIs, FGDs, and Case studies. Purposive sampling was 'used to select respondents that were most likely to yield appropriate and useful information' (Kelly, 2010) and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that use limited research resources effectively. Purposive sampling strategies move away from any random form of sampling and are strategies to make sure that specific kinds of cases of those that could possibly be included are part of the final sample in the research study. The reasons for adopting a purposive strategy are based on the assumption that, given the aims and objectives of the study, specific kinds of people held different and important views about the ideas and issues at question and therefore needed to be included in the sample (Mason, 2002), (Robinson, 2013). The categories of qualitative data collection methods and sample size employed include:

### 4.4.1 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

For KIIs, the plan was to interview 75 respondents but achieved 26 (Female 7, Male 19) because some declined to be interviewed or demanded for facilitation while others were unavailable. These KIIs were identified together with the project team because they were thought to hold "special or expert knowledge" with reference to youths unemployment and topics at hand (Taylor & Blake, 2015). Engaging with these KIIs helped the research team gain "insider" knowledge, including on sensitive topics (youths, marginalised works, people with disabilities-PwDs). These KIIs, by the nature of their positions within the community and with Youths had rich information connected to current youths unemployment trends and sustainable livelihoods options which enabled researchers obtain greater access to communities and information.

### 4.4.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs helped to explore why some youths are employed while others are unemployed. We conducted a total 19 FGDs, of which 13 were mixed groups (68%), three (3, 16%) were men only, three (3, 16%) were women only, distributed as Nebbi

(9, 47%), Pakwach (2, 11%), Apac (2, 11%), Amuru (3, 16%) and Terego (3, 16%) against a plan of 15 distributed 3 per district. Of the participants, 380 (66%) were female and 196 (34%) were male. The FGDs generated information relating to current youths unemployment trends and sustainable livelihood options and strategies. A discussion guide was used as a checklist to facilitate the discussions, and the process was guided by a moderator who ensured the whole process was participatory to minimise few members dominating the discussions. Summaries were generated that contained key points that emerged from the FGDs and community sessions and integrated into the report alongside respective data points.

#### 4.4.3 Recruitment

All the seven (07) data collectors used in data collection were identified and recruited by Primehouse because of their past experience in research and evaluation assignments and were familiar with quantitative and qualitative research methods (had previously used with good results), bilingual (English and local languages) capable of explaining the study to participants in either English or local languages through a plain language statement. Data collectors had the requisite relevant academic qualification and experience which coupled to undertake this research study and generation of this report.

#### 4.4.4 Training and Preparation

The training included the importance of data quality and the consequences of poor-quality data, main purpose of the research, the study specific objectives, proposed research methodology, data collection tools/methods, participants' sampling, duties and responsibilities of an interviewer, ethical considerations during the study, data collectors' relationship with supervisors and prohibitions for the interviewers. The training was conducted by Primehouse Team Leader supported by the firm's M&E Lead, Design and Implementation Officer; and it lasted 2 days. The trainees comprised of seven data collectors designated to Youths survey (quantitative survey), FGDs, KIs and case studies. After the training, a pre-test of the questionnaire and a dry run on the Kobo Collect for Youths participant survey was conducted. Areas which were unclear, confusing or needed multiple selection of responses were identified and corrected appropriately. Primehouse M&E led the process of improving and ensuring uniformity in understanding the Youths participant questionnaire. Typing errors were corrected before the questionnaire was loaded onto the Kobo Collect for field work. Data collection run between Monday, 19th-29<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

#### 4.4.5 Implementation and Quality Assurance

For close supervision and quality assurance, the fieldwork was managed to ensure valid findings. Field data collection phase was directly supervised by the Team Leader. This ensured that personal interviewers, telephone interviewers, surveys and techniques communicated in the training sessions were implemented in the field. The Team Leader checked to see that field procedures were being properly followed. Each data collector's daily targets were checked to ensure that interviewing schedule was being met.

At the end of each day or activity, completed work was assessed and reviewed and necessary consultation or corrections made. These daily briefing sessions ensured lessons were clearly documented during actual data collection and lessons learnt compiled, discussed and documented for positive (successes) or negative (failures). Supervisors ensured proper code of conduct and ethical behaviour was exhibited in the entire process with mutual respect given the sensitivity of the assignment (because it involves young people, women and PwDs).

During fieldwork, completed and reviewed datasets were sent to the central server for safe custody and storage, and this process was repeated daily. However, in some cases due to unstable internet connectivity, this was not possible and relay of data to the server was delayed after review and confirmation. The Design and Implementation Team checked progress with data collection and to confirm whether deliverables were being met.

At field level, the supervisors conducted field support and troubleshooting which was particularly useful for personal interviews. These daily supervisions allowed supervisors to deal with some questions by asking interviewers, who were still able to remember the interviews, about facts that may allow errors to be identified and perhaps corrected. When fieldwork was completed, an in-house editing team was setup to edit, clean and code data collected and rigorously investigated the results of data collection.

When editing data was completed, the quality control team reviewed the edited work in readiness for coding. Careful editing made the coding job easier, which was an important stage of data management because codes represent the meaning in the data. Assigning numerical symbols permitted the transfer of data from questionnaires to a computer.



#### 4.4.6 Secondary Data

Document review enabled the study team to gain insight on trends, determinants/drivers of youths unemployment in Uganda, difficulties faced by the youths, available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options for young people, options and strategies for diversification but with specific reference to West Nile and Northern Uganda. Document reviews also helped assess how COVID-19 impacted the youth. Key documents reviewed are in the reference section of the report.

#### 4.4.7 Stakeholder Validation Workshops

Workshops for the validation of the draft findings constituted an important avenue for not only triangulating the information collected but also a source of additional data for the finalisation of the report. Three validation workshops were held – two were virtual for internal stakeholders within ActionAid International Uganda. The first was held on 29 November 2022 and the second on 20 January 2023. The third workshop was held on 13 April 2023 in Gulu City which was attended by Youths activists, district and sub-county local government officials and political leaders, civil society organisations, representatives of cultural elders, sub-county chiefs, members staff from ActionAid International Uganda, academicians and selected members of the public.



Youths in Pakwach Town Council during FGD, 19 September 2022. Photo credit: Okoth Dean Perez.

#### 4.4.8 Data Analysis

The research data collection used the computer assisted personal interviewing technique with Kobo Collect platform. All the quantitative data collected was downloaded from the server in Comma Separated Value (\*.CSV), exported to Excel for further cleaning, labelling and data analysis. Cleaned data was exported into SPSS for additional analysis and quantitative data analysis included descriptive and frequency counts. To maximise the quality of data and mitigate the risks and constraints inherent in each individual data collection tool, several review and affirmation processes were used to check and clean the data. Data analysis followed the SPA specific objectives and areas of disaggregation {district, gender, residence (rural and urban)}. Different types of quantitative data analysis were conducted and included frequency tabulations (or other relevant high level statistical analysis).

Analysis of qualitative data considered KIs, FGDs, Case Studies, and Documents Reviews which were analysed manually by organising and transcribing, cleaning and labelling data. Range of responses were categorised to identify recurrent themes. This enabled the team to draw out patterns from concepts and insights. Summaries were generated that contained key points that emerged from interview sessions and integrated into the report alongside respective data points. As for the report preparation, a core team of professionals led by the Expert Advisory Team compiled, proof-read, and generated both the draft and final evaluation report.

#### 4.5 Limitations of the research study

A number of limitations were experienced during the research process and some are as outlined below:

- Competing schedules where most of the key informants were busy or engaged with prescheduled work – whilst others were out of their workstations. This was prominent in Nebbi (a meeting convened with other districts including Zombo and Pakwach on interview day), Apac (interviewees were busy with distribution of bicycles to residents) and Terego (officers work in Terego but reside in Arua). This was overcome by conducting phone interviews.
- Demand for facilitation from respondents—respondents in all the districts expected either refreshments or cash reward. This was difficult

in the beginning phase but the research team devised a strategy of informing respondents at the beginning of interviews of their voluntary participation and those who consented continued, while some walked away. However, AAIU later provided facilitation in some areas.

- Long distances between interview places – interview places were far apart leading to loss of time during travel between such places. This was however worsened by the poor road network and terrain because of bad weather. We however had to work long hours, thanks to the patience of the respondents who uncomplainingly waited for the research team.
- Poor road network because of heavy rains which washed away some bridges – This made connection to the places difficult, resulting in delayed start or end to interviews. Movement to and from Terego was so difficult due to poor marram road surface while some bridges were washed away by floods. The team overcame this by using 4WD vehicle. Unfortunately, this resulted in mechanical breakdown of the vehicle.
- Poor network in some rural areas which led to delay in capturing Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates and hence delaying of interviews and start of next sessions. To overcome this, the team had to save the interview with inaccurate coordinates so as to capture responses from next respondents in the queue. This was mainly experienced in Amuru and Terego.
- Proper directions to interview sites – due to newness and lack of familiarity in the area, finding locations was a challenge especially because respondents were gathered in one place, sometimes without specifics. The team used google maps to locate these places and kept asking from passers-by and bona fides of the respective areas.

#### 4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical conduct is the cornerstone of any research undertaking and requires practitioners to abide by certain standard practices. We confirm that this research adhered to ethical requirements. All Researchers and Data Collectors underwent training in ethics related to conducting research on human subjects to ensure they adhered to principles of research ethics.

In adherence to research ethics, only consenting youth, key informants and participants in FGDs participated in the research. Recruited participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. An information sheet and consent form were provided for each study participant. The following Ethical standards and considerations guided this research:

- We requested for and were provided introductory letters from AAIU to the leaders in the five districts stating that Primehouse was contracted to undertake the research study on youths unemployment in their respective districts and for any help to be extended to them.
- Primehouse abided by the Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy and all its consultants assigned on the research were briefed about the same, signed a copy in acknowledgment.
- Training of Data Collectors was conducted by Primehouse to explain the main objectives of the research, demonstrate use of approved research tools and instruments, transfer knowledge and learning on use of appropriate methodology.
- Pre-testing of the tools was done to ensure Data Collectors understood the tools and unclear aspects of the research were clarified.
- Consent forms were read word for word to the sampled group or individual participants (either in English or local language) to ensure a common understanding of the study objectives, requirements, risks and benefits. Only individuals who consented were interviewed. Those who did not consent were thanked by the interviewer and let go.
- All the consent forms used were translated into local languages at point of interview, for those who didn't understand English.
- The principle of respect for one another was observed for Data Collectors and encouraged to maintain discipline.

The leadership, employees or anyone associated with Primehouse Consulting Group declared that there was no conflict of interest whether directly or otherwise that prevented them from fulfilling the objectives of the assignment.

## 5 Findings: Overview

This chapter presents the main findings that emerged from the research and is structured along the research objectives. First, we outline the summary findings regarding the proportion of Youths who are unemployed:

### 5.1 Summary of findings

The table below summarises the findings for all indicators both at goal and outcomes levels.

**Table 2: Rate of unemployment amongst youths in West Nile and Northern Uganda**

Employment status?	District					Residence		Gender		Average
	Nebbi	Amuru	Terego	Pakwach	Apac	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	
Permanent and open-ended Employment	1.5%	1.3%	2.4%	4.7%	4.7%	1.7%	4.5%	4.6%	1.1%	<b>2.6%</b>
Casual Employment	23.3%	18.4%	10.7%	18.8%	20.9%	13.4%	23.4%	18.5%	15.3%	<b>16.7%</b>
Not Employed	31.6%	23.7%	60.9%	42.2%	29.1%	50.9%	28.4%	33.6%	50.7%	<b>43.5%</b>
Looking for Employment	6.8%	2.6%	5.1%	14.1%	5.8%	5.6%	7.5%	6.2%	6.2%	<b>6.2%</b>
Self Employed	30.1%	51.3%	19.8%	18.8%	33.7%	25.8%	31.8%	32.8%	24.1%	<b>27.8%</b>
Employed and paid less than I deserve	6.0%	2.6%	1.2%	1.6%	4.7%	2.7%	3.5%	4.2%	2.0%	<b>2.9%</b>
Domestic employment (maid/ houseboy)	0.8%	0	0	0	1.2%	0	1.0%	0	0.6%	<b>0.3%</b>
Total of Unemployed youth	61.7%	73.7%	34.0%	43.8%	65.1%	43.6%	64.2%	60.2%	43.1%	50.3%

Source: Primary data, 2022

### 5.2 Demographic Characteristics

Findings indicated that 58% of respondents were female, and 42% male; while more Youths in urban (67%) than rural (33%) participated in the research. Few rural

youths (33%) participated in the research because some of them were busy in their gardens while others were taking care of their children or dependents evidenced by 72% of youths who are taking care of children/dependents. The project targeted more women and marginalised groups implying that women's participation (58%) and refugees (41%) matched the project design. In terms of individual districts were Nebbi 22%, Amuru 12%, Terego-Imvepi Refugee settlement 41%, Pakwach (11% and Apac (14%). Of the Youths interviewed, 91% (female 91%, male 92%), urban (92%) and rural 90% were out of school with Amuru (99%) and Apac (94%) recording the highest rates with lowest in Nebbi (84%). Youths still undergoing some forms of education were 9% (female 9%, male 9%), urban 8% and rural 10% with highest in Nebbi at 16% and Pakwach (9%) and lowest recorded in Amuru at 1%.

The majority (65%) of Youths were between 20-29 years, 9% less than 20 years old and 26% aged above years - female 62%, male 68%; urban 62% and rural 69%. Within the 20-29 age bracket, more youths (75%) and 72% were in Amuru and Apac respectively with lowest in Terego-Imvepi refugee settlement (58%). Meanwhile, 9% (female 11%, male 7%, urban 10%, rural 8%) were less than 20 years old and 26% (female 27%, male 25%, rural 23%, urban 28%) were above the age of 30 years.

About 47% of youths (female 59%, male 31%, rural 25%, urban 57%) attained primary education with the highest recorded in Terego-Imvepi refugee settlements-65%, followed by Amuru at 47%. The lowest ratio of Youths with primary level education was in Pakwach (13%) with Nebbi (35%) and Apac (36%). Similarly, only 36% (female 26%, male 51%, rural 51%, urban 31%) have attained secondary education with lowest in Terego - Imvepi refugee settlement-22% and highest in 56% in Pakwach. Nebbi, Amuru and Apac range between 44% - 45%. A small proportion 13% (female 11%, male 17%, rural 25%, urban 8%) have attained vocational education (9%) or attained university degree (5%) with the highest recorded in Pakwach (31%) and lowest in Terego-Imvepi refugee settlements-6% and Amuru (8%).

Meanwhile, of the Youths who participated, 54% (female 53%, male 56%, rural 46%, urban 58%) were married or living together with a partner with the highest in Amuru (75%) and Terego-Imvepi refugee settlement-57% and lowest registered in Apac; and about 32% (female 26%, male 41%, rural 47%, urban 25%) still single or never married or lived together with a partner. In addition, 72% (female 79%, male 62%, rural 59%, urban 78%) had children or dependents that they were taking care of, with the highest number in Youths in Terego (82%) and lowest in Apac

(49%). The majority (70%), male (93%), female 53%, rural 80%, urban 65%) were household heads with responsibility for making decisions about the welfare and general household conditions. More dependents were children (67%) and adults (33%). With no employment but with more dependents (children) to take care of, the Youths were exposed to various risks and livelihood challenges which might lower the quality of life in terms healthcare, nutrition, education requirements.

It can therefore be concluded that the research participants were of the right age targeted by the project and findings, conclusions and recommendations drawn were based on data provided by the targeted age range.

### **5.3 Determinants and drivers of unemployment**

Findings indicated that proportion of Youths with an income source (some form of employment including crop farming, retail trade, petty/kiosk-based trade) was about 50%. More (64%) unemployed youths were in the rural as compared to urban (44%), consistent with the study by (Litsardopoulos, Saridakis, & Hand, 2020) who found significant differences between residents of rural and urban areas because urban areas are strongly associated with economic growth that often dictates what the economy will produce, how will it produce, where will it produce, and for whom (Audretsch & Feldman, 2004); (Knox & Pinch, 2014). The proportion of unemployed women was 43% compared to male at 60% and was partly explained by unpaid care work which are services produced for own use by a household, such as fuel and water collection, childcare, elderly care, growing crops for own use - sometimes constituted a lot of work not accounted for.

Unpaid means the person doing the activity does not receive a wage and as such their work is not counted in GDP compilation. Care means serving people and their well-being; it includes both personal care and care-related activities, such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes. Work means it entails expenditures of time and energy. According to (UBOS, 2019), more females than males were engaged in unpaid work and youths were more engaged than any age groups. In addition, the National Labour Force Report by UBOS (2021) indicated that 40% of persons aged 5 years and above were engaged in subsistence agriculture, 21% in Unpaid Care Work and 39% in Other Subsistence Work.

To this extent, the ToR provided two different objectives to be investigated for why some youths are unemployed. These were "to assess the unemployment

determinants among the urban and rural Youths in Uganda, specifically West Nile and Northern Regions”, and “to examine the underlying drivers of unemployment among urban and rural Youths in Uganda – A case study of West Nile and Northern Regions”. During data collection especially Youths individual interviews, FGDs and KIs, it was observed that determinants and drivers generated similar and nearly the same factors making marginal differences. A study by (Fassmann, Humer, & Rauhut, 2014) used both terminologies in their title to the study. A key section of the paper described both as “Determining drivers” implying these two words are inextricably intertwined.

As such, because of subtle and nuanced differences, the consultants decided to merge the two objectives to produce a more solid and focused discussion to enable generation of evidence for policy advocacy. This position was consistent with findings from a review of secondary data which revealed several studies (Otoi & Titan, 2012), (Escudero & Mourelo, 2013), (Egessa, Nyanzi, & Muwanga, 2021), (Akinyele, Oloba, & Mah, 2022) that looked at the two factors as one and the same. To this extent, the findings outlined below refer to both the determinants and drivers of youths unemployment in West Nile and Northern Regions.

### 5.3.1 Social norms and repugnant cultural practices

The study found social norms and repugnant cultural practices (e.g., women cannot own land, girls on reaching 18-years are married off) that affect effective participation of women in land ownership, rights and employment. A female key informant in Amuru remarked that “the cultural practice in this area exacerbates the unemployment because most Youths when they reach the age of 18 are married off especially the girl child leaving a serious gap and need for the continuous sensitisation of the people on the value of educating the girl child and children in general in the community”. (Kabahinda, 2017) observed that social norms are powerful forces; prescriptions or dictates reflected in the formal structures of society, in its informal rules, its gender role divisions, and permeating beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours.

(Doss, Meinzen-Dick, & Bomuhangi, 2013) notes that when conflict exists between customary norms and national laws, when women’s rights are considered, local norms generally prevail and are enforced by community members. A female FGD participant in Pakwach remarked that “in our culture here, a lady is not supposed to own any land. For me, I am the only child to my parents but cannot own land because I am a woman. Several times, my relatives have told me that when my



parents die, they will take our land because my land is where I will be married.” Of the Youths interviewed, 28% are in self-employment (crop farming, retail trade, petty/kiosk-based trade) and the majority of these are engaged in crop farming at small scale with some practising as income generating activities. The main crops by district include: Pakwach (sorghum, maize, cassava, sim-sim, millet and cotton); Nebbi (cotton, cassava, rice, maize, coffee, millet, beans and groundnuts); Terego-Imvepi refugee settlement (sorghum, maize, sim-sim, cowpeas, soybeans, cassava, vegetables); Amuru (groundnuts, maize, cassava, beans); and Apac (groundnuts, sim-sim, sunflower, soybeans, cassava, beans and maize).

However, during FGDs Youths indicated that they lacked access to land for agriculture or expand the size of their current acreage. A male FGD participant in Kucwiny sub-county in Nebbi district said “some of us want to do farming but we don’t have any land on which to plant crops. Our father did not show or give me any land. We are therefore limited yet we are interested in agriculture.” This finding is consistent with UBOS (2021) National Service Delivery Report which indicated that access to land for production and public Infrastructure projects is a challenge owing to skewed ownership of land, with women and Youths having limited access to productive land.

Land scarcity and weak legal instruments on land rights are hindering Youths from engaging in agriculture; and lack of access to loans and leases also prevent Youths from obtaining their own land. Young men are usually limited to gaining access to land through family inheritances, while legal and cultural gender barriers (women cannot inherit land mentioned in Amuru, Apac, Nebbi and Pakwach) often explicitly preclude young women from inheriting or owning land, or otherwise building and controlling their assets. Until the land is passed onto their hands, most Youths work on the family land for little or no compensation.

Such social norms inhibit the ability of Youths with potential and desire to own personal enterprise and afford a descent livelihood and healthy living. This is consistent with a study by (Acidri, 2014) who found that the land tenure systems are embedded in a cultural and social system regulated along patrilineal lines. Women’s participation in land management structures and dispute resolution is inadequate due to the dual legal system that blends formal and cultural laws. There is need for legislative reform, community engagement, and for strengthening the institutional framework in order to actualise women’s land

ownership rights.

A study by ILO in 2017 indicated that gender norms rooted in cultural and social traditions remain an instrumental factor behind women's engagement in the labour market, which strongly relates to social norms driving the unequal labour market outcomes between men and women. Archaic social norms should be eliminated because the world of work is transforming and the future is being sculpted by several drivers of change, including demography, changing women's aspirations and cultural norms, and rapidly evolving and diffusing technology.

Meanwhile, parents marry off their teenage girls as soon as they reach 18 years which perpetuate the unemployment problem since such girls are married off without any assets or level of education. The qualitative research on harmful practices of Early Marriage conducted by the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health, UNFPA and UNICEF in Georgia revealed that girls in early marriage are often left with limited education, employment prospects and social networks (UNICEF, 2019)<sup>6</sup>. These social norms that sustain harmful practices must be changed (Vaitla, Taylor, Horn, & Cislighi, 2017); (Bicchieri, Jiang, & Lindemans, 2014); (Freij, 2010).

A female key informant in Amuru remarked that "the cultural practice in this area also exacerbates the unemployment because most Youths when they reach the age of 18, they are married off especially the girl child leaving a serious gap and need for the continuous sensitisation of the people on the value of educating the girl child and children in general in the community". Sometimes, the sharp increase in youths unemployment and underemployment is rooted in long-standing structural obstacles that prevent many youngsters from making a successful transition from school to work (Axelrad, Malul, & & Luski, 2018).

### 5.3.2 Sexual harassment and sexual abuse

In almost all the FGDs, the issue of sexual harassment and abuse was prominently discussed. A female FGD participant in Amuru remarked that "I went for an interview, did it and was confident that the outcome would be favourable. To my surprise, I received a phone call informing me that all indication was that the job would be mine, but the anonymous caller asked to meet me to discuss it with him. When I reached the venue for our meeting, unashamedly, he asked

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6 <https://www.unicef.org/georgia/press-releases/girls-early-marriage-are-often-left-limited-education-employment-prospects-and>

for sex in return"! Another lady FGD participant in Apac observed that because sexual harassment and abuse is so pervasive during job search and interviews, she decided not to even try applying for jobs for self-preservation reasons. This finding and fear compares with the work of (Caruso, 2015) who showed the existence of a positive relationship between unemployment and rape, implying that if there is opportunity perspective, the level of unemployment increases as an indicator of social insecurity.

(Folke & Rickne, 2022) found that sexual harassment deters women and men from applying for jobs in workplaces where they are the gender minority. A 2021 survey by UBOS showed that about nine in every 10 women (86 percent) had ever experienced an act of violence at their workplace. According to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, research has shown that sexual harassment has a strong correlation with job dissatisfaction and disengagement, and that women are more susceptible to sexual harassment than men.

The Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Uganda) revealed that violence and harassment against women in the workplace remains a major human rights concern worldwide. It reported that "the high rate of violence is enabled by the cultural and societal attitudes that justifies different forms of discrimination against women which includes violence and the lack of monitoring or punishment. Sexual violence manifests in different spaces, including in the workplace, which limits women's ability to fully achieve other rights such as impeding their political participation." Sexual harassment and abuse are so rampant and common that the case study below illustrates the extent to which women experience this vice.

#### Box 1: Sexual harassment resulting into rape from abusive male employer

*"I was hired by a certain clinic in Adjumani as a laboratory assistant but having signed the contract, the boss assigned me more duties (without pay or overtime) than was agreed in the contract. Due to this increased workload, I requested for the salary increment to compensate for additional tasks. Upon submitting the request, the boss accepted on condition that I had sex with him – I declined. From then onwards, the work environment became hostile. Because the hospital was not always crowded, this created a favourable condition for him to ask me about his idea of salary increment offer.*

*As condition continued to deteriorate with endless sexual harassment coupled with going without pay for three months, I confided in a pastor about what was going on. When the doctor (my boss) learnt that I talked to the pastor, life became so hard. The clinic was located in Adjumani and I used to sleep in one of the rooms within the clinic. Every evening before the doctor could go home, he could pass by and collect the money, reconcile total sales with drugs sold then goes with them. One evening, there were no patients and I was in my room, I heard his footsteps in the neighbouring room and definitely knew he was doing his daily routine work of collecting money. Footsteps came closer to my door; I stayed silent in the room expecting him to knock and ask for drugs. Indeed, he knocked on the door just like I had anticipated, I opened holding money and list of drugs to give him, he immediately entered in the room and closed the door and raped me. It was not reported to police because I feared for my safety.*

*It was a terrible night for me and in the morning, I decided to find solace with the pastor who offered me a place to stay for three days. Life was so hard during the three days since I feared moving around the since the clinic was nearby. The pastor conducted a fundraising drive to solicit money for me to travel away from Adjumani to my hometown, Pakwach. Throughout this ordeal, I would call my boyfriend and tell him everything including rape. Thankfully, my boyfriend understood me because I never kept anything away from him. This ordeal made me to start up my own business (drug shop) which I am nurturing but with challenges due to insufficient working capital. Sometimes I run out of capital but borrow from the village savings group and restock medicine. Apparently am staying with my boyfriend and we so far have one child together.*

It is instructive to note that being sexual harassed or abused is not strange and failure to report to police or any authority is a common phenomenon. According to UBOS (2018), only 34 percent of workplace sexual harassment victims report being violated due in part to fear of reprisals from the victim, public opinion, poor management of such cases by relevant authorities or failure by authorities to investigate and prosecute such offenders adequately and conclusively.

Folke & Rickne (2022) found that people are highly averse to accepting jobs in workplaces with a higher harassment risk for their own gender, but less averse when people of the opposite sex are at higher risk. It also indicated that harassment contributes to inequality by making workplace gender minorities leave their workplaces for new jobs. The study concluded that sexual harassment from colleagues and managers is a barrier to gender equality in the labour market and that women suffer more sexual harassment in the workplace than men. Efforts should be geared towards a campaign to eradicate sexual harassment and rape at workplaces through options of victims reporting to authorities including employers, police and other legal structures.

### 5.3.3 Restrictive work environments and religiosity

Some work environments are restrictive and unfavourable to young mothers since they constrain them from breastfeeding their babies. A female FGD participant in Amuru district observed that her sister was warned by her employer not to breastfeed during work hours because the breastfeeding mother was cheating the employer (lost man-hours during breastfeeding). A study by (Omute & Kirungi, 2022) on breast-feeding practices and maternal employment in health facilities of Lira District revealed that for work-related factors, including breast-feeding space and daily breast-feeding break were statistically significant at multivariate analysis and mothers who worked for more than 8 hours were less likely to initiate exclusive breastfeeding indicating that working for longer hours is a big hindrance to early initiation of exclusive breastfeeding. But a study by (Snyder, et al., 2018) found that women who work for long hours need more workplace support to improve their breast-feeding practices.

Religion and religiosity also determine youths unemployment. Some religious demands prevent Youths from working for certain organisations whose activities contradict their beliefs and faith. A female FGD participant in Amuru district revealed that "I was asked to choose between working in a bar and praying in our Pentecostal church. I chose to leave work for the sake of my faith". This behaviour compares with a study by (Iqbal & Khan, 2020) which showed that religion is a significant force behind peoples' behaviour. A male FGD participant in Kucwiny sub-county in Nebbi district reported that his brother was asked to choose between working for a beer distributor and continued membership of his local Pentecostal church. Another FGD participant in Amuru revealed that his brother was asked to get wedded in church before he could continue with job and failure would lead to loss of his job.

This finding is consistent with the work of (Immerzeel & van Tubergen, 2013) who predict that religiosity and religious practice share are higher in times of economic insecurity, such as unemployment. They found that those with permanent work contracts were less religious than those with temporal contracts or unemployed. Other studies connect religion and unemployment (Van Hoorn & Maseland, 2013); (Scheve & Stasavage, 2006) and focus on the role of religion in attenuating the negative effects of unemployment. A recent study by (Meredith, 2017) measures the relationship between unemployment and the frequency of religious service attendance for individuals of working age.

Ways of improving restrictive employment practices should see employee involvement, building a positive work culture through intensive worker and supervisory development programmes, involving observation of employment law requirements, quality and safety, and explaining how restrictive practices affect an employee, their morale and productivity. Explaining to employers on how a good work environment enhances productivity and employee self-worth is a significant step in addressing these harsh environments. Also making workers to participate in teams for reducing unnecessary lost hours to resentment and unproductive industrial strikes. There is need to proactively engage local governments, social partners and the private sector on protection and the promotion of labour rights, decent work, formalisation of work and enterprises and safe working conditions especially those rights that affect women and young girls.

#### **5.3.4 Segregation, discrimination, nepotism and corruption**

Youths observed that during hiring exercises, qualifying colleagues and indeed themselves are not accepted/taken as they are segregated against simply because they came from another district, belonged to another political formation or tribe. A male FGD participant in Amuru narrated how he was “failed” at interview because he was told he didn’t come from Nwoya district. A female FGD participant commented that she was not given a job because she was not an “Alur” and that only “Jonam” would qualify. Stories were told of direct discrimination and segregation as jobs were given to prominent families, relatives, friends and in-laws.

A male FGD participant in Panyimur alleged that in the recent recruitment into the Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces (UPDF), people from other tribes were ferried into the recruitment centres and bona fide residents were denied the opportunity. A female FGD participant in Imvepi Refugee settlements revealed that “all available

jobs are given to Ugandans only. We, South Sudanese are not considered even if you qualify". A key informant in Pakwach district simply remarked that "the high levels of nepotism and favouritism in the area in terms of tribes and ethnic leanings has significantly contributed to the unemployment in the area just because one particular tribe wants their people to get jobs leaving their counterparts jobless". The same view is echoed by a key informant in Amuru district who said youths unemployment is worsened because there is "a lot of segregation where relatives, friends, and in-laws are recruited".

The impact of nepotism, corruption and segregation cannot be overemphasised as (Bouzid, 2016) showed that corruption practices tend to increase the unemployment rate among Youths and educated job seekers which in turn contribute to sustain those unlawful practices by forcing the latter to bribe rent seeking government officials in order to secure a job. Another study by (Yasin, et al., 2019) revealed that financially strong families can easily influence on the hiring process for obtaining a job in public sector. The positive and significant impact of certain economic benefits to the interviewers impacts on probability of getting a job has proven the presence of the element of nepotism in hiring process.

Similarly, a study by (Bakare, 2011) showed that there is a negative relationship between corruption and output growth. The study revealed that corruption is a cankerworm that has eaten into the fabric of public institutions and is a universal phenomenon, its magnitude and effects are severe and deep seated. All forms of corruption manifest in bribery, frauds, embezzlement, election rigging, examination malpractice. Generally, the study discovered that corruption has caused decay and dereliction within the infrastructure of government and the society in physical, social and human terms. Excessively high levels of unemployment increase corruption up to the point where society appears not to be able to implement good governance quality if unemployment is too high. This is an important finding with policy implications for developing countries, where both corruption and unemployment are often two of the most pressing policy issues facing them.

These findings have some policy implications because the government should introduce a national reorientation programme to educate people on the crucial need to eradicate corruption in all sectors of an economy and socio-political systems and strengthen efforts of Institutions like IGG, Public Accounts Committee, Judiciary, CIID, among others. This will inevitably reduce people's vulnerability

and susceptibility to corruption. Government must also introduce transparency devices that can detect and prevent corruption in all areas.

### 5.3.5 Lack of access to start-up capital

One of the key areas youths pointed out as an inhibiting factor to their ability to reduce unemployment is lack of start-up or access to capital for entrepreneurial youths. A male FGD participant in Amuru remarked that they need capital to start a business. A female FGD participant in Terego-Imvepi refugee settlements simply said “we do not have start-up capital”. This position was echoed by a female key informant in Nebbi who observed that “accessing capital is not easy” and a male key informant at Imvepi refugee settlement said “provide them with start-up capital after training because the capital for the business was eaten up by family members”.

The centrality of access to credit in the dynamic equation of reducing unemployment cannot be overemphasised. The UBOS (2021) showed that obtaining start-up capital and finding clients/market are the main challenges faced by 70 percent of the household enterprises in Uganda with Lango (where Apac falls) at 68.3%, Acholi (where Amuru falls) 49.9% and West Nile (where Pakwach, Nebbi and Terego falls) at 47.6%.

A study by (Behrenz, Delander, & Månsson, 2016) indicated that the start-up subsidy programme for unemployed persons is a successful programme regarding the integration of the unemployed into the mainstream of the labour market. This suggests that extending start-up capital to unemployed youths would go a long way to transitioning them from unemployment to self-employment status. Doing this requires youths to have been trained in financial literacy, business management and skills. Notwithstanding the lack of access to capital, there are some youths who have managed to succeed with as little capital available as possible as Box 2 below illustrates:

#### Box 2: Lack of access to capital is no barrier to Augustino's entrepreneurship

*My name is Badi Augustino, 18 years in in a S.2 student at IMVEPI S.S, Point F. When my dad sent me UGX 100,000 from Juba to buy some clothes, I decided to start a retail shop selling little merchandise here in the Camp. The idea to start my own business was from the knowledge gained from entrepreneurship*



*class from school and decided to put it into practice. Starting was in a very humble way. I simply placed a table within our home compound and started selling small merchandise. It started to gain acceptance and recognition within the community because small items were now easily available within community's reach. When I am not around my mum runs the shop, but we are always together during holidays.*

*Given that I only have a table, when it rains, I have to put the shop merchandise inside the house. Out of the proceeds from the shops, I am now constructing a brick-and-mortar shop. One challenge I foresee is acquiring iron sheets for roofing because the prices have increased so much. As a way of diversifying income sources, I have bought solar panel which I use to charge phones for my friends at a modest fee of UGX 500 per phone. With the skills of Entrepreneurship, I now mentor and encourage my friends to at least engage in some income generating activity. One of my friends listened, he went to the nearby trading centre and his friend taught him how to trim hair. He has now opened up his own saloon.*

### 5.3.6 Family background and Poverty

Various youths in FGDs identified poverty and family background as one of the main drivers of unemployment. This was because of the poverty trap, which is any aspect of a person's life that creates and reinforces poverty for themselves and their family, often persisting to the next generation. One of the most commonly identified poverty traps is family background where if a Youths is living in a neighbourhood in which a high percentage of people are also living in poverty, then they remain in that cyclic pattern. Consequently, these people are unable to create a better life for themselves and provide opportunities to their children. A male FGD participant in Kucwiny sub county in Nebbi district reported that he had all the relevant qualifications but he was unable to pay members of the District Service Commission some facilitation due to his family background and ability to raise money.

Another male FGD participant in Amuru commented that "poverty has denied us the opportunity to be actively employed. There is lack of money to move to where jobs exist or even do interviews when shortlisted". This finding is consistent with

the study by (Mazzotta, 2010) who showed that young people from disadvantaged social backgrounds experienced greater difficulties in finding a job than their more privileged peers. Similarly, a study by (Mooi-Reci, Bakker, Curry, & Wooden, 2019) revealed that mothers' and fathers' whose views about work become more pessimistic lead to reduced educational attainment and employment prospects among their children. (Kind, 2015) when looking at the parental influence on the labour market participation of young adults, observed that Youths who had unemployed parents when they were 14 years of age were more likely to be unemployed.

In the minds of youths in the study area, family background and poverty level played a significant determinant role in their unemployment status. The impact of family background on Youths is best illustrated by the voice of this Youths from Apac district in the qualitative data below:

### Box 3: Family background and poverty exacerbates unemployment situation

"Our family is poor without any assets and life is usually harsh that when I was in Apac Secondary school, I got myself a boyfriend who would support/provide me with some little money which I would share with my mother. Unfortunately, I used to sleep with him which resulted in pregnancy. At only 20 years, I am now a mother, housewife with no skill and unable to get a job. Attempts to look for jobs have not been fruitful and I solely depend on my student husband. Of course, life is not easy because my parents are unable to support me. Early in the year, I grew some maize, cassava and groundnuts but have not done well because the weather has been bad and the harvest will be bad worsening my condition".

#### 5.3.7 Youths Mindset and Attitude

Several types of enterprises exist that Youths could exploit but have not due to attitude and mindset. There needs to be a change of mindset to refocus Youths as well as reskilling Youths to suit the job market. Youth's unwillingness to develop the necessary skills required by the changing industries needs to be tackled with their involvement and active participation. Some observers opine that youths are very reluctant when it comes to developing new skills. Learnability is the most important quality which any person should possess in this rapidly changing world and this is lacking in this technology-driven world. Ugandan youths shun the agricultural

sector, one of the biggest employers in rural areas, preferring to work in service sector jobs like riding motorcycle taxis (boda-bodas), or as low-wage labourers in industries (Magelah & Ntambirweki-Karugonjo, 2014).

Business development experts argue that many youths lack the capacity to pursue personal development or entrepreneurial goals hence, their reluctance to engage in the private sector yet this is an area full of opportunities for youth. It is important that Youths change their attitudes to work. A key informant in Terego district remarked that “the Youths are their own enemy. They leave job after job because of greed. So, Youths are viewed as unreliable. They increase the cost of production through constant recruitment”. A male key informant in Amuru commented that “the Youths have a problem of making poor choices in life. Rather than choosing a job and building a career, they instead go drinking.”

A female key informant in Amuru observed that “the attitude and mindset of Youths towards a particular type of job is negative. For example, Youths fear joining the Armed forces and remain unemployed. Youths fear jobs that involve risk and discomfort”. Re-echoing the same theme, a male key informant in Pakwach lamented that “I have a boy for whom I paid fees and generally took care of. He has applied for jobs here several times without success. Through my network and friends, I secured for him a job in Luwero. When I informed him about the opportunity, he flatly refused to take it because Luwero is far from Pakwach. He is still unemployed and we have almost given up on him.” This example was the reason key informants believed Youths have a problem of making poor choices in life. Mindset and attitude change are essential to create sustained wellbeing by acquiring some relevant skills as well as making life changing choices and decision.

While there was a mismatch between available jobs and job seekers, the youths were reported to undermine certain jobs by being unrealistic. A male FGD participant in Apac revealed that “I just chose to leave a low paying job” while another in Amuru said “youths are too selective. They ignore jobs that pay a fairly low salary”. A female FGD participant in Amuru confirmed that “Jobs exist, but with low pay” highlighting existence of jobs although with mismatch between expected pay and level of effort. This theme was common as captured in the views of a key informant that “Youths at times are too ambitious. They aspire for jobs that are bigger than their qualifications”, which opinion was shared by another key informant in Pakwach who observed that “I blame the youth. They apply for jobs which are beyond their level of

qualifications. When not shortlisted, they complain accusing recruiters of bias. They should be counselled on which jobs they can realistically apply for”.

The issue of low pay is consistent with the findings of the National Labour Force Survey by UBOS (2021) which showed that “about 50 per cent of Ugandans in paid employment earn some Shs.200,000 or less” and due to this, the report adds “about 45 per cent felt discouraged and therefore didn’t go hunting for a job.” The problem of low pay is largely because Uganda as a country does not have a minimum wage – the price floor below which employees may not sell their labour. To overcome this structural difficulty, there is need to standardise payment by introduction of a minimum wage, based on different sectors and labour productivity although NOTU believes getting a minimum wage may be difficult because there is still no will from the government to make it happen.

### 5.3.8 Preference for Instant Gratification

Not all youths have mindset and attitudes challenges. Some are in fact, encouragingly entrepreneurial with recognisable success. However, the long-term sustainability of such success is doubtful because of how Youths manage their enterprises where they choose expenditure over savings or investment. A male key informant in Amuru observed that such successful Youths instead of continuing to invest by either saving or creating wealth, opt for heavy drinking and marrying more wives. A report in the Daily Monitor by (Acema, 2022) showed that government is struggling to recover Emyooga funds after some of the Youths misused the money, they borrowed from their SACCOs, including using it to allegedly marry more wives.

In some cases, they become “lazy” and do not regularly attend to their enterprise leading to their collapse. Some Youths also believed agriculture is not employment as highlighted in this key informant opinion “there is ignorance where most of us think that working in the garden is not work in the sense of today’s Uganda. We view work to be that in office and not farms”. The problem of Youths preferring short-term gain to long term investment is best illustrated by the words of a female key informant in Nebbi who observed that “youths are interested in quick money like boda-boda which is not sustainable”.

A typical investment attracts another investment either through saving, access to credit and practising frugal financial and business management style which preserves and ensures the business grows and develops. Practices that drain out working capital leave an enterprise short of capital for reinvestment and putting on

hold other emerging lucrative undertaking. A study by (Han & Kwon, 2020) showed that employment insecurity tends to prompt individuals to favour immediate benefits (i.e., social consumption) over long-term gains (i.e., social investment). Furthermore, the study found evidence of heterogeneous effects by income level in the face of employment insecurity. High income individuals tend to show higher levels of support for social investment than for social consumption, they support short-term benefits when they experience job losses and employment insecurity, which suggests that individuals have heterogeneous preferences and perceptions driven by economic challenges. Youths should be trained in both financial and business management to enhance their skills in running their enterprises.

### 5.3.9 Political affiliation and rewards

Sometimes the excitement of political campaign, activism and party affiliation have warped the Youths into uncomfortable situations with negative consequences. A male key informant in Amuru observed that two political parties—National Resistance Movement (NRM) and Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) have dominated social, political and economic spectrums in the district. During any party's incumbency, it usually rewards its cadres with appointments both at political and technical levels to the disadvantage of the other.

In the subsequent period, retaliatory tendencies are done by the other party to rectify what the other party did. Youths who are usually victims of this political gamesmanship are caught in the middle. Another key informant in Amuru revealed that "political ties are strong here whereby those who do not support NRM or FDC will not be employed no matter their qualification". This position is also re-echoed by a key informant in Pakwach who reported that "party affiliation here is so strong because the District Internal Security Officer (DISO) and Resident District Commissioner (RDC) ensure only NRM supporters are given jobs".

Other scholarly and conference literature show that youths with no political connections hardly secure employment compared with those from families with political background<sup>7</sup>. A study by (Ragauskas & Valeškaitė, 2020) discovered an adverse consequence of nepotism: distorted incentives lead to overstaffing through political affiliation where nepotism is widespread. (Demeke, 2022) among IGAD countries revealed that there is a significant effect of youths unemployment on political instability in IGAD member countries and there is need for a sound Youths employment policy not only for the sake of youths but also for the relief of government

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/rwanda-today/nepotism-blamed-for-youth-unemployment--1333232>

reducing the burden of controlling continuous internal instabilities. Moreover, there is need for better Youths employment creation policies so that they can manage the internal conflicts.

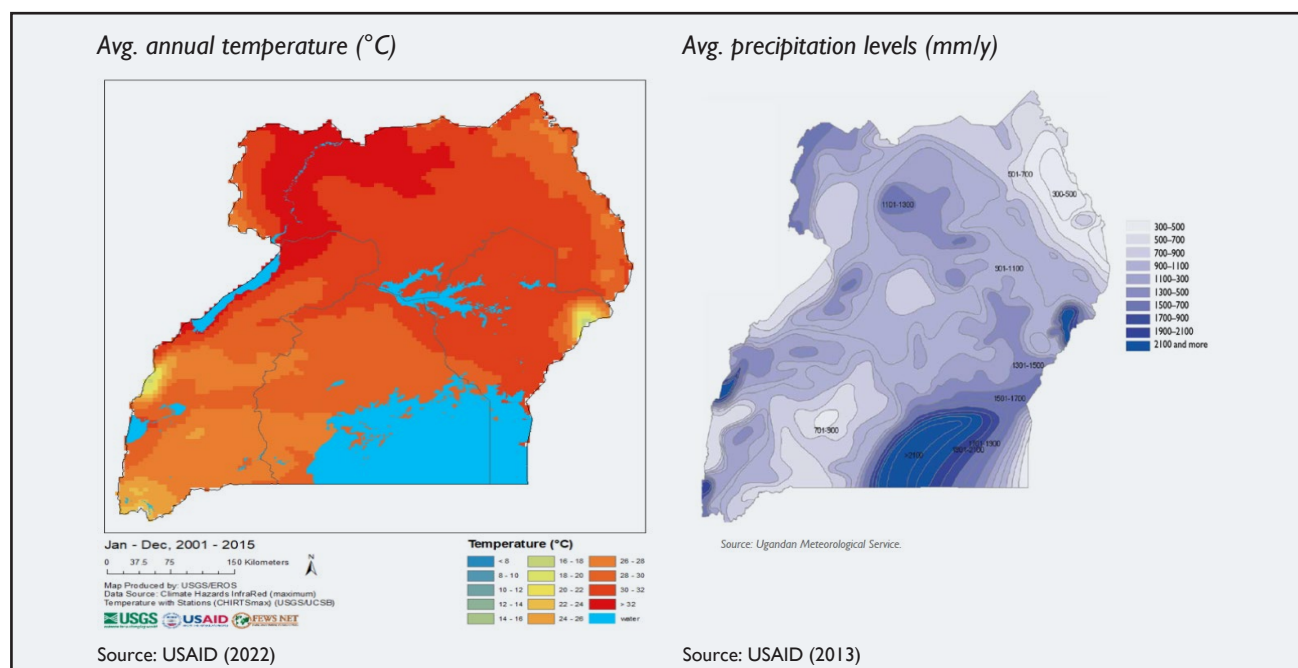
### 5.3.10 Climate change

#### 1) Observed and projected climate change

##### a) Observed rainfall

In Uganda, rainfall is strongly linked to migration of seasonal primary humid air masses and convergence zones shifting towards northerly location in August and to southern direction in January. The northern region, which forms one quarter of the country lies outside the tropical belt, and rainfall progressively merges into one rainy season, March to October (World Bank, 2020)<sup>8</sup>. Northern region suffers from intensified inter-annual rainfall variations, particularly in the December to February (DJF) main dry season (especially Gulu, Kitgum and Kotido). DJF dry season span shows increased levels of precipitation (USAID 2013)<sup>9</sup>. Decline in rainfall has been observed in the same Northern districts of Gulu, Kitgum, and Kotido. Over the past 20 years, northern Uganda like the western and north-eastern regions have experienced more frequent and longer-lasting drought conditions (World Bank, 2020).

**Figure 1: Average annual temperature °C and precipitation levels (mm/y)**



8 World Bank (WB 2020): *Climate Risk Country Profile Uganda*. Accessed via [https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/15464-WB\\_Uganda%20Country%20Profile-WEB\\_v1.pdf](https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/15464-WB_Uganda%20Country%20Profile-WEB_v1.pdf).

9 USAID (2013): *Uganda Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Report. African and Latin American Resilience to Climate Change Project (ARCC)*. Accessed via <https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/ARCC-Uganda%2520VA-Report.pdf>

### **b) Rainfall projections**

Under a high-emission scenario, monthly annual precipitation is expected to decrease in the northern areas of Uganda (World Bank, 2020). However, increase in rainfall is projected in the region particularly in Gulu and Lira in December, January, and February, which is typically a dry season according to USAID (2013). Heavy precipitation events are expected to become more intense due to intensified water vapour holding capacity of a warmer atmosphere (GIZ 2021).<sup>10</sup> Warmer atmosphere may well increase number of days with heavy precipitation events. This increase could have strong impacts on agriculture, especially with respect to tree crops (e.g., coffee) and post-harvest activities such as drying and storage.

### **c) Observed Temperature**

The northern areas of Gulu and Kitgum experience temperatures of 30°C (World Bank, 2020).

### **d) Temperature projections**

A robust and significant warming signal is detected. Warming is projected to continue at a slightly higher rate within proximate future. Statistically significant increase in average annual temperatures, by 2030, projected temperature increases in minimum temperature scenarios average 0.8–0.9°C, maximum temperature increase averages between 1.2 and 1.4°C. According to the World Bank, annual mean temperature is forecasted to increase by 0.3°C by 2030, 1°C by 2040 from a mean temperature of 25°C. The dry (and therefore hot) season is forecasted to be longer and more intense (World Bank, 2020). Similarly, air temperature is projected to rise by 1.5–3.5°C (very likely range) by 2080 (GIZ 2021). However, there are no indicators for particular seasons standing out in terms of speed of warming. This projected warming trend will likely have a strong impact on agriculture and livestock, increasing the risk of disease and pest infestations (USAID, 2013).

### **e) Hot days (>35°C)**

The number of hot days is forecasted to increase (from 30 days to 34 days by 2030 and 40 days by 2040) between January and April (at the beginning of the long rain season). This coincides with an increased risk of wildfire events which also affects agriculture (World Bank, 2020).

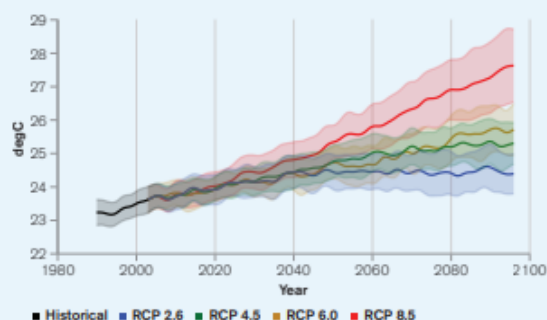
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10 GIZ (2021): *Climate Risk Profile: Uganda*. Accessed via [https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/GIZ\\_Climate-risk-profile-Uganda\\_EN\\_final.pdf](https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/GIZ_Climate-risk-profile-Uganda_EN_final.pdf).

**Projected change in avg. temperature (1986–2099)<sup>11</sup>**

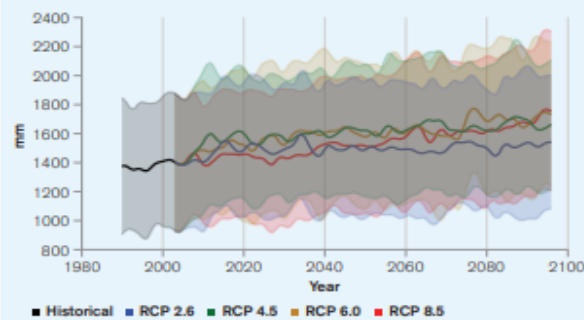
**Projected change in avg. precipitation (1986–2099)<sup>12</sup>**

**FIGURE 5.** Historical and projected average temperature for Uganda from 1986 to 2099<sup>26</sup>



Source: World Bank (2020)

**FIGURE 7.** Annual average precipitation in Uganda for 1986 to 2099<sup>29</sup>

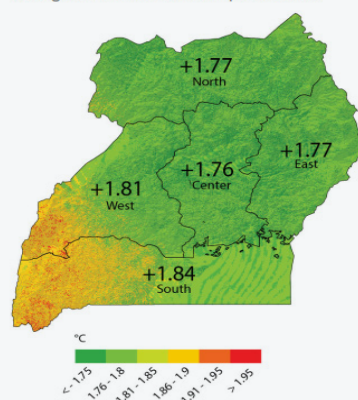


Source: World Bank (2020)

**Regional projected change in avg. temperature (°C, by 2050)**

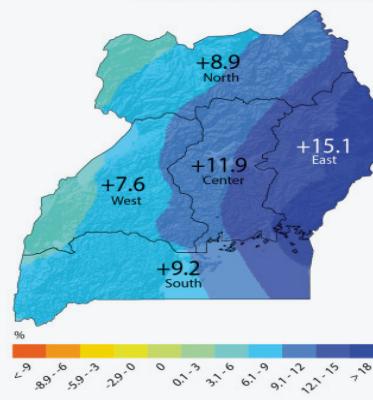
**Regional projected change in total precipitation (% by 2050)**

Changes in annual mean temperature (°C)



Source: CIAT (2016)<sup>13</sup>

Changes in total precipitation (%)



Source: CIAT (2016)

**2) Climate change impacts and vulnerabilities**

**(i) Climate Change Impacts**

**a) Droughts**

It is noted that the climate and weather predictions for areas of the study in the 0–10 and 0–20-year horizons are quite mixed and do not predict high

11 WBG Climate Change Knowledge Portal (CCKP, 2020). Interactive Climate Indicator Dashboard - Agriculture. Uganda. URL <https://climatedata.worldbank.org/CRMePortal/web/agriculture/crops-and-land-management?country=UGA&period=2080-2099>

12 WBG Climate Change Knowledge Portal (CCKP, 2020). Interactive Climate Indicator Dashboard - Agriculture. Uganda. URL: <https://climatedata.worldbank.org/CRMePortal/web/agriculture/crops-and-land-management?country=UGA&period=2080-2099>

13 International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT 2016?): Climate-Smart Agriculture in Uganda. CSA Country Profiles for Africa Series. World Bank. Accessed via <https://ccaafs.cgiar.org/resources/publications/climate-smart-agriculture-uganda>.



levels of change in the baseline climate, though some will occur (World Bank, 2020). The implication of changing rainfall trends/patterns, and more especially increased droughts, will increasingly affect both urban and rural areas of West Nile and northern Uganda. The northern region has been experiencing more frequent and longer-lasting droughts than seen historically. Climate related disasters affected agriculture. In the first place, the increased frequency and magnitude of droughts have and will continue to negatively affect agriculture and food security. Droughts will reduce agricultural productivity in the hinterland as well as urban agriculture affecting food supply resulting in rising food prices and insecurity.

Gulu is among the several towns around the country that are already experiencing severe water availability challenges, with water supply affected in the dry seasons when the water sources run dry. The alternative water supply sources to the existing sources, such as water harvesting is still very limited (GoU, 2018)<sup>14</sup>. Additionally, the main source of electricity for study area is hydro and droughts could reduce water that could affect energy supply. The current power system is very exposed to the effects of climate change and northern and West Nile areas have limited alternative forms of generating electricity, particularly renewable ones, such as solar panels. For example, in West Nile, electricity supply from the Nyagak power station is not stable due to water fluctuations.

### **b) Extreme temperatures**

As already mentioned in the above section, the region especially the urban areas are already experiencing increasing warming, with this warming occurring in the last decades, especially since 1960. The observed warming is projected to continue with temperatures rising by 2–6°C under different emission scenarios. This implies that, extreme temperatures and heat waves are likely to be experienced in the future. There is a likelihood of more hot days, hot nights and hotter days, and fewer cold days and cold nights in the future. Extreme temperatures and heat waves are likely to increase evapotranspiration across the region. These will reduce soil moisture, water table and available surface water, which will affect agriculture and water availability (GoU, 2018).

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14 Government of Uganda, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, 2018. *Uganda National Urban Climate Change Profile*.

### c) Extreme rainfall and floods

The most significant climate change impact in the region is increased variability in rainfall with more frequent and intense rainfall extremes. The increased intense rainfall results in flooding in the area. With extreme rainfall events projected to become more common in particular in the areas along river Nile in northern Uganda, increased flooding will be experienced which will destroy infrastructure of housing, roads, culverts, drainage systems and water supply; affecting the livelihoods, housing and health of urban residents and particularly the youth.

## (ii) Climate change vulnerabilities to key sectors

### a) Agriculture

Agriculture takes a central part in Uganda's economy and food security, with close to a quarter of GDP produced in the sector and over 80% of the population active in agriculture (CGAP, 2016). Below 3% of Ugandan agricultural cropland is under irrigation (Sridharan et al. 2019)<sup>15</sup>, thus the agricultural system as a whole is dramatically dependent on rain-fed irrigation and thus sufficient precipitation levels. Main agricultural outputs in West Nile and northern Uganda include coffee, cassava, poultry, beans maize, sorghum, rice and cassava according to Sridharan et al. (2019) and the World Bank (2020) as shown table below:

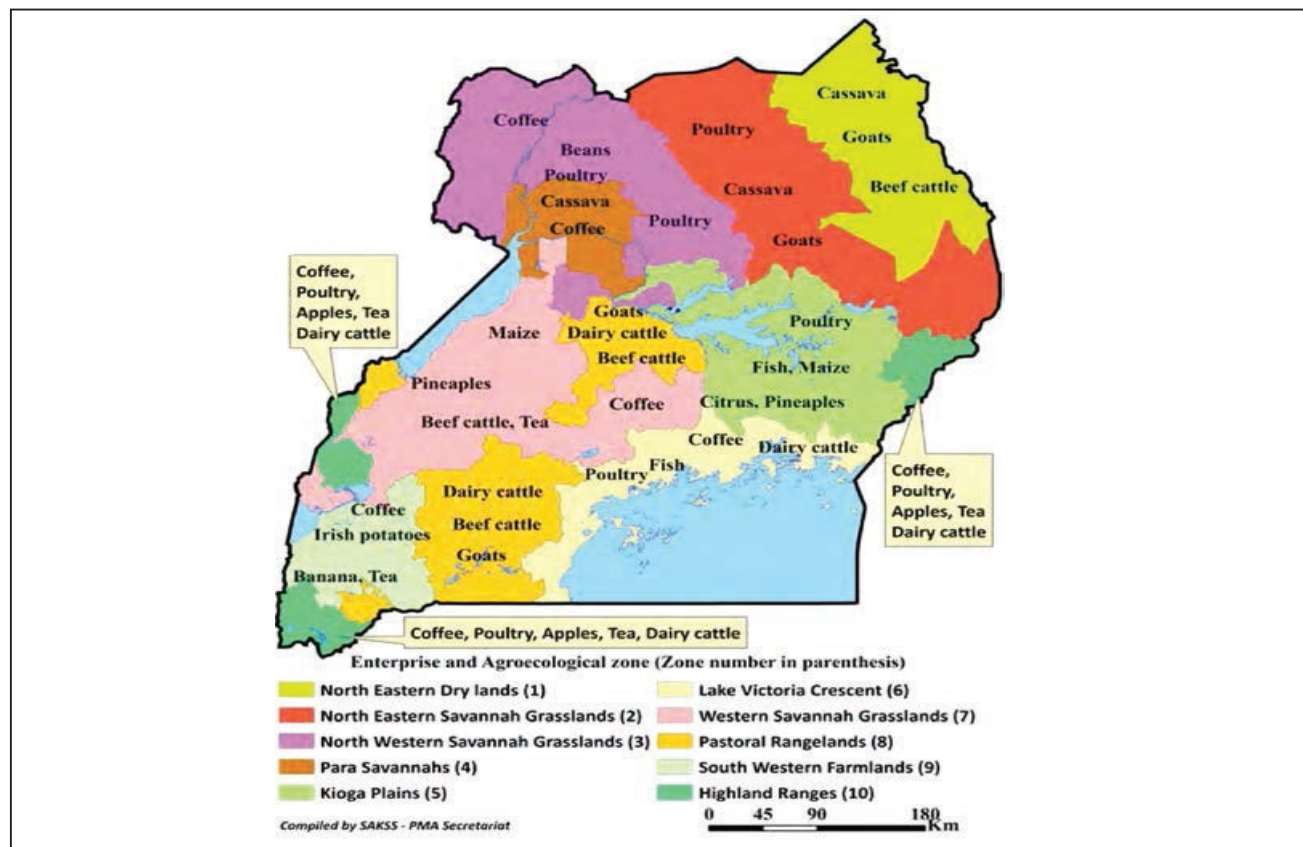
**Table 3: Cultivated crop shares per region**

Crop classification	Western	Eastern	Central	Northern
Plantain banana	35.2%	4.6%	32.3%	0.6%
Coffee	3.6%	3.1%	9.2%	0.2%
Maize	13.0%	25.7%	18.8%	16.4%
Sorghum	3.2%	6.7%	0.2%	16.5%
Rice	0.7%	2.4%	0.3%	1.7%
Cassava	9.0%	22.6%	12.7%	17.9%
Sugar cane	0.2%	0.5%	0.8%	0.3%
Others	<b>35.2%</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>25.7%</b>	<b>46.5%</b>

Source: Sridharan et al. (2019)

<sup>15</sup> Sridharan, V.; Ramos, E.P.; Zepeda, E.; Boehlert, B.; Shivakumar, A.; Taliotis, C.; Howells, M. (2019): *The Impact of Climate Change on Crop Production in Uganda—An Integrated Systems Assessment with Water and Energy Implications*. *Water* 2019, 11(9). Accessed via <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4441/11/9/1805>.

Figure 2: Uganda’s agro-ecological azones<sup>16</sup>



Source: World Bank (2020)

Climate-change-induced temperature increases and reduced water availability will have a direct detrimental effect to livestock health. Increased temperatures will increase waterlogging of fields and may also result in increased prevalence of pests and diseases. Intensified rainfall variability is likely to further soil erosion and loss of soil fertility. Increasing rainfall patterns during the DJF season points to difficulties for post-harvest storage strategies (e.g., post-harvest losses from increased moisture (USAID 13). Testing a range of rainfall level scenarios, Sridharan et al. (2019) found that crop yields until 2030 in driest model may reduce by up to -13.51% for cassava, -21.39% for maize, -14.98% for sorghum, -11.65% for coffee and -15.87% for rice. Specific vulnerabilities for different crop types are:

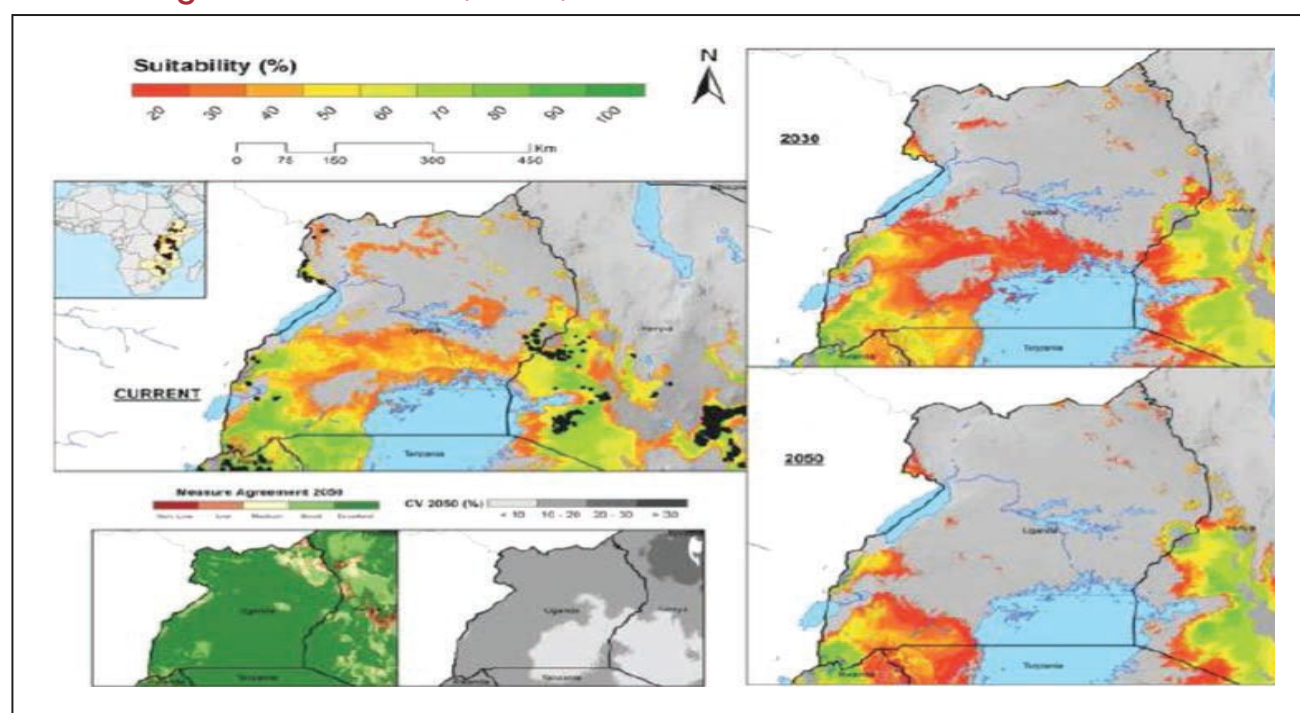
- Coffee: Rising temperatures and erratic rainfall increase the risk of disease and pest infestations in coffee.
- Rice: Two major rice diseases (blast and bacterial leaf blight) affect rice yields and are significantly aggravated by weather conditions such as higher temperatures, air humidity, or soil moisture.

16 Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (2018). National Adaptation Plan for the Agricultural Sector. Page 18. URL: <https://www.agriculture.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/National-Adaptation-Plan-for-the-Agriculture-Sector.pdf>

- Maize: Aflatoxin contamination represents a serious threat to the marketing of maize and will likely worsen if dry season rainfall increases.
- Beans: Beans are vulnerable to fungal and viral diseases when excessive rain falls during critical growing periods.
- Multiple Grains: Erratic rain could increase post-harvest storage losses of crops typically dried in the sun (e.g., maize, beans, coffee, rice, etc.), due to increased pests and rotting.
- Sorghum: Coupled with irregular precipitation, increased temperatures could result in the proliferation of striga, a parasitic weed that affects sorghum and is prevalent in areas with degraded soils.
- Sweet potatoes and cassava: Both crops grow well at temperatures much higher than current ones but are also vulnerable to pests and disease. (USAID 2013).

Suitability of crop production will change dramatically, take for example Arabica coffee production.

**Figure 3: Predicted suitability for Arabica coffee production in coffee-producing zones in Uganda for current, 2030, and 2050<sup>17</sup>**



Source: World Bank (2020)

17 Ministry of Water and Environment (2015). *Economic Assessment of the Impacts of Climate Change in Uganda – National Level Assessment: Agricultural Sector Report*. Page 20. URL: [https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Uganda\\_Agricultural\\_Sector.pdf](https://cdkn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Uganda_Agricultural_Sector.pdf)

## b) Energy generation and supply

Energy is essential in the achievement of sustainable development and socio-economic transformation of Northern and West Nile regions of Uganda. Energy security is a core issue for economies in this region as most of the infrastructure, activities, services and livelihoods depend on energy. For Youths in Northern and West Nile region to have sustainable livelihoods and employment, urban areas must be attractive and productive. However, this depends on the availability, reliability and affordability of electricity supply as a strategic matter.

With three quarters of Uganda's central domestic electricity production derived from hydropower, the energy systems that supply Northern and West Nile regions are largely dependent on large rivers and lakes (USAID 2013). Increased intensity and frequency of droughts or flooding pose both a risk to hydro energy plants' efficiency and structural integrity, heightening the risk of prolonged blackouts and increasing maintenance costs. This impacts access to energy for productive use for activities that Youths are and could engage in. The predicted temperature increase and the urban heat island effect are likely to increase demand for electricity for indoor cooling among Uganda's population in the north and west Nile regions, further increasing energy vulnerabilities due to stress on the country's energy provision (World Bank, 2020).

Central grid infrastructure will be increasingly subjected to degradation due to increased temperatures, and extreme weather events like floods and droughts in the region further impacting electricity access for productive use by the youth. With biomass still the predominant source of energy for households, increased rainfall intensity and drought across the West Nile and northern Uganda is expected to adversely impact biomass availability in turn impacting food preparation affecting access to nutrition and energy for Youths to engage in useful work.

## c) Human health

Uganda's population affected by at least one heatwave per year is projected to rise from 0.2% in 2000 to 9.5% in 2080, related to 39 more very hot days over this period. This will increase heart-related mortality by an estimated factor of four (GIZ 2021). Increased precipitation in addition to floods are excellent

conditions for vector-borne diseases such as malaria<sup>18</sup>, respiratory diseases, tuberculosis and waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea. Climate change is likely to lengthen transmission periods and alter geographic range of vector-borne diseases.

#### d) Water availability

Water is an important resource essential for fighting hunger and poverty and is fundamentally essential for effective primary health care and hygiene. It is also an important resource for electricity generation, fishing, tourism, transport and industry in the region. Future water availability is generally uncertain across different greenhouse gas (GHG) emission scenarios. Several models suggest no change in per capita water availability in Uganda by the end of the century under RCP 2.6 and a decrease of 18% under RCP 6.0 (GIZ 2021), when accounting for population growth.<sup>19</sup> The vulnerability of water resources and water supply in the study areas to the impacts of climate change is mainly related to droughts, floods, and storm water. The availability of water resources is affected by droughts and heat waves, and the quality of water depends on how the reservoirs can be affected by floods, storms and even droughts.

Northern region already suffers from low water availability levels and yield decreases, increasing the risk of food insecurity (USAID 2013). For example, the water sources for Gulu dry up during the dry seasons leaving the urban residents water stressed. Prolonged dry seasons and droughts in the recent years have resulted in reduced water levels in the Oytino stream/wetland that is a source of water supply for Gulu Municipality and River Enyau for Arua Municipality.

Similarly, some boreholes, valley dams and protected springs that are sources of water for Paidha have dried up due to long droughts resulting in severe water shortages (GoU, 2018). Another source of vulnerability is water quality. Water sources are exposed to contamination or pollution from various sources, land degradation arising from increased deforestation; encroachment of

<sup>18</sup> In Uganda, malaria is the most frequently reported disease at both public and private health facilities with 12.4 million cases and 13,203 deaths in 2018, according to WHO estimates WHO, "World Malaria Report 2019," Rome, Italy, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> The population growth determinant is based on the Shared Socio-economic Pathway 4 (SSP4), including estimations of broad characteristics such as country-level population, GDP or rate of urbanisation. Five different SSPs outline future realities according to a combination of high and low future socio-economic challenges for mitigation and adaptation. SSP2 represents the "middle of the road"-pathway.

wetlands and cultivation on riverbanks increases soil erosion and run-off, which result into siltation and contamination of water sources.

Equally, the effects of floods on water quality are appalling in the study area. With the predicted climate change (increased intensity of rainfall) the impacts of flooding on water in the future will be severe, but more importantly they are likely to be more indirect, through increased cost to treat water, than direct, through the damage of the infrastructure (GoU, 2018). The mandate for urban water production and water supply is managed at national level, by the National Water and Sewerage Corporation (NWSC), and not by the local authorities. This in itself is a driver of vulnerability as NWSC is unable to cover the entire towns and rural areas with piped water. Hence, alternative sources of water have to be sought, including boreholes, protected and unprotected springs, streams, rivers, swamps and wetlands. In addition, the water connection costs and tariffs are so high and the poor communities indicate that they cannot afford them.

#### **e) Infrastructure**

Extreme weather events (droughts, continued heavy precipitation) increasing in intensity and frequency indicate increased stressors on human agglomerations. High precipitation events are likely to increase. The prevalence of flooded infrastructure including roads, the frequency of displacement/migration (GIZ 2021), high temperatures accelerate degradation of roads, bridges and protective structures, which inhibits goods transportation. Extreme weather events likely hit high-density informal settlements particularly hard, which are characterized by makeshift home structures in unstable geographical locations such as riverbanks and population increase will stress current water and energy systems.

#### **f) Vulnerabilities**

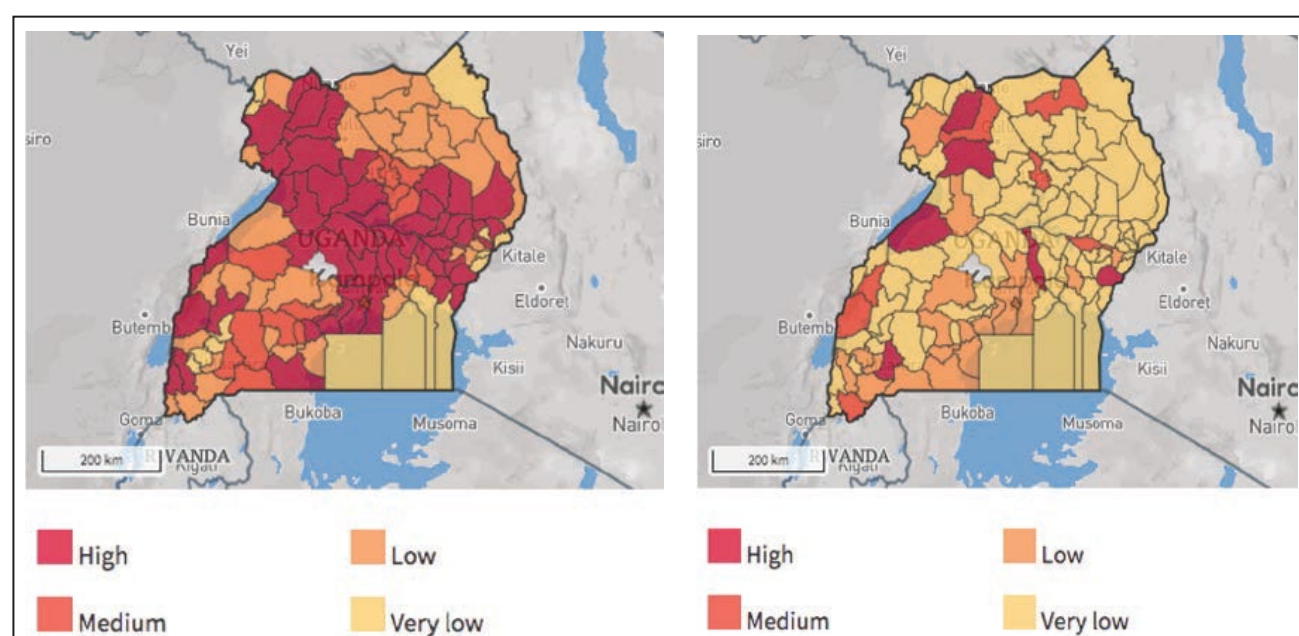
Acute climatic events of significance include drought, water scarcity, fires, and extreme heat. With an extended dry season forecasted, rainfall intensity is expected to increase over a shorter duration than historically occurring, leading to more likelihood of detrimental flood events. Smallholders are materially vulnerable to the forecasted climatic changes. The most material impact would be likely to be erratic rainfall and flood events, higher temperatures, hot days, and to lesser degree, fires.

'Acute' extreme weather events and water scarcity – water scarcity is forecasted to decrease. Models suggest that there is a 1% chance of a drought event occurring in the next ten years. However, water availability for domestic and crop production use is at risk. Decreased water availability due to spring wells being contaminated by flooding, high-density informal settlements likely hardest hit by extreme weather events and concomitant disease spread.

Rainfall: A rainfall increase of 19mm is expected to occur by 2030 and an increase of 45mm by 2040. The rainfall increase is expected to be experienced between September and December. Rainfall variability is also forecasted to increase whilst the wet season duration is forecasted to shorten. Regions like Gulu District will become impassable during rainy seasons, often resulting in food shortages and inaccessibility to health facilities and schools.<sup>20</sup>

Floods (Urban/River) – Flood risk is forecasted to increase in the future. Models suggest that there is a chance of more than 1% that potentially damaging and life-threatening river floods occur in the next 10 years—days with rainfall >20mm are forecasted to decrease. Hence flooding events are expected to intensify.

**Figure 4: Uganda river flood risk (left)<sup>21</sup> and urban flood risk (right)<sup>22</sup>**



Source: World Bank (2020)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> ThinkHazard! (2020). *Uganda River Flood*. URL: <http://thinkhazard.org/en/report/253-uganda/FL>

<sup>22</sup> ThinkHazard! (2020). *Uganda Urban Flood*. URL: <http://thinkhazard.org/en/report/253-uganda/UF>



Youths have identified one of the key drivers of unemployment as climate change. A male FGD participant in Kucwiny explained that “harsh climatic changes especially too much sunshine is drying up crops for some of us in the agricultural sector” while another in Amuru observed that “Youths in the informal sector have been affected by drought. Their crops have dried up.” These observations align with the impacts of the observed and projected climate change by various models and studies as described in section above. Explaining the key drivers of the current high inflationary pressures being experienced in Uganda, Professor Augustus Nuwagaba in his article, “Economists, where are you?” observed that one critical factor that has driven prices high is drought. He argued that there have been prolonged dry spells, resulting in crop failure. A piece by (Tshukudu, 2021) pointed out that climate change is having a growing negative impact, hitting the most vulnerable hardest, and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement, and increasing stress on water resources.

A key informant in Pakwach highlighted that there has been rising water levels that have colonised one of the villages in Pakwach. Consequently, the nearby River Ora burst its banks and had spread within the community causing outbreak of diseases like cholera, typhoid, which was likely to become more serious because affected people have nowhere to go. The respondent continued that the majority of the youths are on their own as households, but still their livelihoods have already been messed up by the floods because the greatest source of survival is the garden work. Even those dealing in animals, animals have developed very serious problems like diseases. See more discussion under the section 5.9 “Relationship between youths unemployment and climate change”.

## **5.4 Available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options for young people**

The sustainable livelihoods approach is a way of thinking about the objectives, scope, and priorities for development activities. It is based on evolving thinking about the way the poor and vulnerable live their lives and the importance of policies and institutions (Serrat, 2017). The sustainable livelihoods approach facilitates the identification of practical priorities for actions that are based on the views and interests of those concerned but they are not a panacea. The research assessed the available formal and informal sustainable options for young people. However, to arrive at these options, a definition of each sector was first provided to give

context to the sustainable livelihood options for the youth. Formal sector includes formally registered companies remitting taxes and contributing to a country's economy; jobs that registered and contribute to the gross national product (GNP) and gross domestic product (GDP); and a sector which generates income on which tax must be paid.

Informal sector has been defined differently by many scholars. (Mugoda, Esaku, Nakimu, & Bbaale, 2020) view it as the legal production of goods and services by businesses that are not registered for the purposes of taxation. Others define it using certain criteria: (i) activities of the sector, (ii) employment level, (iii) legal businesses but sometimes with hidden activities, (iv) income and employment-survival, and (v) registration status of the business. A person is considered to work in the informal economy when he/she is engaged in a business or enterprise that does not keep book of account, has less than 10 workers, has no business/enterprise license and works at least four hours a week. The UBOS (2021) describes informal sector to include those inside the household's dwelling, at the roadside, other fixed location and mobile ones.

With this background, the following sustainable livelihood options were found to be available and exploitable by the Youths both in urban and rural areas. As illustrated in the table below, there are over forty (40) sustainable livelihood options available to the Youths in the five districts. The most prominent livelihood option was crop farming where 93% of youths are engaged in with no difference between female (92%) and male (92%). Interestingly, more Youths in urban (95%) were involved in crop farming than rural (88%) and this was attributed to unclear demarcation between rural or urban areas especially with the recent creation of administrative units.

Youths were not fully aware under which jurisdiction their area fell. In terms of districts, more youths (99%) in Apac practiced crop farming (groundnuts, maize, cassava, beans, sim-sim, sunflower, soybeans) followed by Amuru (97%) with crops that included groundnuts, maize, cassava, and beans. Terego-Imvepi Refugee settlement registered more Youths than Nebbi (86%) and Pakwach (91%) primarily because most Youths in the camp were engaged in growing crops like okra, onions, sorghum, maize, tomatoes, cabbages, egg plants on the pieces land they were allocated in the settlement. Nebbi and Pakwach are situated on the Arua-Kampala main highway and were more involved in non-crop activities like Fish processing and selling.

The next option youths were engaged in was retail trade/shop dealing in general merchandise at 72% with more male (77%) than female (69%). This contrasted with the work of Mugoda et. Al (2020) who found that more women operated retail shops than men because of the nature of retail business which provided gainful employment and incomes to the most vulnerable segments of the population as seen by the number of women engaged in retail business. There were fewer opportunities (60%) in the retail trade in Terego-Imvepi refugee settlement as compared to Apac (88%), Amuru (86%) possibly because of low purchasing power of refugees who depended on food rations and occasional casual work in host communities' areas. Meanwhile, more rural youths (81%) were involved in retail trade than urban (68%) possibly because of burdensome inspection that are more common in urban compared to rural areas. Through these inspections informal gifts are asked from those involved which increases cost of doing business and affect their growth.

Livestock keeping (goat, cattle) was also prominent at 71% with more male (79%) than female (65%) involved. Rural folks practised more (76%) livestock keeping than urban Youths (69%). In both gender and residence, keeping livestock was more demanding in terms of attention, veterinary services, and required space which could only be found in rural areas. Amuru had more opportunities at 95% compared to Terego-Imvepi refugee settlements (56%). Poultry keeping was also an available sustainable livelihood option at 65% with few women (59%) than men (74%) engaged in it. As would be expected, there were more rural folks (72%) than urban (61%) practising the business.

Other reasonably rated livelihood options available to the youths were financial services (mobile money and agent banking) business, salon services/beauty parlour, transport services (motor cycles/bicycles), restaurant and hotels, tailoring, brewing and selling alcohol (local brew), market vending, baking (cakes, pancakes, cookies, chapatti), food vending along roadsides. New emerging ideas indicated that potential options included manufacture and sale of clean energy technologies, Bee keeping, sale of agriculture inputs like improved seed varieties, rainwater and runoff water harvesting equipment, irrigation equipment, fish farming etc. with potential to address climate change and environmental degradation. However, Youths are to a large extent, not aware of such opportunities climate change bring. A deliberate strategy and programme be designed to ensure these opportunities are popularised, or trainings conducted.

The youths also mentioned options with potential including carpentry and joinery, metal works and welding, fish processing and selling. It is fair to assert that some of these formal and informal livelihood options where youths were engaged in did not have a direct relationship to impacts of climate change because they were largely new form of enterprises. Since some of the youths had just ventured into such businesses, it is too early to assess or confirm their success rate because Youths too did not have a clear position of whether these were the enterprises they wanted to permanently engage in, or these were simply stop gap measures. It is recommended a study be conducted to assess success rate, challenges, and lessons that can be learnt from these for potential replication. Some Youths had already identified these formal and informal livelihood options and started engaging in them as these examples demonstrate:

#### Box 4: Firewood selling improved Ropani Scovia wellbeing

*My name is Ropani Scovia, a refugee at Imvepi Refugee settlement, village 4. The condition in my family is not very good because I am not with my husband because he does not support me. Sometimes, I came to this camp in 2017 and survive on monthly food rations. Considering the number in this camp, Bidi-Bidi and Rhino Camp refugee settlements, these rations are not sufficient to cater for my family and had to devise options and strategies to improve our livelihood. We used to go without basic necessities like soap, salt or even sugar and this had a negative impact on my family. Consequently, I started doing casual work for some host community members by digging in their gardens or even work at construction sites. Since we have a fairly big family, I also started collecting firewood to sell and this has been my routine although the host communities do chase us away but still, we persevere because we do not have any viable option. The firewood which I collect are sold in the local market here in Terego. The money I make from selling firewood varies, but on a good day, I can make UGX.40,000. Previously when I worked as casual labourer for member of the host communities, I would only make about UGX.3,000. But if they assign me a quarter of an acre, I can make about UGX.20,000. Collecting and selling firewood gives me and my family a slight improvement if we add on to the food rations that we receive on a monthly basis.*

**Box 5: Disability hasn't stopped Tutu Suzan improving her wellbeing**

My name is Tutu Suzan, 30 years – a person with disability (PwD), at Imvepi Refugee settlements, village 9. I came to this camp in 2017 and survive on monthly food rations which has never been sufficient. Sometime, when I get rations in-kind, I sell it. To supplement rations, I grow and sell okra (6 pieces) at between UGX.200 -300. Being a PwD has not discouraged me because I also do casual work especially digging on one leg. To enable me take advantage of physical condition, I request that some training be given to me especially for hairdressing or tailoring because I cannot move well.

A detailed list of all available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options for young people is illustrated in the table below:



*Youths in Mutema village, Amuru district during FGD, 26 September 2022. Photo credit: Okoth Dean Perez*

Table 4: Available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options for young people

#	Livelihood Options	District (%)						Residence (%)			Gender (%)		Average (%)
		Nebbi	Amuru	Terego	Pakwach	Apac	Urban	Rural	Male	Female			
1	Crop farming	85.7	97.4	93.0	90.6	98.8	94.8	88.0	93.7	91.7	92.5		
2	Retail trade/shop - general merchandise	74.4	85.5	60.2	73.4	88.2	67.7	80.5	76.6	68.6	71.9		
3	Livestock keeping	69.9	94.7	55.7	84.4	85.9	68.7	76.0	79.4	65.1	71.1		
4	Poultry keeping	69.9	89.5	46.3	79.7	77.6	61.4	72.0	73.8	58.6	65.0		
5	Financial services e.g., Mobile money/Airtel Money	74.4	69.7	50.0	65.6	80.0	56.7	78.0	70.6	58.9	63.8		
6	Salon services/Beauty parlor	69.2	65.8	51.2	65.6	69.4	57.5	68.5	60.3	61.7	61.1		
7	Charcoal selling	65.4	75.0	53.7	64.1	60.0	59.0	65.0	61.1	60.9	61.0		
8	Firewood selling	59.4	73.7	57.8	60.9	58.8	60.2	61.5	57.9	62.6	60.6		
9	Transport services (Vehicle/Motorcycle/Bicycle)	64.7	78.9	43.4	62.5	80.0	54.5	70.5	77.0	47.4	59.8		
10	Restaurant & Hotel	61.7	64.5	45.1	59.4	72.9	50.7	68.5	54.4	58.3	56.6		
11	Tailoring	54.1	67.1	44.7	59.4	65.9	49.8	63.0	49.6	57.4	54.2		
12	Brewing & selling alcohol/Local brew	53.4	67.1	50.8	43.8	57.6	52.7	55.5	50.4	56.0	53.7		
13	Market vendor	50.4	53.9	51.6	53.1	63.5	51.2	58.0	48.0	57.4	53.5		
14	Baking e.g., Cakes, Pancakes, Cookies, Chapatti.	51.9	52.6	44.7	59.4	62.4	45.5	63.0	45.6	55.4	51.3		
15	Brick making	54.9	68.4	38.1	48.4	64.7	48.3	55.0	59.9	43.7	50.5		
16	Building & Construction services.	57.1	50.0	29.1	59.4	67.1	40.3	59.0	59.1	37.4	46.5		
17	Food vending along Roadsides	48.9	50.0	40.6	45.3	52.9	42.8	52.0	43.7	47.4	45.8		
18	Bar waiter/Waitress	51.9	47.4	34.8	46.9	57.6	38.1	58.0	44.4	44.9	44.7		
19	Carpentry & Joinery	45.9	52.6	32.4	51.6	60.0	39.1	53.5	53.2	37.1	43.9		
20	Metal works and Welding	48.9	46.1	29.1	53.1	63.5	35.1	59.0	52.0	36.6	43.0		
21	Fish processing and selling	33.8	34.2	33.2	89.1	51.8	37.8	50.5	44.0	40.6	42.0		
22	Gambling or placing a bet	46.6	40.8	30.3	43.8	54.1	35.6	49.0	44.8	36.6	40.0		
23	Timber harvesting/logging & selling	45.1	46.1	29.5	40.6	52.9	35.8	47.0	45.2	35.4	39.5		
24	Vehicle repair e.g., Mechanics for vehicle	45.1	39.5	27.0	50.0	58.8	33.3	52.0	50.8	31.4	39.5		
25	Handcraft making (weaving mats, and baskets.	40.6	40.8	30.7	54.7	48.2	33.6	50.5	33.7	43.1	39.2		

#	Livelihood Options	District (%)						Residence (%)			Gender (%)		Average (%)
		Nebbi		Amuru		Terego	Pakwach	Apac	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	
26	Cobbler (making & Mending shoes & sandals)	42.1	53.9	28.3	32.8	56.5	34.8	47.5	45.2	34.6	39.0		
27	Hardware shop	46.6	42.1	24.6	42.2	55.3	29.6	54.5	46.4	31.7	37.9		
28	Hawking	39.1	48.7	28.3	35.9	51.8	32.1	48.0	40.5	35.1	37.4		
29	Scraps collection and selling	43.6	36.8	27.9	32.8	43.5	31.6	42.5	37.7	33.4	35.2		
30	Electronics repair	40.6	36.8	21.7	40.6	56.5	27.9	48.5	45.2	27.1	34.7		
31	Begging	41.4	39.5	31.6	20.3	38.8	33.6	36.5	35.7	33.7	34.6		
32	Plumbing	36.8	28.9	17.2	40.6	47.1	21.4	46.5	39.3	22.9	29.7		
33	Music and Recording/CDs and DVDs	38.3	30.3	20.1	28.1	44.7	24.1	41.0	38.9	23.1	29.7		
34	Tourism service	28.6	25.0	18.0	54.7	31.8	21.9	37.5	28.2	26.3	27.1		
35	Tree nursery/Road-side gardening/Selling ornamental plants/Flowers	32.3	28.9	18.4	23.4	42.4	21.9	36.5	28.6	25.4	26.7		
36	Agro-input dealer (Fertilizers, tools, Seeds)	31.6	23.7	17.2	32.8	44.7	20.4	39.5	31.0	23.7	26.7		
37	Mowing Grass	27.8	23.7	22.1	31.3	35.3	23.9	31.5	27.8	25.4	26.4		
38	Herbal medicine extraction and trade	27.1	34.2	20.5	18.8	40.0	21.9	35.0	30.6	23.1	26.2		
39	Real Estate e.g., Land and Houses	26.3	30.3	16.0	26.6	40.0	18.9	36.0	27.0	22.9	24.6		
40	Commercial and survival of sex	31.6	25.0	19.7	21.9	23.5	21.4	28.5	25.8	22.3	23.8		
41	Agro-processor e.g., Milling cereals	28.6	23.7	13.9	31.3	37.6	18.2	34.5	28.2	20.3	23.6		
42	Other (specify)	1.5	-	2.0	1.6	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.2	1.7	1.5		

Source: Primary data, 2022

As shown in table above, there are many available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options that the Youths can exploit given the right information, training and environment. For a Youths to choose the best enterprise that can gainfully engage him/her, there is need to undertake needs assessment (conduct feasibility study) and map out Youths with the type of option in which they have the skills, interest and available market. Training in life skills, financial management, financial literacy and business management are crucial to avoid wasteful use of enterprise resources. This was because one of the difficulties faced by the Youths which was also a determinant/driver of unemployment was preference for instant gratification where Youths waste funds instead of saving and creating wealth.

As a way to impress and assess youths in various enterprise selection, it is recommended that AAIU should undertake a business plan development competition. This would be a good innovation which can give opportunity for youths to share experiences, showcase presentation skills, and exhibit knowledge and skills that they have in a particular enterprise Business plan competition. If successful, such competition could be an annual event conducted for all the five districts in a central location with judges drawn from outside the organisation. Properly designed, business plan development competition can boost business best practices in similar interventions. Winners could be given a certain amount as start-up capital with runners-run getting maybe 50% of what the winners got.

## **5.5 Options and strategies for livelihood diversification among youth**

In order to accurately and comprehensively document options and strategies for livelihood diversification among unemployed Youths in West Nile and Northern regions, there was need to fully have a clear and unambiguous understanding of what livelihood diversification meant and entailed. (Biswas & Mallick, 2020) state that livelihood diversification is a process by which people increase the number of income generating activities to improve the livelihood quality and well-being of the family. Some say it is the process by which every household persists and develops their standard of living or an indication of a variation in income-generating activities. A more common understanding of livelihood diversification is increasing the number of income-generating activities in any sector, where for instance, people who work in the traditional farming sector, simultaneously, can work in secondary or tertiary sectors.



Livelihood options strategies are operations that contribute to the desired results (Ayana, Megento, & Kussa, 2022). There are coping strategies and adaptive ones which are respectively reactive and proactive livelihood strategies. Coping strategies are often survival strategies which are a short-term reaction to shocks or immediate strain, and adaptive strategies are a long-term change in behavioural habits due to stress and shock. The interaction among the following three attributes: possession of human capabilities, access to other tangible and intangible assets, and the existence of economic activities defines what livelihood option an individual household pursues. Human capability, livelihood assets and the existence of economic activity are three important elements of livelihood options (Krantz, 2001). Diversification of livelihoods entails both on and off-farm activities (Losch, Fre´guin-Gresh, & White, 2010). The diversification is undertaken to overcome the limitations of a particular local economy or to expand their options, some households adopt flexible arrangements that allow members to participate in multiple urban and/or rural economies.

On-farm diversification means maintaining a wide range of activities in the development of crops and livestock that interlock with each other in different ways. A traditional example is a mixed crop or intercropping which refers to growing two or more crops on the same piece of land to take advantage of complementarities between crops when using soil nutrients, sunlight and other resources. Non-farm diversification refers to finding opportunities for business or jobs other than conventional production of crops and rearing of livestock. Agriculture is also linked to non-farm diversification since it requires the processing and trading of agricultural produce.

Non-farm practices often include the provision of utilities, commerce, business and manufacturing, the selling of wage labour or self-employment in small businesses, and other risk-minimisation techniques (Losch et al. 2010). This study involved urban and rural youths. Therefore, findings revealed that rural Youths continued to participate in a variety of non-farm activities including food for casual, grain trade (produce selling), subsistence and small-scale farming (okra, onions, sorghum, maize, tomatoes, cabbages, egg plants, groundnuts), liquor sales (local brews and industrial type), and sales of handicrafts (sponges, craft shoes, etc.)

Crop farming has been identified as the most dominant activity where youths are engaged. In this context, diversification included enterprises (planting various crops or inter-cropping), spatial diversification (planting across different fields), temporal diversification (staggered planting) and diversification of varieties (low risk, varieties resistant to drought). Other types of diversification involved diversification of inputs (using low risk or lower cost inputs), business diversification (alternative sources for purchasing inputs and selling outputs) and vertical integration (diversification into own production of inputs and own processing outputs).

This research documented several options and strategies for livelihood diversification common in the study area. The top options included crop growing which was practised by almost every Youths interviewed. Casual work which included several items like gardening work (digging, weeding, support in harvesting), work at construction site, collecting water for people and most menial jobs fell under this category. Youths also practised retail business which involved dealing in general merchandise as well as wholesaling. One option common to Youths was transport especially boda-boda or bicycle. In this, two options are available working for someone who has a motor cycle or bicycle or using one's own machine. Some youths especially in Nebbi, Pakwach, Amuru and Apac are involved in fishing and selling fish while a good number also owned or worked in salon/barbershop.

Similarly, a good number was involved in bakery which included making cakes, pancakes, cookies, and chapattis. Poultry and livestock keeping were also common among the Youths as well as market vending, mobile money (including bank agent) business and restaurant, food vending and catering services. Some youths also collected and sold firewood while others were involved in sports betting, gambling and playing cards for cash. Partly because of construction taking place in the areas, some Youths made bricks for sale as individuals and groups. Although, it is affected by boutiques and market for second hand clothes, tailoring was also still common as well as charcoal selling. To this extent, the study found the following options and strategies for livelihood diversification among unemployed Youths in West Nile and Northern Uganda.

Table 5: Options and Strategies for livelihood diversification

	Options and Strategies for livelihood diversification	Frequency	Proportion
1	Crop growing	304	22%
2	Casual work	104	7%
3	Retail Business/General Merchandise/wholesale	102	7%
4	Transport (Motor cycle/Bicycle	89	6%
5	Fishing	84	6%
6	Salon/barbershop	66	5%
7	Bakery	55	4%
8	Poultry keeping	48	3%
9	Livestock keeping	41	3%
10	Market vending	41	3%
11	Mobile Money	40	3%
12	Restaurant/Food vending/Hotel	33	2%
13	Firewood selling	29	2%
14	Betting	29	2%
15	Brick making	28	2%
16	Tailoring	26	2%
17	Begging/Support from relatives	24	2%
18	Charcoal selling	22	2%
19	Mechanics/Repairs	19	1%
20	Boutique/selling clothes	18	1%
21	Brewing/Selling alcohol	15	1%
22	Welding & Fabrication	15	1%
23	Produce selling	15	1%
24	Handcraft making e.g. weaving mats, baskets.	13	1%
25	Hawking/roadside selling	13	1%
26	Quarrying/Stone gathering	11	1%
27	Brokerage	10	1%
28	Carpentry	9	1%
29	Bar selling/waiter/waitress	9	1%
30	Borrowing	6	0%
31	Selling fuel	6	0%
32	Money Lending/VSLAs	5	0%
33	Hardware selling	4	0%

	Options and Strategies for livelihood diversification	Frequency	Proportion
34	sugar cane selling	4	0%
35	Stealing	4	0%
36	Sand mining	3	0%
37	Scrap Selling	3	0%
38	Tree planting	3	0%
39	Plumbing	3	0%
40	Beekeeping	3	0%
41	Spare parts	3	0%
42	Cutting & selling grass	2	0%
43	Commercial Farming	2	0%
44	Technical Services to Football Associations	2	0%
45	Language Interpreting	2	0%
46	Nursing Assistant/Pharmaceuticals/Drugs	2	0%
47	Teaching	1	0%
48	Seedling selling	1	0%
49	Short Contracts	1	0%
50	Juice Making	1	0%
51	Hunting	1	0%
52	Motivational Speaking	1	0%
53	Veterinary Work	1	0%
54	Voluntary Work	1	0%
55	Soap making	1	0%
56	Computer Training Centers	1	0%
57	Solar business	1	0%
58	Sex work/prostitution	1	0%
59	Music Recording/burning	1	0%
60	Stationery/Bookshop	1	0%
61	Mowing	1	0%
62	Agent Banking	1	0%
63	Witchcraft	1	0%
64	Security Guard services	1	0%
65	Tobacco selling	1	0%

Source: Primary data, 2022

A Youths at Imvepi refugee settlement rewardingly exploited these options and strategies for excellent results as demonstrated in the box 6 below:

#### Box 6: Creativity and will improve Tabu Jane's wellbeing and livelihood

My name is Kevin Tabu Jane, a refugee at Imvepi Refugee settlements and senior four (S4) leaver. As a refugee, my main source of survival is from monthly food rations. But this is not sufficient to cater for my family and had to devise options and strategies to improve our livelihood. Consequently, I started sponge making in February 2022. This was because of my natural skills in Fine Art, it was actually my best-done subject. After sitting for final examinations in Koboko (S.4 results still withheld in school), I couldn't continue with school because of school fees defaulting,

At school, I had my art skills and it is what has helped me in life. I know how to sew and make crafts. Most times I simply look at someone with a nice design and go try it out at home till I get it. Currently, I employ 4 women whom I trained and support in my craft business. For crafts, I make them out of threads and the sole out of tyres for durability. Final products are sent to my sister in Juba who sells them for about UGX 15,000. For sponges, I sell them UGX. 3,000 or UGX. 7000 in Juba. On average per month, I make UGX.270,000 from sponges and UGX.1,350,000 from craft shoes. The disappointing thing is that I have tried to teach some of my fellow refugee women how to do it, however, most of them say, it is hard to do. It would be my pride to see them embrace this for improving their livelihoods.

## 5.6 Difficulties faced by Youths in the labour market both formal and informal

Youths generally had challenges in as far as unemployment is concerned. In addition, there were serious difficulties faced by the Youths in their quest to secure decent jobs leading to improved wellbeing and livelihood. Quantitative data indicated that the proportion of Youths running a business enterprise was 22% with male (25%) better than female (20%). Rural youths who managed their own enterprises were 29% compared to their urban counterpart at 19%. The lowest ratio was in Imvepi refugee settlement at 13% possibly because of

the difficult conditions refugees find themselves in. Amuru district (17%) was far lower than Apac (22%) although Nebbi (36%) and Pakwach (31%) were not any better. To support these quantitative data, findings from FGDs, key informants and document reviews revealed the following difficulties faced by the Youths in the labour market both informal and formal sectors. The arrangement of these factors is based on attempts by the consultants to rank them in order of perceived significance. However, someone else may choose a different ranking based on certain considerations, which may be an entirely debatable proposition:

### 5.6.1 Mental health and suicidal tendencies

Youths expressed concern about their mental health resulting from prolonged unemployment which was worsened by the impact of COVID-19. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there are many mental disorders that present differently, characterised by a combination of abnormal thoughts, perceptions, emotions, behaviour and relationships with others. Mental disorders include depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other psychoses, dementia, and developmental disorders, including autism. Quantitative data indicated that 51% of Youths experienced increased mental illness during COVID-19 with more female (55%) than male (46%), and 51% in both rural and urban areas. A male FGD participant in Amuru remarked that “I lost touch with my friends leading to loneliness and nearing mental illness. I couldn’t drink with them” while a male key informant in Amuru observed that “Psychological/mental disorder/trauma due to increased case of mental illness and suicide”

Research studies also indicated that the risk of mental health problems like depression was higher among the unemployed than among the employed. A study by (Mokona, Yohannes, & Ayano, 2020) found factors like long duration of unemployment, low self-esteem, poor social support, and alcohol use were statistically significant with depression. It is reported that unemployment still has a negative effect on mental wellbeing as long as five years after starting a new job.<sup>23</sup>

Qualitative data from a male Youths in Amuru highlighted this point “to begin with, I am unemployed. When my condition worsens, sometimes I think of committing suicide by overdosing with drugs or taking poison. If I am lucky and abandon

23 <https://www.fau.eu/2022/03/28/news/research/unemployment-has-a-lasting-negative-effect-on-mental-health/#:~:text=The%20result%3A%20unemployment%20still%20has,unemployed%20for%20a%20short%20time.>

the idea, I go out to steal. However, in my bitterness, I want to steal and even kill the one from whom I have stolen. I just don't know why but this has repeatedly happened to me. It is clear that if I had a job, possibly this would not happen because the job would give me some money which improves my condition".

### 5.6.2 Drug abuse and alcoholism

One of the difficulties youths faced was drug and alcoholism. A male FGD participant in Amuru reflected that "drug abuse and alcoholism is making Youths unproductive at work" with another saying "the Youths have a problem of making poor choices in life. Rather than choosing a job and building a career, they instead go drinking". Another male FGD participant in Apac observed that "our moral behaviours worsened as I learnt how to drink and smoke". A key informant in Nebbi remarked that "youths are engaged in prostitution and those who cannot do prostitution take marijuana. I know Youths do these because of frustration since they do not see any light at the end of the tunnel".

This difficulty was further highlighted by the views of a key informant in Pakwach who observed that "drug addiction among the Youths is too much especially with peer pressure from fellow youths with vices like drugs and alcohol consuming the youth. Engaging in drugs and alcohol take away the productive time of the Youths and destroys them as human beings, lowers the efficiency at work". This observation was re-echoed by a female key informant in Amuru who said "alcohol and drug abuse are too common among Youths in this place". This finding is supported by scholarly research like (Azagba, Shan, Qeadan, & Wolfson, 2021) who found that unemployment was associated with substance abuse admissions for alcohol, marijuana, opiates, cocaine, and other drug use. These findings suggest that economic hardship is associated with increased substance use and also implies that treatment for substance use of certain drugs and alcohol should remain a priority even during economic downturns.

### 5.6.3 Violence and aggressive behaviour

FGDs and key informants revealed that youths exhibited violent and aggressive behaviour, partly blamed on unemployment. A key informant in Amuru reported that "Youths are too violent and aggressive leading to high rate of crime" while another attributed the level of violence and aggression on "lack of respect among youth. They just do not listen to elders". During FGDs, a male Youths in Amuru remarked that "whenever I see that I am unemployed, I ask myself why me! Sometimes I just want to fight whoever I meet". Probed further, he opined that the

violent behaviour is partly due to the effect of the war in Northern Uganda, which may take him time to unshackle. Clearly, it is imperative to impute the need for psychosocial support for the Youths in these areas.

This view was re-echoed by another male FGD participant in Amuru who linked this tendency to post war trauma after the destructive war. In his words, he said “majority of Youths here are still facing post war trauma which has made us to hate our own life. As a result, youths take drugs and alcoholism to help lessen the trauma which has resulted in vices like emotional issues, aggression, fighting and lack of harmony”. War conditions and conflicts have a major negative impact on children and youths’ lives and include mental health consequences (Charlson, et al., 2019). It is well-documented that youths living in conflict-affected areas (conflict-affected youths), experience multiple and on-going psychological traumas, and stressful situations (Dimitry, 2011). Evidently, there is need to devise intervention mechanism to help address these psychosocial problems which is creating social, behavioural and relationship tension. (Forsberg & Jon-Håkon, 2022) studied the educational and psychosocial support for conflict-affected youths and recommended as such.

A study by (Fischer, Greitemeyer, & Frey, 2007) revealed that given the economic and psychological interest of work, unemployment clearly represents a deeply frustrating event: unemployment contains a variety of frustrations including economic suffering, perceived unfairness, and decline of social status. Similarly, a study by (Irum & Anum, 2021) found that young people with low socio-economic background are more vulnerable and become the victim of aggression due to the frustration and anxiety of joblessness. Because the people with low socio-economic status have more pressure to get job, it is needed to overcome the stress of the young unemployed people and engage them in healthy activities so that they can contribute positively in the development of society.

#### **5.6.4 Lack of employable skills**

Quantitative data showed that 79% of youths lack employable skills. Employability skills are those basic skills necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job. These are the skills, attitudes and actions that enable workers to get along with their fellow workers and supervisors and to make sound, critical decisions. Employers need reliable, responsible workers who can solve problems and who have the social skills and attitudes to work together with other workers. Findings showed that more female (84%) compared to male (71%) lacked employable skills. This is



not surprising given that 85% of female attained primary or secondary education compared to male at 82%. Meanwhile, only 69% of youths in rural compared to 84% in urban areas lacked employable skills. Again, this disparity can be explained by more opportunities and exposure urban youths have as compared to rural folks. Amuru district with 92% reported greatest lack of employable skills followed by Terego (88%) while Pakwach (52%) was better off in comparative terms. A study by (Fajaryati & Akhyar, 2020) found that employability is a skill that individuals should have to continue their career in life. To face global competition and remain active in future world work, individuals need to renew their employability skills. Employability skills must be owned by workers according to the employer including communication, team working, problem solving and technological skills.

In order to address lack of employable skills, it is imperative to involve private sector in marketable employable skills development programmes because Uganda is a private sector led economy which employs the largest number of people. Interventions aimed at skilling Youths should be designed in partnership with private sector or umbrella organisation. Skills differ by trade/profession, industry and change with time and Youths did not know what skills they lacked because they couldn't provide recommendation other than recommending general training. Involvement of private sector is meant to draw attention to skills in vogue since private sector has first-hand knowledge on type of marketable skills needed for industry. This means that a comprehensive employable skills gap assessment for Youths needs to be conducted. The Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Patrick Ocailap, said "given the fact that the government is essentially not the largest employer the best we can do is to put in place policies that will expand the growth of the economy and be able to make firms more competitive and profitable. Once the private sector does well as a result of the policies that will spur growth, then the incentives to increase payments (wages) will follow suit." Youths need to know what skills they lack so that strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) project can design an appropriate, tailored-made and focused training and skills enhancement.

#### **5.6.5 Sexual harassment and abuse**

As much as it is disgusting and deplorable, sexual harassment and abuse is a double-edged sword in the youths unemployment equation as it was both a driver as well as a difficulty faced by the youth. As Box 1 illustrated, this was a deep-seated vice that needs immediate and concerted efforts. This is because in almost all the FGDs, the issue of sexual harassment and abuse was prominently

discussed and loathed by many. A female FGD participant in Amuru remarked that “I went for an interview, did it and was confident that the outcome would be favourable. To my surprise, I received a phone call informing me that all indication was that the job would be mine, but the caller asked to meet me and discuss it with him. When I reached the venue for our meeting, unashamedly, he asked for sex in return!” Another lady FGD participant in Apac observed that because sexual harassment and abuse is so common during job search and interviews, she has decided not to even try applying for jobs for self-preservation reasons. Caruso (2015) showed the existence of a positive relationship between unemployment and rape, implying that if there is opportunity perspective, the level of unemployment increases as an indicator of social insecurity. Folke & Rickne (2022) showed that harassment deters women and men from applying for jobs in workplaces where they are the gender minority. Sexual harassment and abuse were so rampant and common that the case study in Box 1 above illustrated its pervasiveness.

A study by (Folke & Rickne, 2022) found that people are highly averse to accepting jobs in workplaces with a higher harassment risk for their own gender, but less averse when people of the opposite sex are at higher risk. It also indicated that harassment contributes to inequality by making workplace gender minorities leave their workplaces for new jobs. The study concluded that sexual harassment from colleagues and managers was a barrier to gender equality in the labour market and that women suffer more sexual harassment in the workplace than men.

### 5.6.6 Early marriages and attendant difficulties

At the face of it, early marriages and teenage pregnancy may not necessarily turn out to be a difficulty but its complexity. For the Youths involved and affected by early marriages start bearing children without any jobs making them susceptible to many socio-economic conditions including inability to provide for their family resulting in escalation of GBV. Girls in early marriage are often left with limited education, employment prospects and social networks. Women who marry early are more likely to suffer abuse and violence, with inevitable psychological as well as physical consequences. Various studies have indicated that women who marry at young ages are more likely to believe that it is sometimes acceptable for a husband to beat his wife, and are therefore more likely to experience domestic violence themselves. Violent behaviour can take the form of physical harm, psychological attacks, threatening behaviour and forced sexual acts including rape. Abuse is sometimes perpetrated by the husband’s family as well as the

husband himself, and girls that enter families as a bride often become domestic slaves for the in-laws.

The relationship between child marriage and unemployment is complex. Women in early marriage usually have low educational attainment which may reduce their likelihood of entering the labour market and adversely affect the type of jobs they engage in. This may be the case in contexts where higher levels of educational attainment are associated with increased likelihood of labour market participation, in part due to the high opportunity cost of not working. In other contexts, specifically in low-income settings where labour markets tend to be informal and where many women, faced with poverty, must work simply for the household to survive, the impacts of lower educational attainment on women's labour market participation may be less salient.

Although child marriage need not necessarily have a direct impact on women's labour force participation, higher fertility associated with child marriage may influence women's roles in the labour market and the number of hours they are able to work. Frequent interruptions to employment due to childbirth and the time burden of care responsibilities can also affect the types of jobs that women can engage in, forcing them into lower-paying jobs and more unstable work situations. Child marriage can also curb women's agency and limit their bargaining power in their households, including possibly with regards to the decision to enter the labour force.

#### **5.6.7 Nepotism, corruption, bribery and segregation**

Youths observed that during recruitment processes, qualifying colleagues and indeed themselves are not accepted/taken as they are segregated against simply because such youths were not from that particular district, tribe, political affiliation or community. A male FGD participant in Amuru narrated how he was "failed" at interview because he was told he didn't come from Nwoya district. A female FGD participant commented that she was not given a job because she was not an "Alur" and only "Jonam" would qualify. Stories were told of direct discrimination and segregation as jobs were given to prominent families, relatives, friends and in-laws.

A male FGD participant in Panyimur alleged that in the recent recruitment into the Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces (UPDF), people from other tribes were ferried into the recruitment centres and bona fide residents were denied the opportunity. A

female FGD participant in Imvepi Refugee settlements revealed that “all available jobs were given to Ugandans only. We, South Sudanese are not considered even if you qualify”. A key informant in Pakwach district simply remarked that “the high levels of nepotism and favouritism in the area in terms of tribes and ethnic leanings has significantly contributed to the unemployment in the area just because one particular tribe wants their people to get jobs leaving their counterparts jobless in the area”. The same view was echoed by a key informant in Amuru who said youths unemployment is worsened because there is “a lot of segregation where relatives, friends, and in-laws are recruited”.

The impact of nepotism, corruption and segregation has been studied by (Yasin, et al., 2019) who showed that financially strong families can easily influence on the hiring process for obtaining a job in public sector. The positive and significant impact of certain economic benefits to the interviewers impacts on probability of getting a job has proven the presence of the element of nepotism in hiring process.

Similarly, a study by (Bakare, 2011) showed that there is a negative relationship between corruption and output growth. It revealed that corruption is a cankerworm that has eaten into the fabric of public institutions and is a universal phenomenon, its magnitude and effects are severe and deep-seated. All forms of corruption manifest in bribery, frauds, embezzlement, election rigging, examination malpractice. It was discovered that corruption has caused decay and dereliction within the infrastructure of government and the society in physical, social and human terms.

### **5.6.8 Inadequate access to information about job opportunities**

A typical difficulty Youths found in the labour market was lack of access to information about where the jobs are. (Robalino, Margolis, Rother, Newhouse, & Lundberg, 2013) found that youths face more constraints relative to adult workers when accessing jobs, and have less or no work or job-search experience, they are less connected to jobs through their social networks. During FGD in Amuru, it was observed that there was information asymmetry about job opportunities worsened by some unscrupulous people concealing/hoarding away available job opportunities to limit competition. As highlighted by a key informant in Apac, in some instances, “jobs are simply few yet there are too many job seekers.” Another informant in Apac said that “there are many youths qualified in only one field or profession hence many are unemployed because only few can be absorbed

by the district local government. Private sector is not developed in Apac". The inadequacy of jobs for all the youths has been highlighted by the Chairman of National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU), the largest national trade union in Uganda, Mr. Usher Wilson Owere, who opined that the low wages is much more of a structural problem. According to him, "there is need for more jobs in the market as there are too few jobs for everybody, including between 400,000–800,000 young people who enter the job market annually, for a mere 80,000 new jobs each year".

With this stark reality, youths are advised to develop social networks to enable them learn about existing or potential job opportunity in different areas of the country. Although Youths generally like to get jobs within their areas of birth<sup>24</sup>, it is imperative that they establish social networks in other areas too. Avenues through which Youths can access information about where the jobs are, include job Intermediation, In-School Counseling, Job fairs, help wanted Websites. According to UBOS (2021), job search methods employed by prospective job candidates in Uganda are 60% friends/relatives, 19% directly by employer, 16% Newspaper/job advertisement, 2% by recruiter/intermediary/broker in country and others at 3%.

### 5.6.9 Level of Education

This study found that the level of illiteracy among youths was high. Quantitative data showed that about 3.3% of Youths participants did not have formal education and 47% attained primary education, with female (59%) and male (31%). Urban youths with primary education were (57%) and rural counterpart at (25%). Of the Youths interviewed, only 36% had secondary education with majority being male (51%) and female (26%) as contrasted with urban (31%) and rural (48%). Youths with some levels of skills were those with vocational and University education that was 13% with male (17%) and female (11%). More rural Youths (25%) had vocational and university education as compared to urban (8%). Generally, there were more males (99%) who attained some level of education than females (96%) possibly indicating level of female dropout from school either due to child and early marriages, teenage pregnancy or preference given to boys than girls.

A study by (Mpendulo & Mang'unyi, 2018) established that educational level was found to positively relate to unemployment and also had the highest effect on unemployment. The UBOS (2021) revealed that education is key determinant factor in exposing one to employment opportunities. The study showed that majority of those without education or had attained only some primary education were

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24 Key informant in Pakwach

engaged in subsistence agriculture while those who completed primary and other higher education levels were mostly in employment. Thus, the higher the education level, the higher the proportion in employment. Similarly, data from the US Bureau of Labour Statistics show that as workers' educational attainment rises, their unemployment rates decrease and earnings increase, and that workers with less education had the highest unemployment rate. This report compares with the finding of this research which indicated that about 87% of youths had no formal education, attended primary or secondary education hence level of unemployment was 49%.

To address this challenge, may require a deliberate skilling programme that targets youths with no formal education, primary or lower secondary education. Both youths who are refugees and host communities be trained in various TVET disciplines of carpentry and joinery, bakery, salon business, agriculture among others in order to earn a living independently. This approach will increase access to quality skills development through vocational training and provision of entrepreneurial skills hence contributes to the development of sustainable livelihoods through creation of income generating activities for both refugee and host communities.

#### 5.6.10 Required Experience

Throughout FGDs, key informant discussions and individual interviews, one of the key concerns raised by Youths was that all job advertisements called for a certain level for experience. A report by the British Chamber of Commerce<sup>25</sup> revealed that firms believe hiring a young person is a risky move due to their lack of experience, plus the investment of time and resource needed to train them. The report concluded that business people tended to favour more skilled and experienced applicants – and while they do sympathise, their primary function is to run a business, which means making business decisions. The findings from our research indicated that Youths had a concern on level of experience asked for when it comes job advertisements.

A male FGD participant rhetorically asked where the school of experience was for him to attend because each job, he attempted to apply for required certain minimum experience. A female key informant in Pakwach highlighted that “there are few positions for the fresh graduates to get into at the local and central governments because the market is in need of experienced employees which

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25 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/young-people-lack-skills-needed-in-the-workplace-according-to-businesses-9769287.html>

the Youths do not have. This has become a problem to them. Positions that can take up fresh graduates are few". Another key informant in Amuru shared similar sentiment stating that "the market is in need of experienced employees, which experience, the Youths do not have. This has become a frustrating thing for the youth". Scholarly studies have also provided the same picture as in the findings above. For example, workers with experience are in high demand in the labour market due to high productivity and low training costs.

Youths expressed concern on requirement by employers for minimum working experience of two years. To address this, the project could engage with the private sector to support youths to establish private enterprises. The project could also engage existing business owners to offer on-the-job training and mentoring to Youths to teach them business operations and help their business to grow. Youths involved in Business Savings and Loans Associations could be linked to private financial institutions to enable them to access youth-friendly savings and credit products.

An alternative approach would be to for the project to collaborate with Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) with internship program such as government-sponsored Skills Development Facility project (funded by World Bank). In this arrangement, PSFU financially supports SMEs and companies that are willing and able to provide internships to vocational training graduates and other youths, ensuring first that these companies meet certain selection criteria including their ability to provide a safe and fair working environment. The project could also design life skills curriculum that teaches target Youths about their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, and what to do if they feel they were being mistreated. The project could provide feedback mechanisms where Youths who may experience negative situations in the workplace have an opportunity to report, which ActionAid International in Uganda then would follow up in collaboration with relevant parties.

#### **5.6.11 Lack of markets for produce**

Availability of ready market for Youths agricultural produce and products is critical, a market with adequate information where Youths can effectively participate is a necessary condition for development of enterprises in the agribusiness sector. Absence of effective marketing information creates vacuum for farmers leading to unfair practices and losses including getting cheated by unscrupulous middlemen in the selling process. This was why a male FGD participant in Apac district observed

that “there is no markets for our produce. The available market is dominated by middlemen who underpay us”. Another key informant while lamenting on lack of markets for Youths agribusiness products highlighted that “the market is merciless implying that some things youths do simply don’t add value.

This means that Youths yearning for more money will always receive low prices or even rejected due to no or poor value addition. Youths should seize opportunities to add value which will attract better prices”. There are many channels Youths can use to market their products including forming cooperatives, or signing marketing agreements directly with produce buyers. The government of Uganda has popularised the Buy Uganda, Build Uganda programme which promotes use of ready markets within Uganda. As a way forward, Buy Uganda, Building Uganda (BUBU) will help in boosting industry growth which in turn will result into more job creation and ultimately better wages. Value addition, will guarantee premium price for agricultural products, translating into better pay.

Although Youths were decrying about lack of markets, there is a creative and less costly way for Youths to market their product. A study by (Inegbedion, Inegbedion, Asaleye, Obadiaru, & Asamu, 2020) demonstrated how Youths in Nigeria adopted the use of social media channels (WhatsApp and Instagram) in the marketing of agricultural products which significantly influenced cost reduction and hence efficiency in marketing as well as enhanced turnover of farmers through increased demand for agricultural products. It implies that the adoption of social media in the marketing of agricultural products enhances the efficiency of agricultural marketing and sales turnover.

The National Labour Force Survey by UBOS (2021) showed that for persons 10 years and above, only 17% use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for business and 96% for social networking. A deeper understanding of this is important especially for Youths forming SACCOs/Cooperatives, farmer groups as they view social media as potential avenue for marketing, capital and non-financial mobilisation to address issues of training and mindset change highlighted by the research.

The lack of markets for agricultural produce may be linked to the quality of public services and market development which resultantly results in youths unemployment. For example, in West Nile, the absence of stable electricity has hindered both formal and informal employment for young people. Government should ensure availability of infrastructure that supports enterprise and market development. Improving infrastructure, support market development will enhance business and employment



opportunities in the agricultural value chains by supporting their access to business development services and grants. Value chain development requires infrastructures like roads, electricity to bolster economic growth and development.

### 5.6.12 Poor postharvest handling of produce

The majority of Youths (28%) who were in self-employment were involved in agriculture especially crop farming. This is consistent with the findings of (Ayana, Megento, & Kussa, 2021) who found that agriculture is one of the major self-employment activities in less developed world. Some of these Youths revealed incurring losses due to poor postharvest handling. During FGDs and key informant interviews, the youths revealed that pests and diseases had affected their yield, while in the words, of a male FGD participant in Apac “there is poor postharvest handling that results into low prices of produce.”

Postharvest management is handling of produces from farm to consumer i.e., harvesting, transporting, and handling, storing, processing and value addition. Minimising postharvest losses of crops are a very effective way of reducing the area needed for production and/or increasing food availability. A study by (Bekele, 2021) showed reduction of post-harvest food losses is a critical component of ensuring future global food security and reduction of unemployment related to people engaged in agriculture (crop growing).

Effective postharvest handling takes three phases: On-farm (grain quality<sup>26</sup>, new harvest handling, drying grain, threshing and cleaning, grain storage and insect pest control); collection point (store and preparing it to receive grain, inspecting grain at intake, keeping grain quality high and routine maintenance); and warehousing (maintaining a warehouse, building bag stacks, good store hygiene, receiving grain into store, insect pests and their control, and how to do a fumigation). All these must be regularly conducted to avoid postharvest losses.

A study by (Kumar & Kalita, 2017) revealed that postharvest loss is a complex problem and its scale varies for different crops, practices, climatic conditions, and country economics. Storage losses account for the maximum fraction of all post-harvest losses for cereals in developing countries, and negatively affect the farmers’ livelihoods. Most of the harvested grains are stored in the traditional storage structures, which are inadequate to avoid the insect infestation and

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26 *It is appreciated that crops planted in all districts are not only grains but a combination of many including oilseeds, vegetables, etc. Use of grains here illustrates cases where storage is required before readying for market or consumption.*

mould growth during storage and lead to a high number of losses. Improved storage structures can play a critical role in reducing postharvest losses and increasing farmers' revenues.

## **5.7 Impact of COVID-19 on young people, SMEs, SACCOs, Cooperatives, Farmer Groups and suggested solutions**

Due to the onset of COVID-19, the country went through lockdowns meant to prevent the spread of the virus. Schools were closed, public transport was suspended (private and public vehicles) except cargo trucks which were allowed. Consequently, different people experienced varying impacts of COVID-19. While the majority suffered the negative impacts, there were those who felt it was necessary for the lockdown to have been enforced because it enabled them to renew their spiritual vows and draw closer to their Gods. These impacts are categorised into positive and negative both on youths individually and their various SMEs (including SACCOs, Cooperatives and Farmer groups) as outlined below:

### **5.7.1 Effects of COVID-19 on Youths Businesses**

The section assessed how COVID-19 impacted young people, their SMEs ((including SACCOs, Cooperatives and Farmer groups) as well as exploring potential solutions. Generally, COVID-19 affected Youths negatively with few cases of positive impact. Overall, about 83% (female 81%, male 86%, rural 83%, urban 83%) reported the pandemic and the related lockdowns affected their wellbeing, SMEs (including SACCOs, Cooperatives and Farmer groups) in various ways. Amuru (87%) was relatively more impacted than other districts- Nebbi (85%), Pakwach (86%) with Terego-Imvepi refugee settlement (79%) least impacted.

In terms of post-COVID-19 recovery to overcome the impact, 53% of respondents indicated they got new skills for business with more males (55%) as compared to female (52%), and more rural Youths (58%) than urban (50%). Potentially as a way of addressing mental health, GBV and aggressive behaviours exhibited during the pandemic, 81% of the youths received psychosocial support with more females (81%) than males (80%). More youths in urban areas (86%) than rural (72%) received psychosocial support. Other recovery programmes included support on loan repayment (38%), support with rent payment plans (35%), support in accessing cheaper inputs (46%) and receipt of tax waivers (34%).

Asked whether these support from government and partners met their

expectations, 73% of the youths were either neutral or disagreed with both rural and urban rating at 73%. In terms of gender, more females (74%) than males (71%) were dissatisfied with the recovery programme provided by government and other partners. More youths (86%) in Nebbi revealed their dissatisfaction followed by Pakwach at 78% while Terego (73%) and Amuru (72%) were fairly high with lowest proportion (51%) in Apac.

### 5.7.2 Positive Effects of COVID-19 on Youths Livelihoods

#### a) Tapping into new business opportunities

The pandemic led to a new normal that necessitated the wearing of face masks and using alcohol-based hand sanitisers, an opportunity seized by Youths as additional income stream. Some Youths embraced the opportunity to sell cloth masks. A male FGD participant in Amuru revealed that he started selling hand sanitisers, while another in Nebbi revealed that “market for everything was lost as money was hoarded. However, some creative youths organised themselves and started making liquid soap. The district started buying from them and this made them grow fast. The problem is sustainability since the lockdown ended because people now do not strictly observe SOPs”. Another FGD participant in Amuru reported to have learnt tailoring during the lockdown although he did not have a sewing machine and material to act as start-up for his enterprise.

#### b) The opening of new employment doors

During the FGDs, participants narrated loss of jobs but some youths reported having found new opportunities during and after COVID-19. A male Youths in Amuru reported that he got a job as a police stable during the pandemic.

#### c) Improved hygiene and health status

The new normal practices because of COVID-19 required having hand-washing facilities which lifted the hygiene standards, practices, and behaviours of Youths in businesses. For every operational business, there was a hand-washing facility with water and soap. This led to improved hygiene standards in line with the sustainable development goal on sanitation and hygiene. Hand-washing with soap is a key factor in disease prevention, as it reportedly leads to reduction in respiratory and intestinal diseases by 25–50 (WHO). In turn, this leads to a reduction in morbidity and improves the health status of youth.

### 5.7.3 Negative effects of COVID-19 on Youths and their SMEs

The COVID-19 Global health pandemic caused disruptions in the lives of almost all groups in society. It has had far-reaching consequences on their social and economic well-being. For young people, the COVID-19 crisis posed considerable risks in the fields of employment and livelihoods, education, health services, mental health, and disposable income. The majority of Youths reported a loss of work/paid employment, which resulted in difficulties accessing basic needs such as medical services, food, water, disinfectants. Others expressed concerns about failing to pay house rent. The section below provides a narration of the negative effects of COVID-19 as highlighted by the key informants and the Youths that participated in the FGDs.

#### a) Increased early marriages and teenage pregnancy

All the districts reported increased teenage pregnancies and early marriages because of idleness at home during the lockdown. Testimonies and confessions indicated these twin vices increased during COVID-19 lockdown. A FGD in Amuru observed that “many girls got married off and more got pregnant” and another in Apac confessed that “I moved out of school as I couldn’t continue while pregnant”. In Pakwach, a FGD participant reported that in his village, there were increased cases of early child marriages; and a victim in Imvepi refugee settlement confessed that “children were married off as a result of being idle. That is the reason you see me with a baby yet I am only 18 years”. The following excerpts from qualitative data demonstrated how COVID-19 increased early marriage and teenage pregnancy:

“

***“My 17-year-old sister got pregnant and eloped with the boyfriend to Kampala. As a family, we tried to bring her back but were unsuccessful because the girl insisted on living with the boy. My parents gave up and left them to live together; she now has one child and is expecting another”.***

*A female FGD participant in Imvepi refugee settlement, Terego district.*

”

“

**“My mother had a 12-year-old daughter of her friend living with us. During COVID-19, the girl would be sent to fetch water but would unreasonably delay. This trend continued until we tracked her down to the water point only to discover that she had a boyfriend with whom she would have sex. We tried to counsel the girl to stop the habit, she refused to listen. Later, she got pregnant but the boy denied responsibility and she had to go back to her mother who was unable to support her and the child. Unfortunately, she is back in Apac town now practising prostitution to earn a living”.**

*A female FGD participant in Apac district.*

”

“

**“Due to the way people were dying, I also feared to die without any child. So, I decided to get married as young as I was although I was still at school. My parents did not stop me because I explained to them why I was doing this and they understood me”.**

*A female FGD participant in Mutema, Amuru district.*

”

“

**“During COVID-19, I grew and became too big and decided to get married. I now have a wife and a child. Of course, I could not go back to school although sometimes I miss school but cannot do anything now”.**

*A male FGD participant in Mutema, Amuru district.*

”

### **b) Halting of group activities and savings**

The immediate effect of COVID-19 was that most of the young people had their lives disrupted creating confusion and uncertainty. FGDs reported instances where youths engaged in wellbeing and livelihood options had to suspend groups' activities, including savings. During COVID-19, most of the groups shared their savings and stopped saving, leaving them with no social

safety net. Due to the reduced incomes of the group members, the group's savings declined, and groups faced high dropout/turnover of the members. This disruption is best reflected in the excerpt from a female key informant in Nebbi district: "there are some youths who organised themselves. They formed a group that was making liquid soap which they were selling in the community. It's unfortunate that, immediately after COVID, they left what they were doing".

### **c) Reduced household incomes and savings.**

For many of the Youths interviewed, the most significant effects of the COVID-19 on their lives were related to loss of family income and livelihood. This was mainly attributed to the loss of jobs and restrictions on movement, which made it impossible to access their places of work. A male FGD participant in Terego-Imvepi Refugee settlement said "my business was a mobile one and with no movement, there were reduced sales, it collapsed". Another FGD participant remarked that "As I told you, my business collapsed during COVID-19. I have since failed to revive it."

A key informant in Amuru captured the impact of COVID-19 on the household incomes and savings saying "loss of capital due to no sales or simply eaten up by the family members on meals and other necessities during the period of COVID-19 pandemic". This view was echoed by a key informant in Pakwach who observed that "low-income levels due to the standard operating procedures instituted by the Government of Uganda to curb down the effects of COVID-19 pandemic by cutting off some of the income streams that were helping the people have a living in the area".

### **d) Loss of dignity and increased vulnerabilities.**

Youths reported to have lost their dignity and suffered double vulnerabilities from what they already faced before the pandemic. Findings indicated that 78% (female 79%, male 77%, rural 74%, urban 79%) had lost their dignity and experienced increased vulnerabilities. The most affected district was Apac (94%) followed by Amuru (86%) and least was Pakwach (59%). Given that most of the Youths had some form of vulnerability before COVID-19 struck, the effect of COVID-19 pushed them into a difficult situation. A male FGD participant in Amuru reported that there was "increased commercial sex especially for young girls because of the need to meet daily needs". People with Disability (PwDs) who were most disadvantaged in terms of accessing transport facilities became even more disadvantaged with the closure of public transport as they could not walk or ride a bicycle to access various services.

**e) Distorted family harmony and escalated Gender-Based Violence (GBV).**

Findings indicated that 48% experienced distorted family harmony which escalated Gender-Based Violence (GBV). More female at 52% than males (43%) experienced GBV. A study by (Ocheme, Ibikunle, & Namaganda, 2020) found that that certain aspects of Ugandan culture subject women to unequal treatment and make them prone to sexual abuse and gender violence. While more Youths in urban areas (49%) than rural areas (47%) registered escalation of GBV. Pakwach and Amuru recorded 52% and 50% respectively with lowest in Nebbi at 46%. Anxiety and uncertainty associated with the pandemic provided an enabling environment that exacerbated diverse forms of violence.

There were reports of increased GBV in homes because of socio-economic stress that was partly driven by social isolation measures and restrictions on movement. Women had to stay locked down with their abusers in the face of limited resources and closed essential protection services and social networks. The respondents revealed that there were cases of verbal and physical abuse. The findings indicated that some women who were already stressed with the loss of jobs and restricted movements due to lockdown had to bear the psychological burden of breakdowns in relations with spouses. There were mentions of some spouses (husbands) who left their homes because of failure to provide for their families while others sent their wives away, or in the worst case, separated with them. Some voices about this were captured, as shown below.

“

**“There was increased GBV resulting into broken marriages”.**

A female FGD participant, Olwal centre – Lamogi, Amuru.

”

“

**“At my home there was tension throughout resulting in GBV to the extent that my husband left me during COVID-19 and has never returned.”**

FGD participant in rural Apac.

”

“

**“In my area, there were increased cases of GBV because families were not able to meet their needs”**

A female FGD participant, Pakwach Town Council.

”

“

**“Without doubt, there were increased vulnerabilities especially women to the GBV because some cases were reported to our offices”.**

A male key informant, Apac district.

”

#### f) Loss of jobs by the Youths

Youths have lost jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic and its related restrictions. Findings from the study indicated that 39% (female 34%, male 46%) had lost their jobs during and after COVID-19 implying Youths were unable to provide for the families. Meanwhile more rural youths (46%) than urban (36%) lost their jobs partly because most youths relocated back to their rural homes after losing jobs due to the pandemic. A report by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) in the first half 2021 indicated that 28% of Ugandans were poor, and two thirds had lost at least some income due to the COVID-19 crisis. During FGDs, youths reported having lost employment opportunities because of lockdown and related restrictions. Some of these views illustrate loss of jobs by youths.

“

**“During COVID-19 lockdowns, there was a lot of firing of workers and so jobs are now not available”**

A male FGD participant in Mutema, Amuru district.

”

“

**“Many youths lost jobs due to reduction of employees at work. We found the gravity of this issue when lockdown was lifted and it is a huge problem”.**

A male key informant in Apac district.

”



### g) Collapse of Businesses

COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown measures not only affected Youths through loss of jobs, but their business collapsed too. Findings indicated that 42% (female 36%, male 49%, rural 44%, urban 41%) of Youths reported their businesses collapsed. More businesses (76%) collapsed in Pakwach followed by Nebbi (42%) than other districts with the lowest registered in Apac (33%). Qualitative data below captured sentiments of some youth:

“

***“As I told you, my business collapsed during COVID-19. I have since failed to revive it”.***

A male FGD participant in Amuru Town Council.

”

“

***“The lock down got me at a friend’s place. I had to keep there and so my business at home collapsed because I had to feed on my capital. to sustain myself”***

A female FGD participant in Imvepi refugee settlement.

”

### h) Inability to pay back loans

Among youths, there were some who had taken loans from their groups or other institutions but COVID-19 made it difficult or impossible for them to pay back the outstanding loans because their sources of income had reduced or collapsed. Quantitative data indicated that 30% were unable to pay back loans. More youths in Pakwach (48%) and Amuru (42%) were unable to pay back loans with lowest recorded in Nebbi (23%) and Terego (24%). More male Youths (32%) and those in rural areas (34%) reported inability to pay loans compared to female Youths (32%) and urban (28%).

Probed on why male Youths had somehow managed to pay loans, a number of them claimed they had sold their land in the villages to clear loans. It should be noted that unlike boys/male youth, the female Youths or women rarely inherit land from their parents. A male key informant in Amuru remarked “businesses closed, some through sale of business assets due to pandemic. In some cases, banks took over properties of businessmen and women due to accumulation of loans from the pandemic period”.

### i) Reduced quality of life by many households

Quality of life led by Youths determine their general wellbeing and sometime foster harmony in families. Quantitative data indicated that 78% of Youths had reduced quality of life due to COVID-19. More male youths (79%) had reduced quality of life compared to female (76%), with marginal difference between urban (78%) and rural (77%) counterparts. Youths in Apac (88%) and Amuru (86%) recorded the highest reduction in quality of life with Nebbi (69%) registering lowest reduction. The FGD discussions revealed that access to medical services and medication for chronic illness had been limited or absent due to restrictions in travel, nutrition was compromised at a household level hence affecting the overall quality of life for many of the households. Voices of these youths below indicated the extent of reduction of quality of life in households:

“

***“Because hospitals were far, and transport put on halt, women ended up giving birth at home or along the road on the way to health facilities”.***

A male FGD participant in Apac Urban.

”

“

***“We experienced starvation because we could not move into the host communities to look for some casual work to do for some money to enable us buy food”.***

A female FGD participant in Imvepi Refugee settlement.

”

“

***“Increased hunger and malnutrition in the area. This is because the operations of the service providers like World Food Programme in conjunction with Andre Foods International (AFI) were halted because of the pandemic in the West Nile regions”.***

A male Key informant in Nebbi district.

”

### **j) Increase in Mental health cases**

The lockdown measures where Youths were locked up in their homes with limited movement, reduced incomes, low or no savings, limited access to necessities in some cases have been associated with increased risk of mental health and psychosocial consequences. Quantitative data indicated that 51% of youths experienced increased in mental health case with female (55%) registering more cases as compared to male (46%) - with no difference between rural (51%) and urban (51%). Apac district recorded more cases (61%) with the lowest in Pakwach at (39%). Youths reported having depression, and anxiety, and suicidal thoughts in some cases, during the total Lockdown.

Mental health specialists have raised concern that the pandemic could follow with an increase in cases of depression, suicide, and self-harm, apart from other symptoms reported globally (Kumar & Nayar, 2020) and (Lemuel, et al., 2021). During FGDs, some Youths reported some cases of mental illness as reflected by this female FGD participant in Panyimur sub county, Nebbi district who observed that "Youths needed psychosocial training to help them recover from the COVID-19 shock."

#### **5.7.4 Suggested solutions to impact of COVID-19**

The findings of the assessment of the impact of COVID-19 have several implications for policymakers at various levels (district local governments), ActionAid International Uganda SPA project implementation staff, community members, and central government.

##### **a) Simplify access to Government funds**

The Youths experienced business collapses, loss of employment and incomes, failure to pay back loans, reduced quality of life due to COVID-19. To enable Youths recover, there is need to simplify access to some of the government livelihood funds. For example, the Youths livelihood programme has stringent criteria attached to it (e.g., a requirement of filling the forms that are in English). Therefore, they are less likely to be accessed by illiterate Youths and are not very likely to solve the unemployment challenge. Therefore, the district leaders should design inclusive and fair access measures that translate political commitment into actionable programmes.

##### **b) Improve communication about Government programmes for Youths**

Public information dissemination strategy using the most utilised mediums such as radio stations regarding ongoing government programmes,

policies, laws, avenues for accessing or benefiting from the empowerment programmes should be designed and implemented to promote awareness and further interest Youths in participation in such interventions. The use of various avenues such as radio talk shows/spots, posters, identification cards, and educational banners should be employed to reach the normally overlooked age group.

**c) Educate and sensitise Youths about the various requirements for accessing funds.**

It is important that Youths are educated about the various requirements and dos and don'ts for accessing the various funds such as Youths livelihoods programmes (YLP), community driven development (CDD), Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), Youths Venture Capital, Disability Fund, Emyooga and Parish Development Model (PDM) funds. The AAIU team can collaborate with the district local governments to sensitive Youths groups on a periodic (monthly) rotational basis.

**d) Produce portable Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials for small enterprises and employment.**

In this regard, portable IEC materials on policies, programmes and a summary of the key entrepreneurial skills which are simplified to suit the context and understanding of the ordinary Youths or better still translated into local languages need to be produced and circulated through channels that will ensure that the targeted beneficiaries get the material. The information could also be modelled and packaged in youth-friendly formats such as sports, influential community individuals (Arts and sports idols), and successful entrepreneurs. The summaries of this information could also be given to the mentors/trainer of trainers (ToTs) for dissemination to the youth.

**e) Link the Youths to employment agencies.**

A significant proportion of the youths revealed they have tried in vain to get into formal employment relevant to their level of training and education. This, therefore, requires strategies to help the Youths access all available information regarding recruiting entities but also guide/train them in the processes of applying for employment opportunities, including developing a quality curriculum vitae and approaches to job interviews. Potential avenues for information about where jobs are including intermediation, in-school counselling, job fairs or websites where jobs are frequently advertised. If possible, the project team could liaise with technical, vocational education

and training (TVET) institutions to attach the graduates from TVET institutions to business incubation and mentorship avenues. This has the potential to go a long way in improving livelihoods and creating employment for many other youths.

#### **f) Sensitisation on Prevention of Domestic violence**

Due to the financial challenges posed by COVID-19, the female Youths expressed concerns about increased rates of GBV in homes. It is imperative to involve their spouses in sensitisation sessions on women and children's rights. The men should be sensitised not to deny their wives the right to be economically active or freely associate with their peers. The sensitisation would be better done by the male ToTs to emphasise the point so that these ToTs are looked at as change agents. Additional investment may be needed in upskilling male staff within AAIU in project areas to help Youths who may have experienced violence during the Lockdown, mainly to ensure they speak up and find remedies.

#### **g) Revolving loans to recapitalise Youths Businesses**

As noted, one of the major challenges as a result of COVID-19 was the depletion of savings. The lack of savings and capital has left some Youths entirely out of business. Recapitalisation of Youths businesses through a revolving loan model or a Microfinance Institution is recommended. Under this model, AAIU can inject funds into the groups (savings and loans associations) that are struggling, and the members will borrow and payback under a model which can be developed. Alternatively, Youths can be grouped so that lending is through a group structure. Before any such scheme is instituted or developed, it is recommended that training of members in group dynamics, principles of group lending, life skills, business management, financial management is conducted to all youths in a particular area or district.

## **5.8 Relationship between youths unemployment and labour rights violations**

In ensuring common understanding labour rights, the research team, among other things, considered the following: Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; Elimination of all forms of forced labour; Effective abolition of child labour, and Elimination of discrimination at work. These principles form the basis of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The study also checked to ensure youths were protected from slavery, servitude

and forced labour as provided for in Uganda's 1995 Constitution (as amended). To this extent, youths generally felt that their labour rights were respected. Asked whether they believed their labour rights were respected, 80% agreed and only 20% disagreed. More female (83%) compared to male (75%) agreed while more youths in urban areas (81%) than rural (78%) reported that their rights were not violated. In terms of districts, fewer youths with insignificant variation between youths in Nebbi (65%) and those in Pakwach (66%) agreed, while more youths in Apac (90%) agreed. The table below illustrates this:

**Table 6: Youths whose labour rights were violated or not**

	District (%)					Residence (%)		Gender (%)		Total (%)
	Nebbi	Amuru	Terego	Pakwach	Apac	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	
No	34.6	13.2	15.0	34.4	10.5	19.5	22.4	24.7	17.3	<b>20.4</b>
Yes	65.4	86.8	85.0	65.6	89.5	80.5	77.6	75.3	82.7	<b>79.6</b>

Source: Primary data

Similarly, Youths were asked whether they were employed but left the job because their labour rights were violated. Findings indicated that 91% of the youths did not leave due to labour rights violation and only 9% left their jobs with more (93%) female retaining compared to male (87%). Data also showed that more male (13%) left their employment than female (7%). More urban youths (93%) remained in their jobs than rural counterparts (86%). In terms of district comparison, more youths in Pakwach (23%) left their jobs followed by Nebbi and Apac both at 13% with the lowest in Terego (4%) signifying the status of refugee youths with no option but to remain in their current occupation. Youths who did not leave their jobs although reported labour rights violation were due to lack of available alternative, low level of education that does not allow them switch/change jobs.

**Table 7: Youths who left their jobs because their labour rights were violated**

	District (%)					Residence (%)		Gender (%)		Total (%)
	Nebbi	Amuru	Terego	Pakwach	Apac	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	
No	87.2	94.7	95.7	76.6	87.2	92.9	85.6	86.9	93.2	<b>90.5</b>
Yes	12.8	5.3	4.3	23.4	12.8	7.1	14.4	13.1	6.8	<b>9.5</b>

Source: Primary data

However, as shown in Box 1 where a young woman was overworked, sexually harassed, raped and denied her due and rightful pay for over three months, 20% of youths believed their labour rights were not restricted as the case study below illustrates:

### Box 7: Labour rights violation

I am a single male adult with no dependents and holds a Diploma in Agriculture. I was hired by an organisation to work as an Agricultural Extension Worker, handling crop production, advisory services to farmers among other duties. The contract I signed had terms and conditions of work which included 7 to 8 working hours and 5 working days a week with a salary of UGX.700,000 that was to be revised upwards to UGX. 1,000,000 after successful completion of allotted three-months probationary period.

After signing the contract, things suddenly changed and the organisation started making me work beyond the agreed time including in some cases over weekends. During this period, I remained patient thinking this was because of probationary period which are usually tough. When I completed probation, there was no sign of salary increment and my attempt to initiate dialogue never yielded any fruit, and this continued until I completed one year with the same salary and without any sign of talk about the salary increment.

Aware of this breach of contract terms, I still remained loyal and patient hoping management would see my work and reconsider their action. Unfortunately work conditions started to deteriorate especially when my salary started to delay. Still respecting my employers, I remained steadfast and continued to work. I ignored the first month salary delay, but it became worse when it went into two, three months at which point anxiety started and I became scared. When it reached six months, I couldn't hold it any longer and decided to stop working. When management called me, I told them about my complaints and they promised to increase my salary. However, I conditioned them that to resume work, my arrears must first be cleared in full and then we set new terms. This was not done and I decided to resign. In panic, management requested me to keep working but I maintained my stance. I don't regret resigning but only sad that they violated and abused my rights especially because the job was risky which involved moving from village to village using a motorcycle without health insurance.

The National Labour Force Survey by UBOS (2021) showed that 67% of labour agreements are oral with 83% in production and 96% in Agriculture, forestry and fishing. Instances where labour rights were violated are captured by views of some of youths in various districts as below:

“

***“I just chose to leave a low paying job”***

A male FGD participant in Apac district.

”

“

***“I used to cut grass from the bush, but when I realised that I was losing it continuously to the host communities, I stopped.”***

A female FGD participant in Imvepi refugee settlement, Terego district.

”

“

***“This is because the pay and exploitation during the working hours was too much coupled with low pay at the end of the day including the sexual harassment”.***

A male key informant in Apac district.

”

Notwithstanding cases of labour rights violations as illustrated in the preceding paragraphs and the case study on sexual harassment and rape, the proportion of Youths who believed their labour rights were respected during their employment was 80% (eight in ten youths). The National Labour Force Survey by UBOS (2021) showed that “many employees, despite the low levels of wages, seem satisfied with their work”, because 77% of respondents revealed they were satisfied with their jobs. It can be concluded that the majority of youths (80%) revealed their labour rights were respected while some (20%) believed their rights were violated.

## **5.9 Relationship between youths unemployment and climate change**

Climate change is having devastating impact on youths unemployment through loss of jobs exacerbating the already bad situation. Over the past 20 years, Northern Uganda has experienced more frequent and longer-lasting drought



conditions according to the World Bank (2020). Under a high-emission scenario, monthly annual precipitation is expected to decrease in the northern areas of Uganda. However, increase in rainfall is projected in the region particularly in Gulu and Lira in December, January, and February, which is typically a dry season according to USAID (2013) causing heavy precipitation events which are expected to become more intense due to intensified water vapour holding capacity of a warmer atmosphere (GIZ, 2021). This increase could have strong impacts on agriculture, especially with respect to tree crops (e.g., coffee) and post-harvest activities such as drying and storage. The implication of changing rainfall trends/patterns, and more especially increased droughts, will increasingly affect both urban and rural areas of West Nile and Northern Uganda.

The Northern region has been experiencing more frequent and longer-lasting droughts than seen historically. The number of hot days is forecasted to increase (from 30 days to 34 days by 2030 and 40 days by 2040) between January and April (at the beginning of the long rain season). This coincides with an increased risk of wildfire events which also affects agriculture. Need to invest in low carbon, climate resilient and sustainable agriculture practices such as agroecology e.g. climate resilient seeds, animals and fodder varieties, developing sustainable rainwater-harvesting systems that can contribute to increased water availability as well as the resilience of water resources, clean energy technology (clean cooking technologies and solar technologies), post-harvest handling, storage, value addition and marketing, afforestation and reforestation, agroforestry, to enhance cycling and integrated pest management and other initiatives to create green jobs to address youths unemployment while eradicating poverty and climate change. Agroecological practices involve soil and water management, soil fertility management, weed management, pasture and agricultural land management, crop yield, integrated pest and disease management, ecological land use management, post-harvest handling and storage etc.

Climate change has been a constant theme among the youths during various discussions with the majority reporting negative impacts of climate change on their livelihoods and general wellbeing. An article by Tshukudu (2021) pointed out that climate change is having a growing negative impact, hitting the most vulnerable hardest, and contributing to food insecurity, population displacement, and increasing stress on water resources. This is in line with the observed climate where the Northern region suffers from intensified inter-annual rainfall variations, particularly in the December to February (DJF) mainly dry season (especially

Gulu, Kitgum and Kotido) in which increased levels of precipitation have been experienced (USAID 2013).<sup>27</sup>

Over the past 20 years, Northern Uganda has also experienced more frequent and longer-lasting drought conditions with warming projected to continue at a slightly higher rate within proximate future (World Bank, 2020), which trend will have a strong impact on agriculture and livestock and, increase the risk of disease and pest infestations (USAID, 2013). The Northern region already suffers from low water availability levels and yield decreases, increasing the risk of food insecurity according to USAID (2013). For example, the water sources for Gulu dry up during the dry seasons leaving the urban residents water stressed. Prolonged dry seasons and droughts in the recent years have resulted in reduced water levels in the Oyitino stream/wetland that is a source of water supply for Gulu Municipality and River Enyau for Arua Municipality. Similarly, some boreholes, valley dams and protected springs that are sources of water for Paidha have dried up due to long droughts resulting in severe water shortages (GoU, 2018).

A male FGD participant in Amuru observed that “Youths in the informal sector have been affected by drought. Their crops have dried”; with another male in Apac saying “climate here keeps changing, in extremes. When it is a dry season, the sun is too hot, and in a rainy season, there are floods”. Commenting on how climate change has negatively affected his agricultural livelihoods, a female Youths in Pakwach reported that “I have seen real negative effects of climate change because my land was claimed by water which has affected my farming business”. A female FGD participant in Imvepi refugee settlement lamented that “there has been increase in unemployment here because of unreliable weather which has made some people to give up. They are now left with nothing to do”.

To a male key informant in Apac, climate change has had more devastating effects which were mainly negative. He identified these effects as “cutting down of the trees within the environment affecting the rainfall formation patterns especially in the areas of Akokoro and Apuyi. Climate change has destroyed and dried crops hence the low yields due to low rainfall formation. I have seen crops drying up in gardens. Over the past few months, food prices have been increasing at an alarming rate in this area. Within the district, there has been too much hunger yet there is nothing to eat. It is a worrying trend.” The same position

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27 USAID (2013): *Uganda Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Report. African and Latin American Resilience to Climate Change Project (ARCC)*. Accessed via <https://www.climatelinks.org/sites/default/files/asset/document/ARCC-Uganda%2520VA-Report.pdf>

was echoed by a female key informant in Pakwach district who said “there is too much hunger amongst the people in Pakwach. This is as a result of the climate change. For instance, if you go to the market and ask about food prices, they are so high that beans increased up to UGX. 4,800 per kilogram. About 7 months ago, a sack of cassava flour was sold between UGX. 75,000–80,000. But now you would be lucky to get it at less than UGX.195,000. This is all because of poor harvest”.

Reflecting on the impact of climate change on unemployment in the district, a female key informant in Nebbi highlighted that “of course, climate change increases unemployment. When roads are frequently cut off, market places flooded, and during these occasions, there can be no work to do. We are in our own lockdown where nothing is happening.” A male key informant in Apac reflected that “there is limited production due to unpredictable seasons hence increased unemployment in Apac. Seasons have changed so we are trying to find ways of coping up”. Notably, a female key informant in Pakwach reported that “arguably, I can say that it’s almost a 50-50 situation. However, by and large, the rate of unemployment has gone up with these climate changes. This is because most of the people here are farmers. Many have run out of employment with the loss of their crops.”

A male key informant in Pakwach highlighted that there has been rising water levels that have colonised one of the villages in Pakwach. Consequently, the nearby River Ora burst its banks and had spread within the community causing outbreak of diseases like cholera, typhoid; likely to become more serious because affected people had nowhere to go. The majority of the Youths were on their own, yet their livelihoods were messed up by the floods because the greatest source of survival is the garden work. Even those dealing in animals, animals could potentially develop serious problems like diseases.

Climate change has affected fish processing and selling due to floods or drying up of water points. In Pakwach, a male FGD participant observed that “for me, my life revolved around fishing but whenever it rains the river is flooded and our fishing nets are washed away.” Another male Youths in Panyimur, Pakwach district remarked that “some of us do not go to gardens or do any business because we know our source of livelihoods is in the lake – that is our bank. Unfortunately, the ban on fishing and rising water levels have affected us badly. We appeal to government to lift the ban on fishing”. A female Youths in Pakwach town highlighted that “whenever it rains and flooding happens, our fish business

is affected because supplies are interrupted raising costs of buying fish.”

Jobs for young people are a critical vehicle for their social, economic, and political inclusion. By investing in climate resilient and sustainable agricultural practices such as agroecology, water harvesting practices and clean energy technology, and attracting young people into these enterprises, there is an opportunity to address the multiple challenges of youths unemployment, poverty and climate change. The perspective of agroecology is sustainable agriculture, based on diversity, rights, resilience, redistribution, recycling, responsible governance, circular and solidarity economy, co-creation and sharing knowledge.

Agroecology would be an approach to guide the management of agriculture and natural resource management in the era of ever-changing climate. Well-functioning agri-food systems have an important role to play in increasing food security and advancing sustainable development, especially in Uganda. Effective implementation of agroecology needs creation of learning alliances and other spaces whereby networks of farmers and technology providers can be initiated and strengthened. Importantly, there is need to ensure youths are able to save (through forming VSLAs, Youths savings groups), access innovative climate financing such as agriculture insurance, credit, grants, results based financing and blended financing through creating linkages with microfinance, other financial institutions, NGOs and other development agencies.

As means of addressing impacts of climate change, youths are engaged in tree planting and agroforestry which is a commendable effort, because planting trees is considered an effective method for climate change adaptation and mitigation (Hopkins, January-Bevers, Caton, & Campos, 2021). In some cases, youths are diversifying their portfolios to include poultry, mobile money, bakery, metal fabrication and welding, liquid soap making and other emerging businesses. Rather than go it alone, some youths are opting to form VSLAs, Cooperatives and SACCOs to provide a platform for resilience and improved personal welfare.

A study by (Obrist, et al., 2022) showed how participation in saving groups increased women’s collective and individual capacities to access, combine and transform five capitals. The groups offered a mechanism to save for the annual insurance premium and to obtain loans for relatively lower rates because the groups were organised around aspirations of mutual support and protection, fostered social responsibility and widened their interaction arena to peers, government and NGO representatives (social capital). Another study by

(Frisancho & aldivia, 2020) indicated that access to savings groups increases participants labour market participation and, in poorer areas, it fosters greater specialisation in agricultural activities. Access to savings groups also leads to an increase in access to credit, mainly driven by access to the group's loans.

Youths in Apac have introduced crops (mainly oilseeds) hitherto not traditional in their areas because of availability of ready markets. Some of the oilseeds now cultivated in Apac include soybeans, sunflower, groundnuts and sim-sim. A study by (Adeleke & Babalola, 2020) showed that the use of bio-fertilisers in developing environmentally friendly agriculture as an alternative to chemical-based fertilisers in enhancing food production is promising in sustainable agriculture for the improvement in the yield of some commercial crops such as sunflowers and other oilseed crops in terms of quality and quantity. Sunflower is an important oilseed crop and currently cultivated throughout the world. Generally, the sunflower is considered important based on its nutritional and medicinal value. Other activities youths are engaged in include selling fertilisers, setting or participating in gaming and sports betting while others have ventured into herbal medicine extraction (especially in Nebbi) apparently because the area has many medicinal plants.

Findings indicated that youths and households in various areas of the study used a combination of practices, including soil and water management, water management, weed management, pasture and agricultural land management, crop yield and disease management. This act of making use of a combination of practices is a risk averting strategy that has evolved through time. Traditionally, in agricultural societies, the application of diverse strategies for risk avoidance, risk escaping, and risk management have been deployed over long periods of time.

Further, they do so by tapping into indigenous knowledge and find that the prioritisation of climate resilient and sustainable agricultural practices such as agroecology combinations is better performing and more adaptive to local conditions and farming practices. The determination of which practices are appropriate is a function of many factors that influence the adoption of climate smart agriculture which included; access to climate information, total land acreage available, ownership of non-livestock assets, and participation in off-farm activities. The application climate smart practice is purely based on youths' rudimentary knowledge or information obtained from trainings organised either by districts or chanceful opportunity with NGOs. ActionAid should consider a

collaborative approach through creation of learning alliances and other spaces whereby networks of farmers and technology providers can be initiated and strengthened.

These conditions are not pretty from a livelihood perspective especially because agriculture is extremely vulnerable to climate change. Climate change's negative impacts are already being felt, in the form of increasing temperatures, weather variability, shifting agroecosystem boundaries, invasive crops and pests, and more frequent extreme weather events. Respondents in Pakwach identified flooding (of gardens, homes, roads) due to proximity to Albert Nile; Apac, Amuru, Terego, and Nebbi revealed intense drought with negative impact on crop yield, on-farms, climate change is reducing crop yields<sup>28</sup>, the nutritional quality of major cereals, and lowering livestock productivity.

Crops grown vary by district such as Pakwach grows sorghum, maize (subsistence), cassava, sim-sim, millet and cotton; Amuru grows groundnuts, maize and cassava and beans; Nebbi engages in growing cotton, cassava, rice, maize (subsistence), coffee, millet, beans and groundnuts and Terego has sorghum, maize, sim-sim, cowpeas, cassava, soybeans and vegetables (tomatoes, okra, eggplants, onions). Studies by Sridharan et al. (2019) and The World Bank (2020) also indicate the same that the main agricultural outputs in West Nile and northern Uganda include coffee, cassava, poultry, beans maize, sorghum, rice and cassava as shown in the Table 3 and Figure 2 above.

Discussions with Youths indicated that some of them are engaged in productive ventures like tree planting and agroforestry both as a climate change remediation measure but also as income generating activity. Others have diversified into poultry, mobile money and agent banking, welding and fabrication, liquid soap making and growing vegetables in swampy areas. Relatedly, some youths have introduced intercropping where main crops are planted with subsidiary, different nutrient requiring plants. In some cases, youths have formed themselves into VSLAs and Cooperatives to pull together their collective resources; while others have established businesses dealing in fertilisers to support those engaged in crop farming. As part of entrepreneurship, some youths are developing ideas of engaging in gaming and sports betting; while others are into herbal medicine extraction since there are plants and trees with medicinal values within their communities.

On farms, climate change is reducing crop yields, the nutritional quality of major

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28 *The latest Annual Agricultural Survey 2018, shows production figures at regional, not individual district levels. As such, it was difficult to disaggregate by respective district of research.*

cereals, and lowering livestock productivity. Specific vulnerabilities for different crop types to climate change are:

- Coffee: Rising temperatures and erratic rainfall increase the risk of disease and pest infestations in coffee.
- Rice: Two major rice diseases (blast and bacterial leaf blight) affect rice yields and are significantly aggravated by weather conditions such as higher temperatures, air humidity, or soil moisture.
- Maize: Aflatoxin contamination represents a serious threat to the marketing of maize and will likely worsen if dry season rainfall increases.
- Beans: Beans are vulnerable to fungal and viral diseases when excessive rain falls during critical growing periods.
- Multiple Grains: Erratic rain could increase post-harvest storage losses of crops typically dried in the sun (e.g., maize, beans, coffee, rice, etc.), due to increased pests and rotting.
- Sorghum: Coupled with irregular precipitation, increased temperatures could result in the proliferation of striga, a parasitic weed that affects sorghum and is prevalent in areas with degraded soils.
- Sweet potatoes and cassava: Both crops grow well at temperatures much higher than current ones but are also vulnerable to pests and disease. (USAID 2013)
- Suitability of crop production will also change dramatically, take for example Arabica coffee production (World Bank, 2020).

Livestock/animal health is directly affected by climate change especially rising temperatures increases the potential for morbidity and death. Furthermore, the impact of climate change on microbial communities (pathogens and parasites), spreading of vector borne diseases, food-borne diseases, host resistance, and feed and water scarcity. Heat stress decreases forage intake, milk production, the efficiency of feed conversion and performance. Warm and humid conditions cause heat stress, which affects behaviour and metabolic variations on livestock or even mortality as illustrated in Figure 3 above.

Substantial investments in adaptation will be required to maintain current yields and to achieve production and food quality increases to meet demand. Jobs for young people are a critical vehicle for their social, economic, and political

inclusion. By investing in climate resilient and sustainable agriculture practices such as agroecology e.g. climate resilient seeds, animals and fodder varieties, developing sustainable rainwater-harvesting systems that can contribute to increased water availability as well as the resilience of water resources, clean energy technology (clean cooking technologies and solar technologies), post-harvest handling, storage, value addition and marketing, afforestation and reforestation, agroforestry, to enhance cycling and integrated pest management<sup>29</sup>, and attracting young people into these enterprises, there is an opportunity to address the multiple challenges of youths unemployment, poverty and climate change.

A number of initiatives and interventions have been instituted for mitigating impact of climate change in Uganda including areas of research. For example, the Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) highlights Uganda's priority adaptation and mitigation measures as well as the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) whose goal is to ensure a harmonised and coordinated approach towards a climate-resilient and low-carbon development path for sustainable development in Uganda. The overarching objective of the policy is to ensure that all stakeholders address climate change impacts and their causes through appropriate measures while promoting sustainable development and a green economy. In Northern Uganda, government officials have embarked on tree and grass planting to trap emissions from growing municipal motor traffic and from their compost site where municipal garbage is incinerated. The government is also promoting the use of energy saving technologies as a means of mitigating climate change effects in upcountry areas.

In addition, the country is reviewing and integrating the country's disaster risk management policies and plans to reduce climate change impacts. For that reason, Uganda is in the process of formulating its National Adaptation Plans and the National Disaster Preparedness and Management Legislation. These efforts require to be strengthened with the support of willing stakeholders on the national and global scene to make it clear that the country does not lack conviction.

From the above confessions and excerpts, climate change has had a largely devastating impact on the livelihoods of the people. We can conclude that there is clear relationship between youths unemployment and climate change. People's gardens, sources of livelihoods, land have been destroyed by flooding waters

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<sup>29</sup> [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-09/Updated%20NDC%20\\_Uganda\\_2022%20Final.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/NDC/2022-09/Updated%20NDC%20_Uganda_2022%20Final.pdf)



and in some cases, crops have dried up in gardens causing losses to farmers who depend on their gardens. Cases of cholera, typhoid and other diseases have been reported which may lead to outbreak of other health and sanitation concerns exacerbating the deplorable conditions in these places. Evidently, there is clear relationship between youths unemployment and climate change. From a policy perspective, there is need to institute remedial measures to address climate possibly through adoption of climate change smart approaches.



*Youths in Pakwach Town Council actively participating in FGDs, 19 September 2022.  
Photo credit: Okoth Dean Perez.*

## 6 Conclusion

**Y**ouths unemployment continues to be a serious concern for government, civil society organisations as well as development agencies. Findings showed that unemployment rate among the Youths in West Nile and Northern Uganda remains high. From a policy perspective, this matter must be given the necessary attention because of the adverse effects of unemployment

on life satisfaction which increases with the time spent unemployed since the negative effect of the unemployment experience will last for a very long time. Health impacts of unemployment include physical, mental, and psychological well-being, substance abuse, depression in young adults, and suicides implying need for immediate attention. Unemployment is a threat to national security because unemployed individuals sometimes lack food, essential services and means of survival. They often resort to crimes in order to make ends meet. But more importantly, when people's livelihoods are threatened for reasons such as subjugation, injustices, marginalisation, unfairness in resource allocation, it automatically leads to discontents.

Determinants and drivers of unemployment have been identified which included negative social norms, sexual harassment, restrictive work environments and religiosity, family background and poverty, political affiliation and climate change. Difficulties faced by the Youths in the labour market included mental health and suicidal tendencies, drug abuse and alcoholism, violence and aggressive behaviour, lack of employable skills, early marriages, nepotism and segregation (including bribery and corruption) and lack of information on job opportunities. Fortunately, there are many available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options for the young people as well as options and strategies for livelihood diversification among youth. COVID-19 had both positive and negative impacts but the latter outweighed the former and related lockdown measures exacerbated the unemployment question.

Most youths were household heads with more children dependents yet level of unemployment was high amongst youth. With no employment and more dependents (children) to take care of, the Youths are exposed to various risks and livelihood challenges which may lower the quality of life in terms of healthcare, nutrition, education requirements. The study found that majority of youths reported their rights were respected with insignificant cases of rights violation. Conversely, there was a clear relationship between youths unemployment and climate change since gardens for Youths have either dried up due to drought or destroyed by flood waters. Markets, roads and Youths livelihood options have been messed up by climate change.

## 7 Recommendations

From the above analysis and conclusions, the youths unemployment still remains a big challenge from stakeholders. Determinants (drivers) of unemployment require actions and policy intervention to urgently address them especially because there are available formal and informal sustainable livelihood options matched by options and strategies for livelihood diversification. Care must be taken to avoid difficulties faced by the Youths in the labour market. Consequently, the following recommendations are proposed:

- a) The majority of unemployed youths have attained primary education with a reasonable proportion with secondary education with majority between 20-29 years. Interventions should be designed considering these critical characteristics. For policymakers, it is important to rethink economic development strategy in order to avert the growing unemployment threat with resultant life, mental and national security ramifications.



Youths in Pakwach Town Council during FGDs, 19 September 2022. Photo credit: Okoth Dean Perez.

promoting women's land rights through embracing initiatives or joining efforts aimed at empowering women to overcome suppression and discrimination rooted in cultural practices and traditions that hinder not only the realisation of women's land rights but the development of women in general.

- c) The informal sector is growing and policies should focus on a regulatory framework that supports the sector to create secure livelihoods and generate employment opportunities for the unemployed. Such policies will provide regulatory support which can attract Youths to invest in it.
- d) Corruption is a huge hindrance to Youths employment with some policy implications because the government should introduce a national reorientation programme to educate people on the crucial need to eradicate corruption in all sectors of an economy and socio-political systems and strengthen efforts of institutions like IGG, Public Accounts Committee, Judiciary, CID, among others. This will inevitably reduce people's vulnerability and susceptibility to corruption. Government must also introduce transparency devices that can detect and prevent corruption in all areas.
- e) Sexual harassment including rape is pervasive which calls for breaking barriers to women's entry in labour market potentially helping employers increase the diversity and overall quality of their workforce. Sexual harassment and abuse can also inform policymakers about potential barriers that keep women from taking these jobs especially at local governments.
- f) Mental health is increasingly becoming a concern amongst youths. Policymakers and programme planners should establish appropriate strategy for prevention, early detection and management of depression among unemployed young adults. It is also important to design and implement effective community-based depression prevention programmes for unemployed young adults plus addressing the need of unemployed young people, improving access to care for mental health problems, particularly for depression.
- g) Climate change is having devastating effect on youths unemployment through loss of jobs exacerbating the already bad situation. There is need to invest in climate resilient and agroecological technologies and

practices such as developing rainwater-harvesting systems that can contribute to increased water availability as well as the resilience of water resources to address water security and reducing floods and other initiatives to create jobs. Jobs for young people are a critical vehicle for their social, economic, and political inclusion. By investing in agroecology and clean energy technology, and attracting young people into these enterprises, there is an opportunity to address the multiple challenges of youths unemployment, poverty and climate change.

- h) Unemployment hasn't affected Youths equally with some more affected than others. Policymakers and labour agencies should better address those groups of young adults (marginalised women, PwDs) most endangered by unemployment such as younger individuals, women, through more effective, inclusive and tailored education and labour market policies as well as specific counselling support services for career orientation and development.
- i) Engage local governments, civil society organisations and the private sector on protection and the promotion of labour rights, decent work, formalisation of work and enterprises and safe working conditions.
- j) Youths have indicated lack of market for their products. There is need to improve business and employment opportunities in those agricultural products value chains by supporting their access to business development services and grants.
- k) A number of youths have indicated lack of capital or access to capital. It is recommended that financial service providers are proactively engaged in order to improve access to finance and financial services.
- l) Involve private sector in marketable employable skills development programmes – qualitative data and document review revealed that Uganda is a private sector led economy which employs many youths. UBOS report shows that private sector employs the largest number of people with 77 per cent, while public sector stood at 23 per cent. Interventions aimed at skilling Youths should be designed in partnership with and to include private sector or umbrella organisation.
- m) Conduct employable skills gap assessment for Youths – findings

indicated that a large number of youths lack employable skills. In future, before any intervention aimed at improving employable skills is implemented, a gap assessment should be conducted to determine which skills are lacking and extent of the gap. Training should be targeted to such areas.

- n) Train youths from both refugees and host communities in various TVET disciplines of carpentry and joinery, bakery, salon business, agriculture among others in order to earn a living independently.
- o) Improve business and employment opportunities in agricultural products value chains by supporting Youths access to business development services and grants.
- p) Improving employment opportunities, business development and value chain development requires infrastructures like roads, electricity to bolster economic growth and development. It is recommended that government to improve these infrastructures especially in West Nile region.
- q) Like already done in some districts, available jobs in private and public sectors are displayed on noticeboards at district headquarters. Options that can be considered could include intermediation, In-School Counseling, Job Fairs, or Help Wanted Web Sites.

## 8 Stakeholders Interviewed as Key Informants

	Name	Gender	Designation	District/Institution	Telephone
1	Olinga Andrew	Male	Assistant Community Service Officer	Terego District Local Government	256-775-275-334
2	Okello Philip	Male	District Planner	Apac District Local Government	256-771-878-009
3	Arugi Geofrey	Male	Probation Officer	Apac District Local Government	256-783-254-575
4	Anewa Micheal	Male	Deputy Finance	Alur Kingdom	256-772-465-898
5	Akim Jennifer	Female	Senior Commercial Officer	Nebbi District Local Government	256-779-169-002
6	Oryek Eunice	Female	Commercial Officer	Pakwach District Local Government	256-779-541-112
7	Acayo Julie Opoka	Female	Representative Toro Kingdom	Amuru District Local Government	256-777-486-851
8	Labalpony Ignatius	Male	Personal Assistant Chief of Pagak	Amuru District Local Government	256-781-604-908
9	Olok John Bosco	Male	Member Cultural Institutions-Pagak	Amuru District Local Government	256-779-026-008
10	Oyo Christopher Ouma	Male	Religious Leader-Catholic Church	Amuru District Local Government	256-787-363-036
11	Omito Robert Steen	Male	Chairman LC V	Pakwach District Local Government	256-773-330-571
12	Ayo Jane Joice	Female	Director/Administrator	LERMA Vocational Institute	256-770-715-688
13	Muswa Charles	Male	Principal Assistant Secretary	Pakwach District Local Government	256-772-334-996 /256-706-334-996
14	Acele Krieleison	Male	Probation Officer, Youths & children's Affairs	Pakwach District Local Government	256-772-978-920 /256-781-631-051
15	Okumu B.S Genaro	Male	Senior Labour Officer	Pakwach District Local Government	256-775-697-779



	Name	Gender	Designation	District/Institution	Telephone
16	Odong William George	Male	Senior Community Development Officer	Amuru District Local Government	256-777-327-947
17	Ajusi Pascal	Male	Commandant, Imvepi Refugee Settlement	Terego District Local Government	256-772-423-620
18	Otim Benson Humphrey	Male	Chief Administrative Officer	Terego District Local Government	256-772-632-843
19	Akello Eunice	Female	Youths Councillor-Female	Apac District Local Government	256-778-903-278
20	Afoyocan Fancy	Female	District Labour Officer	Amuru District Local Government	256-772-557-329
21	Komakech Simon Peter	Male	District Production Coordinator	Amuru District Local Government	256-782-635-203
22	Kidega Samuel	Male	District Commercial Officer	Amuru District Local Government	256-773-470-634
23	Aciro Stella	Female	District Gender Officer	Amuru District Local Government	256-772-821-502
24	Olum John Bosco	Male	District Community Development Officer	Amuru District Local Government	256-392-419-596
25	Awio Emmanuel	Male	Deputy Chief Administrative Officer	Apac District Local Government	0772-668789 or 0752-688789
26	Okello Tom	Male	Deputy Community Development Officer	Apac District Local Government	256-772-660023

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