

Lost Opportunity? Gaps in Youth Policy and Programming in Uganda



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ACRONYMS

AAIU	ActionAid International Uganda
AYDL	African Youth Development Link
BTVET	Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training
DRT	Development Research and Training
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ICT	Integrated Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IYF	International Youth Foundation
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UNNGOF	Uganda National NGO Forum
UNPS	Uganda National Panel Survey
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USE	Universal Secondary Education
UYONET	Uganda Youth Network
YOP	Youth Opportunities Programme

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It is our hope that the findings from this piece of work will translate into something rewarding for our youth and the country as a whole.

GLOSSARY

Chronic Poverty - Chronic poverty occurs where individuals, households or regions are trapped in severe and multidimensional poverty for extended periods and where poverty is transmitted across generations, so people are born in poverty, live in poverty, and pass it on to their children¹. The poor describe chronic poverty as “When you have nothing and cannot get anything and there is no means to get anything.” They describe persistence of poverty as “rain that soaks and does not stop” (Lwanga-Ntale & McClean, 2003 cited in DRT 2005).

Poverty Profile - Is a description of how the extent of poverty varies across sub groups of a population, characterised by, for example, their gender, region of residence, type of economic activity, or source of income.

Social protection - Social protection is a response to this more dynamic understanding of poverty.

Unemployment² - State of non-engagement in any economic activity but available and willing to work. i.e. Comprises of persons in the working age population, who were not working during the reference period but were seeking and/or available for work.

Voice³ **Voice** - the capacity of all people – including the poor and most marginalised – to express views and interests and demand action of those in power. The focus is not on the creation of voice for its own sake but on the capacity to access information, scrutinise and demand answers with a view to influencing governance processes.

Youth - The term young people or “youth” has different meanings depending on the context. This study defines youth as

1 See DRT, 2005

2 See UBOS 2001 Compendium of Statistical Concepts and definitions used in the Uganda Statistical system and services

3 See O’Neil, T., Foresti, M. and Hudson, A. (2007) for a fuller overview of current debates and approaches on ‘voice and accountability’.

people aged between 12-30 years (NYP, 2003).⁴ The NYP recognises that this is a period of great emotional, physical and psychological changes that require societal support for a safe passage from adolescent to full adulthood.

Youth Participation - Refers to the involvement of youth in the process of identifying needs, exploring solutions, making decisions and planning action within communities and organisations that seek to support civil society. In this context, young people should be treated as citizens now (as opposed to the citizens of the future) and should be involved in all decisions that are made about the community and society in which they live.

⁴ The study was undertaken before the new Youth Policy was approved

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study into the dynamics and complexities of youth and their contribution to national development supports the new impetus in youth development programming, based on a cross-sectoral understanding of youth needs, risks and opportunities. The study is premised on the appreciation of the pivotal role of the youth and their centrality in Uganda's development agenda. The study is also cognizant of the salient development challenges emanating from the current demographic profile of the country.

The study set out to achieve four main objectives. Firstly, to establish the proportion of youth living in poverty, with particular emphasis on the chronic poverty. Secondly, the study goes to the depths of understanding the factors that contribute to poverty of the youth. Thirdly, we scrutinize the development challenges facing the youth in a bid to gain insight into the impact these are having on the youth. Lastly, we explore the barriers that prevent youth from gainfully participating in existing government and non-government youth-focused development programs.

It is observed that the youth (aged 12-30), constitute over 80 percent of Uganda's 33 Million population. By inference, a healthy, properly educated youth able to find productive employment, could boost the country's economy and reinvigorate it politically. The reality however, paints rather an ominous picture. Despite being the majority of the population and the bedrock of the labour force, the optimal contribution of the youth to the development of the country is hampered by unemployment, low skill level, limited opportunities and vulnerability.

More than 2 million youth are out of school, and majority of these have no regular work or income making them vulnerable to recruitment into illegal activities. It was observed that 70 percent of young people between 12-24 years who were never in school in 2006 remained out of school in 2009, while 33 percent of those who were in school in 2006 had dropped out in 2009. A lack financial means to invest in education and early pregnancies were identified as the major factors for dropping out of school. However, those in school and out of school

alike expressed the view that the education system is characterised by poor learning outcomes and a lack of integration between education and the requirements of the job market.

A scrutiny of the status of youth with regard to employment, careers and livelihoods, access to adequate livelihood opportunities further reveals the youth are at a disadvantage. With the majority of youth lacking the requisite skills, the informal sector has become the major alternative source of employment and opportunity for job creation. In this regard youth in the rural areas have resorted to small scale agriculture while those in the urban setting are into the petty trade and artisanship. However, youth seeking to start their own enterprises are faced with challenges in obtaining access to credit. Despite government efforts to avail soft loans through youth funds, the practical challenges facing the youth face in accessing these funds have left out many youth. Majority of youth do not own assets and the financial systems which manage the youth funds rarely make loans without collateral. This seems to explain why overall, 12 percent of all youth in the country are chronically poor. The data also demonstrates higher poverty rates among the 12-17 year olds as compared to the 18-30 year olds. Young women experience a higher prevalence of poverty than young men. Moreover, the current youth surge means that the need for jobs will continue to become more pressing with every passing year as a growing number of those currently under the age of 12 enter the workforce.

In terms of health and well-being, reproductive and sexual health are the two priority issues of focus for young people. Risky behaviours, such as multiple sex partners, unsafe sexual practices, and/or the use of drugs and alcohol play a significant role in the health profile of Ugandan youth. There is a high incidence of teenage pregnancies and a negative relationship that has been reported between teenage pregnancy and education. On the whole, health service programs are costly, not focused on the needs of young people and located in areas that are not always easily accessible.

Regarding youth participation, the question of substantive contribution versus numbers arises. At a fundamental level many youth are illiterate often for the reasons of poverty. They are also constrained by unreasonable expectations of monetary benefits and a corrupted ethic amongst the population. Not only do youth lack self-worth

as individuals, but they are also affected in the access to services provided by government. Youth perceive that they lack a voice in society, while they also distrust authority.

This study recommends skill based learning as early as primary school and massive technical training for Uganda's young people. The report places particular emphasis on training in modern agricultural technologies for youth in rural areas. The study also recommends the establishment of a well-structured, national apprenticeship and mentoring program to motivate youth and provide real work experience, as well as investment in relevant school-to-work transition programs that are relevant to labour market requirements.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Uganda has the world's youngest population with over 78 percent of the population below the age of 30⁵, about half of the population is below 24 years of age⁶ As highlighted in the World Development Report⁷ youth are Africa's most abundant assets and the time has never been better to invest in young people living in developing countries. The demographic significance of this large cohort of young people is increasingly taking centre stage in discussions of sustainable socio-economic development. For example, five of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) speak directly to improving the situation of young people: universal access to primary education; gender equity in access to education; employment creation, maternal health; HIV and AIDS and other diseases.⁸

The cohort of Ugandans aged between 12 and 30 years is the largest in history and is growing⁹. The potential for this demographic trend to bolster or undermine national objectives in the areas of governance, economic and social development is real. Societies with rapidly growing young populations often end up with rampant unemployment and large pools of disaffected youths who are more susceptible to recruitment into Violence¹⁰.

Because youth now constitute the highest and fastest growing proportion of Uganda's population, there is need to understand the dynamics and complexities of youth, and to understand how programs designed for exiting poverty have benefited youth. As an integral part of efforts to address the needs of young people in Uganda, the Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF), Action Aid International Uganda (AAIU) and Development Research and Training

5 IYF, 2011 Youth Map Uganda. Navigating Challenges, Charting Hope. A Cross-sector Situation Analysis on Youth in Uganda

6 MoFPED, 2011 Uganda's Population Stabilisation Report. Population Secretariat

7 World Bank, 2007 World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation

8 African Union, 2011 State of the African Youth Report 2011

9 MoFPED, 2011 Uganda's Population Stabilisation Report. Population Secretariat

10 Phillip De Bboeck & Alcinda Honwana, 2005

(DRT) identified a need to collect in-depth information about Uganda's young people. Such information is useful not only to this consortium in developing youth focused interventions, but also to a broad range of stakeholders involved with youth, including government departments and agencies.

This report presents findings of a study to investigate the dynamics and complexities of Ugandan youth and their contribution to national development. The research was conducted in eleven districts across all the regions of Uganda (Buvuma, Wakiso, Kampala, Nakasongola, Pader, Zombo, Kotido, Katakwi, Luuka, Masindi, and Mitooma). Separate district reports have been produced and can be accessed for district based findings.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of the study was to investigate the socio-economic situation of youth in Uganda, their poverty levels and to analyse existing development interventions for young people by government, civil society and the private sector. The specific objectives of the study included;

- i) To establish the proportion of youth living in poverty, especially chronic poverty.
- ii) To understand the factors contributing to youth poverty.
- iii) To understand the impact of emerging development challenges on youth populations.
- iv) To explore the barriers that prevent youth from gainfully participating in existing government and non-government youth-focused development programs.

1.3 Structure of the Report

This report is organised into seven chapters. In this introductory chapter, we provide an overview of the study as well as the objectives of the study. In chapter two, details of the design and methodology of the study are provided while chapter three provides a clearer understanding of the youth with focus on the demographics, employment and careers of the youth. Chapter four gives a detail of

the youth and poverty nexus with emphasis on the situational analysis and the attendant drivers. Chapter five analyses the issues of youth participation while chapter six looks at the emerging environment the youth operate in with emphasis on how the socio economic dynamics affect them. In the concluding chapter seven, key policy recommendations are given to address the emerging issues cited in the report.



2. STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Study Design

The study used a mixed-model research design, which combined both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. One approach to the study was qualitative and involved a comprehensive review of the literature, analysis of secondary information relevant to young people in Uganda and holding field consultations with purposively selected respondents at national and local government level. The second approach to the design was quantitative. Essentially, this involved administering a survey questionnaire around themes of youth empowerment and skills development, and focusing attention to studying young people as a specific category of the Ugandan population and to issues that have particular relevance to youth.

2.2 Sampling

2.2.1 Selection of Study Areas

The selection of study areas followed three criteria namely; regional representation based on UBOS' geographical categorisation, the prevalence of poverty and vulnerability that are known to affect youth and areas where AAIU has active operations. Ten districts were selected from each of the 10 sub regions of Uganda, and included Kampala being the business district and hub of policy making and decision processes. The Northern Region districts were selected on the basis of being a post-conflict area that currently has various forms of humanitarian crises. The Eastern region has suffered multiple shocks and the selection of districts intended to investigate the abilities of and resources for youth in this region to weather the shocks. The enumeration areas in the selected districts were chosen according to residential and administrative classification of areas as urban or rural. Visiting points within each enumeration area were chosen randomly.

2.2.2 Sample Size

A total of 1,100¹¹ youth were selected for the household survey. Out of the expected sample, 1,035 youth were interviewed representing an achieved response rate of 94 percent. In order to select individuals to be interviewed in a district, the following path was followed; the number of individuals to be interviewed in each district was set at 100, to render a national sample of 1,100 young people. Half of sample in each district was obtained from urban areas, while the other half was obtained from rural areas.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

A set of inclusion criteria was used to select eligible respondents. These include age group, gender and location. The age group (12-30) was the primary criterion used to randomly select respondents. If a potential respondent met this criterion, other attributes such as gender, specific age, and education level were then taken into account. Anyone outside this age group was excluded from the study. The study also took into consideration a fair representation of both gender and location of the respondents. This was in line with the national statistics that indicate a higher percentage of females and a more demographically concentrated rural population of the youth. Tables 1-3 below show the descriptive features of the sample, by age group, residence and by district.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Survey Sample by Age group

Age group (Years)	n	%
12-17	255	24.6
18-24	529	51.1
25-30	251	24.3
Total	1035	100

Table 2: Youth Study Survey Sample by Residence Type.

Residence Type	n	%
Urban	514	46.7
Rural	521	53.3
Total	1035	100

¹¹ A representative sample of 100 youth per study district youth was used.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of the Survey Sample by Age group and District

District	Age group (Years) %		
	12-17	18-24	25-30
Buvuma	20.2	41.4	38.4
Kampala	12.3	54.8	32.9
Katakwi	18.0	55.0	27.0
Kotido	13.5	51.0	35.4
Luuka	7.0	50.0	43.0
Masindi	15.0	67.0	18.0
Mitooma	39.8	55.1	5.1
Nakasongola	42.0	40.0	18.0
Pader	49.5	27.5	23.1
Wakiso	29.3	62.0	8.7
Zombo	23.3	59.3	17.4

Source Field data 2012

2.4 Data Collection

Four main methods of data collection were used. The study began with a review of literature and analysis of existing statistical data¹². This was followed by administration of a questionnaire to a targeted sample of 1,035 youth¹³; Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)¹⁴ and Focus Group Discussions.

2.4.1 Review of Available Literature

The study began with a review of existing literature about young people’s development issues during the early part of 2012. The review encompassed government programs, policies, legislation, strategies and plans; institutional and individual research reports and papers; and NGO/Youth organization program descriptions and reports. Documents presenting regional and international best practices and global experiences with youth programming were also reviewed, as were newspapers and economic reports. Analysis of existing statistical data was concurrently undertaken with the literature review. The analysis examined household data and cross tabulated it with various human and economic development indicators; such as youth and education, youth and agriculture, youth and employment, among others.

12 The existing statistical databases from UBOS were mainly used to give aggregate figures reflective of a national level analysis. These were particularly useful with regard to demographics of youth, employment trends, and trends in poverty

13 The questionnaires administered to the youth provided quantitative figures that were used to infer and generalize findings especially with regard to knowledge, attitudes, practices, and behaviors of youth

14 Key informant interviews provided explanatory notes on key issues regarding youth. These were particularly useful in shading more light on issues of youth participation in key government programmes

2.4.2 Questionnaire Development

Following the validation meeting, two sets of tools were developed, a question guide and a questionnaire. The major themes of education, employment, health and civic engagement were selected as critical aspects of youth development and these topics formed the focus of the questionnaire design.

2.4.3 Key Informant Interviews (KIs):

The teams conducted interviews to discuss various aspects of youth services and needs with key informants. These included officers of the local governments charged with community based services, administration, planning, production, health and education. Other key informants interviewed included officers of the Uganda Police Force, representatives of youth serving organisations and representatives of the private sector and faith organisations.

2.4.4 Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Individual Interviews:

Participatory youth focus group methodologies were used to collect direct, first-hand information from youth. The teams targeted youth who are out of school and not currently served by any organisation, youth participating in programs of a youth organisation and youth going to school. Same focus groups were held for both boys and girls and to the extent possible, youth were selected purposely to maintain representation in terms of age.

2.5 Data Analysis and Preparation of Reports:

The research teams cleaned the qualitative data from the FGDs and KIs and subjected it to thematic and content analysis. The quantitative analysis of data from the individual interviews was analysed descriptively.

2.6 Study Team

The study team comprised of 21 members; four Lead Researchers, nine District Team Leaders and eight Research Assistants who served as facilitators in conducting focus groups in each of the four regions. A complete list of the study team is provided in the annexes. Training for field study teams was organised by DRT in June 2012. All members of the field research teams, including regional leaders and resource

persons from AAIU and UBOS attended the training. All aspects of the study, including identification of respondents and quality control, were dealt with during the training. The field study teams were trained on understanding the terminologies used in the study and their possible translations into their respective local languages.

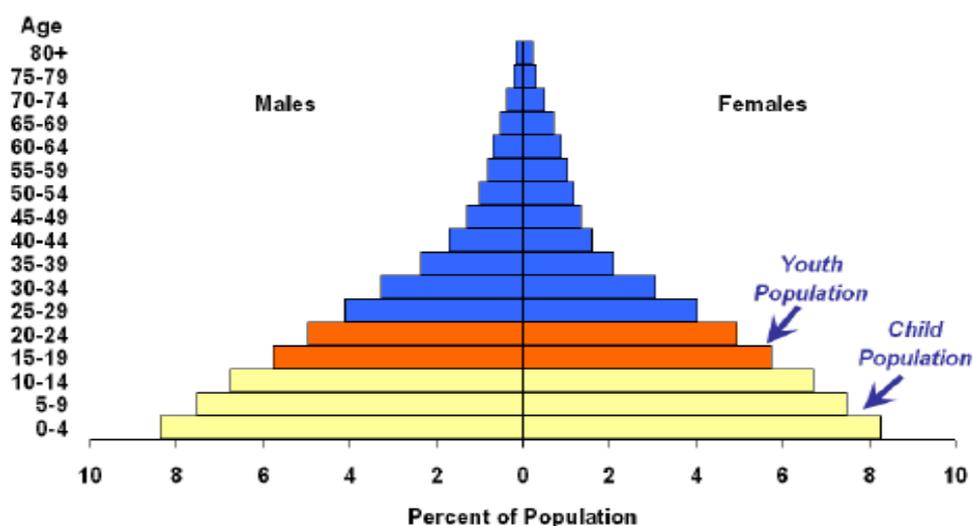


3. THE UGANDAN YOUTH IN PERSPECTIVE: DEMOGRAPHICS AND LIVELIHOOD

3.1 Demographics

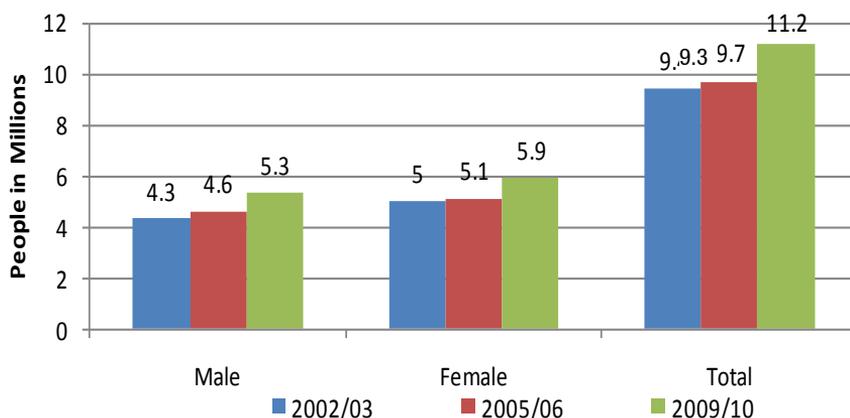
The population of Uganda is generally young. More than 50 percent of the population is below 15 years. There are about 11 million youths in Uganda. Of these, over 80 percent live in rural areas with females constituting the largest share (UBOS, 2010). The cohort of Ugandans between 12 and 30 years is the largest in history and is growing (IYF, 2011). To this end, there is a significant and growing youth surge in the demographics of Uganda (MoFPED, 2011). Females account for 51% of the total youth population, and they dominate both by residence and region. Figure 1 shows the population structure of Uganda and the age-sex distribution of the population for 2012 while Figure 2 gives trends in the population of youth since 2002

Figure 1: Population Structure



Source: Population Secretariat 2012

Figure 2: Trends in the Population of Youth Aged 12-30 Years



Source: UBOS, Uganda National Health Survey 2010

3.2 Youth Employment, Careers, and Livelihoods

3.2.1 Employment

Access to adequate livelihood opportunities is one of the most critical issues that youth face and finding employment plays an important role in the transition to adulthood. Interviews and focus groups discussions demonstrated that key challenges for youth in this regard include the lack of jobs to do, lack of skills, difficulty in obtaining a first job, under employment and job quality. Our finding, according to Table 4 below is that unemployment is high; 61.6 percent of respondents were not employed.

Table 4: Employment Status of the Survey Sample by Education Attained

Education Attained	Employment (%)	
	Employed	Not Employed
None	1.6	12.0
Primary	9.8	16.4
O' Level	12.7	24.2
A' Level	4.8	11.2
Vocational Training	2.5	4.2
University	7.1	3.6
Total	38.4	61.6

Source: Field data 2012

The results of the survey show slightly more unemployed young people in the urban areas than in the rural areas (Table 5). Analysis of UBOS data based on the UNHS 2010 showed that rural employment-to-population ratios were consistently higher (87 percent) than the

corresponding urban ratios (63 percent), yet the urban unemployment rate is almost five times the rural rate. These differences arise because almost all working-age persons in rural areas engage in agriculture and are considered employed. In urban areas however, the high unemployment rate is due to the limited employment options, and the failure of the job market to absorb the available labour force.

Table 5: Employment Status of the Survey Sample by Location

Employed	Location (%)	
	Rural	Urban
Yes	17.7	20.8
No	27.4	34.1
Total	45.1	54.9

Source: Field data 2012

This finding compares with results of the 2009/10 Uganda National Household Survey (UBOS 2010), which showed that while youth employment opportunities improved by 14 percentage points over the period 2002/03 to 2009/10, as measured by the employment-to-population ratio, unemployment rate, on the other hand, increased over the period with wide variation between rural and urban areas. Lack of employment opportunities for them was the key reason respondents gave for not being employed. In the urban centres where more respondents said they were in some form of employment, they indicated that the satisfaction obtained from the jobs available is minimal, as their current job does not meet their expectations. The lack of satisfaction is related to low pay fuelled by the low levels of education and poor labour relations.

3.2.2 Livelihood

The pursuit of better livelihoods is concentrated in the informal sector. Focus group participants and KIIs indicated that the major informal sector areas that attract youth are motorcycle taxis, welding, carpentry, agriculture or fishing and hair dressing salons. Other informal jobs youth engage in include construction, market vending and managing road side restaurants popular for chapatti. A few respondents said they also contribute to doing household chores or family work, like tilling family land or looking after children and ageing or sick relatives, which occupation does not accrue any income to them. Both these groups of respondents were aware that conditions in the informal sector are insecure and the incomes are inadequate for majority young people.

This is consistent with the UNHS¹⁵ 2010 analysis showing that majority of the youth in the country are self-employed in agriculture followed by the services sector. Youth in the services industry were mainly engaged in the whole sale and retail trade, repair, and other services. Wage employment accounted for 25 percent of all employed youths. Male youths were more likely to engage in wage employment than their female counter parts. The presence of many youths in self-employment indicates the ease of entry into the sector for and to some extent it demonstrates how rigid the formal economy is to absorb job seekers.

Related to urban unemployment are the youths in the study who were neither in school nor in employment particularly in urban areas (14 percent). The majority of them in this category are women (9 percent) as opposed to males (3 percent). This group is particularly vulnerable to exploitation by the urban elite. The higher unemployment among women may be explained by the socially constructed gender norms that discriminate against women’s access to employment especially in the private sector.

Table 6: Distribution of the Youth by Employment Status 2009/10

Employment Status	Age group			Total
	12-14	15-24	25-30	
Regular wage earner	0.0	1.6	6.1	3.0
Casual wage earner	1.2	17.6	20.7	17.4
Self employed	2.6	14.6	39.5	22.2
Contributing Family workers	96.2	66.1	33.7	57.4
Total	100	100	100	100
Gender		Male	Female	
Self Employed		62.0	76.5	69.9
Contributing Family worker		3.7	5.1	4.4
Wage Employee		34.4	18.4	25.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
Industry of Employment				
Agriculture and Forestry		58.6	68.5	64.0
Manufacturing		9.3	4.8	6.8
Services		32.2	26.7	29.2
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Analysis based on UBOS UNPS data sets 2010

In the absence of formal employment opportunities, many youths engage in “informal employment” this is a situation where people work

¹⁵ Analysis based on UBOS UNPS data sets 2010

in the formal sector but on informal basis. The informal employment is a widespread phenomenon rated at approximately 97% in 2010 (UBOS). Workers in this situation generally have jobs of lower quality than with formal jobs or those who are in paid employment. This is because those in paid employment are more likely to have contracts and other benefits commensurate with the positions they hold, and better placed to negotiate their employment terms.

In all the districts visited during the study, youth are extensively involved in agriculture. Table 7 shows that 79 percent of respondents are involved in some kind of agriculture, particularly crop growing, animal grazing and fishing. In cases where the land holding is large enough, they might produce surplus which is then sold in the local markets. In both Nakasongola and Buvuma districts, youth consider fishing as a way to earn fast cash, and are therefore largely involved in this activity. At the same time however, these youth confessed that they spend a lot of time trying their luck at fishing because they hardly have any other livelihood choices. This observation points to the importance of innovating creative opportunities for job enhancement and employment.

Table 7: Involvement of youth in Agriculture

Involvement in Agriculture	Agriculture kind				Total
	Crop Growing	Animal Grazing	Fishing	Others	
	%	%	%	%	
Yes	69.4	6.0	2.3	1.6	79.3
No	1.1	1.6	0.1	17.9	20.7

Source: Field Data

Youth in Kampala that reported to be involved in agricultural activity have taken up short term ventures like horticulture, crop, poultry, piggery and livestock farming as well as trading. In Katakwi district, youth are mostly engaged in agriculture as casual labourers while those who have land practice small scale subsistence crop husbandry. In northern Uganda as in Kampala, agricultural engagement extends beyond farming to marketing as well.

The agricultural sector is expected to provide employment for the bulk of youth in the rural areas of the country, but in reality it does not. The reasons for this scenario are varied. Table 8 shows that the major challenge inhibiting youth involvement in agriculture is the lack of production inputs such as land, capital, tools, credit, seeds and even

the poor road infrastructure. During focus group discussions, youth mentioned climate change and lack of capital to undertake farming at a large scale as the major reasons why they have given up on farming. Other reasons given include poor soils, pests and diseases (especially the cassava wilt), the lack of markets and absence of quality agricultural extension. They also complained that the absence of post-harvest technologies for storage and value addition prevents many from “wasting their time” in agriculture.

Table 8: Challenges Inhibiting Youth Participation in Agriculture

Challenges Inhibiting Agriculture	Frequency	Percent
Production inputs	861	83.11
Pests and diseases	33	3.19
Rural-urban migration	13	1.25
Low prices	7	0.68
Climate change	36	3.47
Attitudes	5	0.48
Others	80	7.72
Technology	1	0.1

Source: Field Data 2012

Typically, the majority of youth had the opinion that soft loans from the government were the panacea to the challenges youth face in agriculture. Other insightful proposals included tree planting, the use of fertilisers, and improvements in farming technologies. In order to encourage more youth to participate in agricultural activities, youth across the board proposed improvements in extension services, improvements in value addition and marketing, provision of improved seeds and capital as the strategic interventions in which youth serving organisation must invest.

4. YOUTH AND POVERTY

4.1 Situational Analysis

It is estimated that 8.5 Million Ugandans live in absolute poverty. Of these, 85 percent live in rural areas¹⁶. Poverty and the lack of resources pervade the lives of young people and limit their ability to foster their own development. But how poor are Uganda's young people and what are their characteristics? Based on the analysis of secondary data conducted for this study, this section presents the characteristics of the youthful poor following the multidimensional approach in defining poverty. Overall, 12 percent of all youth in the country are chronically poor. Young people aged 12-17 years are more likely to be chronically poor than those in the 18-30 age group. This is expected because the potential to engage in gainful activities is higher among the latter than in the former age group. Similarly, this category is predominantly dependent on others for their livelihoods and as a result, their welfare status is dictated by their parents or guardians. The 18-30 age group on the other hand, represents the bulk of those searching for employment opportunities as well as new entrants to the job market.

Regarding vulnerability to poverty, more youth drifted out of poverty (17%) than into poverty (12%) between 2005/06 and 2009/10. Table 9 shows the poverty transitions of youth by age. The mobility in and out of poverty reflects the extent to which this population group is susceptible to changes in consumption expenditure.

Table 9: Poverty Transitions of the Youths by Age group

Characteristic	Poor	Moved into poverty	Moved out of poverty	Never poor	Total
Population by age group					
12-17	12.5	11.4	16.6	59.5	100
18-30	9.1	9.2	14.4	67.2	100
12-30	10.8	10.4	15.5	63.3	100

Source: UBOS: Uganda National Panel Survey 2009/10

4.2 The Drivers of Youth Poverty

Information on youth poverty is difficult to find, and the impact of poverty on youth in Uganda is not particularly well documented or understood in either development or policy circles¹⁷. Previous analyses of poverty in Uganda indicate that young people are often invisible or simply 'burdens' in household analyses of poverty. They are considered poor if their parents are poor, yet poverty at the household level will impact on different household members in different ways (UYN, 2010). This lack of attention may, in part, reflect the difficulties associated with youth as a transitional category that overlaps with childhood and adulthood. A question that arises in the context of this discussion is what drives and maintains poverty amongst youth in Uganda?

4.2.1 Education or a Lack of It

The low levels of education attainment

There is a close correlation between levels of education and poverty. Analysis of poverty dynamics amongst young people in Uganda over the period 2005/06 through 2009/10 (Table 10) showed that the mean years of schooling for the non-poor youth is twice that of the poor. Even among the poor, the mean years of schooling is higher for those in youth headed households than in the non-youth headed households.

Table 10: Poverty Dynamics of Youths 12-30 years by Years of Schooling

Transition	2009/10		
	Headed by Non-youth	Headed by Youth	Total
Poor	2.5	4.1	3.8
Move in poverty	4.2	5.5	5.2
Moved out poverty	4.5	5.4	5.2
Never poor	6.7	7.6	7.5

Source: UBOS: Uganda National Panel Survey 2009/10

Table 11 shows the poverty transitions of youth by age and education level during the period 2005/6 - 2009/10. In general, the risks of being poor decline rapidly as individuals attain higher educational levels. The youth with no formal education are poorer and more likely to stay poor than those who have at least completed primary education. The reverse trend is observed among non-poor youths. Those with either no formal education or some primary education are less likely to

17 See Namara et al, 2010; Eradicating Extreme Poverty and Hunger; Youth Efforts to Achieve MDGs in Rural Uganda

exit poverty compared to those with higher levels of education. The returns to education in form of human capital accumulation increase the chances of remaining non poor.

Table 11: Poverty Transitions of the Youth by Educational Level

Characteristic	Poor	Moved into poverty	Moved out of poverty	Never poor	Total
Education of youths 2009/10					
No formal education	34.8	10.4	18.4	36.5	34.8
Some primary	13.5	13.1	19.2	54.3	13.5
Completed primary	5.8	8.5	14.3	71.4	5.8
Some secondary	3.0	6.2	11.1	79.8	3.0
Completed secondary	2.8	2.6	7.1	87.5	2.8
Post-secondary plus	0.2	3.7	0.2	95.9	0.2
Not stated	0.9	3.5	1.9	93.6	0.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: UBOS: Uganda National Panel Survey 2009/10

Despite the presence of UPE and USE, a significant number of youth have not received any formal education or have dropped out of school. Tables 12 and 13 show the education attainment and schooling status of individuals aged between 12-24 years between 2005/06 and 2009/10. The analysis shows that about 70 percent of young people who were never in school in 2006 remained out of the education system in 2009. About 24 percent of youth who were not in school in 2006 joined the education system but dropped out before 2009, while only 6 percent remained in school in 2009. Similarly, about 33 percent of youth attending school in 2006 dropped out.

Table 12: Education attainment by school status aged 12-24 years in 2005/06

	Attended in both period	Dropped out school	Out of school	Attending but not in 2005/6	Total
Some primary	39.8	18.7	39.6	2.0	100
Completed primary	20.9	25.3	52.8	1.0	100
Some secondary	71.0	9.9	17.4	1.7	100
Total	47.9	16.6	33.8	1.8	100

Source: UBOS: Uganda National Panel Survey 2009/10

Low levels of education link directly with poverty in that those with lower education attainment find it difficult to enter the job market. If and when they do, they end up doing low income jobs. At other times, they are paid much lower than the amount of work they do and they often have no basis, in terms of qualifications, to challenge this.

Table 13: Current Schooling Status (12-24 years)

2005/06	2009/10		
Age based on 2006 and aged 12-24	Never Attended School	Attended school in the past	Currently attending school
Never Attended	70.9	23.5	5.6
Attended school in the past	0.0	96.4	3.6
Currently attending school	0.0	33.7	66.3
Total	6.3	53.6	40.1
Age based on 2006 and aged 12-24 years in 2009			
Never Attended	68.8	17.8	13.3
Attended school in the	0.0	90.8	9.3
Currently attending school	0.0	30.8	69.2
Total	3.8	39.3	56.9

Source: UBOS: Uganda National Panel Survey 2009/10

Research participants repeatedly mentioned that the majority of youth have not attained functional education, with many dropping out of school prior to completing primary school or before completing the first four years of secondary education. The majority of youth participating in the study had attained only up to Ordinary Level. Education attainment levels were lower in the rural districts, with the lowest levels in Buvuma, Katakwi and Kotido respectively.

Reasons for the significant school dropout rates are directly linked to poverty. Youth as well as key informants most often cited a lack of financial means by parents and early pregnancies as the main reasons for not transiting to secondary or high school because of a lack of funds. Many youth in the rural districts felt that parents chose to devote money to other areas such as health and family/household welfare, suggesting that education is not considered a strong investment priority for the limited funds parents have.

Facilitation is inadequate specifically under Universal Secondary Education. Because of inadequate facilitation, parents are approached for a bridge up which some cannot afford. This has caused many school drop outs in the District. Children whose parents cannot afford are forced to drop out of school (DEO, Katakwi District).

The education supplied is inadequate

Respondents signalled that school quality and learning outcomes are very low and that the quality of learning and teachers available in schools in Uganda limits youth development. The general perception

was that schools offer education that is insufficient to enable youth to progress. They described the current academic experience as lacking in its focus on developing the individual, in part due to high student-teacher ratios especially in public schools. Further, they noted that the curriculum and pedagogy were theoretical and boring to students. The education system was said not to equip young people for the work place or for self-employment. Youth leave school lacking job search skills, an understanding of what employment opportunities are available, and the knowledge and skills to attain the job they want.

The majority of out of school youth do not consider the education they received applicable to improving their livelihoods. Many felt that they would be better off if at school they had learned agricultural education, technical skills, entrepreneurship and the creative arts. Outside of school, there is a complete lack of the career guidance necessary to help youth pursue additional training and income generating opportunities.

The inadequate education received is perceived as relevant

An important aspect of understanding the adequacy of education in the context of poverty and youth is its perceived relevance. Table 14 shows the perceived relevance by level education attained by respondents. Young people as well as local government official and employers in the private sector reported that prospective employees need to be highly educated to access meaningful jobs. They averred that the lack of skill and qualification among youth is not only a result of low level of education attainment, but also related to the weaknesses in education and the lack of vocational training opportunities.

Table 14: Perceived Relevance by Level of Education

Level of Education	Education Relevance			Total
	Relevant	Not Relevant	No Response	
None	47	22	31	3
Primary	55	38	7	24
O' Level	68	27	5	39
A' Level	78	17	5	19
Tertiary/Vocational	91	8	2	6
University	74	18	7	9
No Response	100	0	0	0
Total	68	26	6	100

Source: Field data 2012

Interestingly, for majority of older, male youth, voluntarily drop out contrary to their parents' wishes or lack of fees. This is triggered by the fact that their peers who have already dropped out consider the very basic education they have received sufficient for existence outside of the school. Many study participants were confident that the general knowledge for counting money, speaking English, improved sanitation and communication with others was sufficient for the available endeavours to exit poverty and advance in life. In other words, for this category of people, the little education they have received is relevant.

4.2.2 Unemployment, underemployment and joblessness

Many studies show that many young people, including children, are poor because they depend on their parents or guardians, who are themselves unemployed or intermittently employed, for sustenance. This implies that they essentially dependent on poor households for their livelihoods and wellbeing; creating the situation of intergenerational and persistent poverty¹⁸.

The study found strong evidence to suggest that poverty is closely linked to unemployment, underemployment and joblessness amongst young people. While as alluded to in the foregoing living in a poor household means that one is poor themselves, majority of youth are impoverished more from lacking employment than from direct dependence on impoverished households. For example, majority of youth in paid employment are temporary or casual employees. Others are occupied as unpaid family workers. They indicated that they experience low development, little job growth, and widespread poverty. Analysis by UBOS (Table 15) indicated that the proportion of unemployed youth aged 12-30 years in Uganda increased from 2.7% in 2005/06 to 3.6% in 2009/10. Another report on labour market characterises¹⁹ suggests that the proportion of jobless youth aged 18-30 years increased from 5% in 2002/03 to 8% in 2009/10; and that the rate of youth unemployment is way above the national rate. These reports were corroborated by our study which found that 61.6% of the youth who were not attending school of any kind, who participated in the study were unemployed.

18 See DRT, 2005, UBOS 2009/10

19 MGLSD, 2009 "Employment and job creation in Uganda, Status and Growth prospects" - Discussion Paper 19

Unemployment among female youth doubled between 2005 and 2010, but there was a reduction in the male unemployment rate. As the data shows, inequalities exist between young women and young men looking for employment. While overall unemployment is low, urban youth unemployment was almost three times the national average registering an average of 10 percent in 2009/10. The dominance of subsistence agriculture as a livelihood activity makes almost all those in rural areas employed. As a result, unemployment is predominantly an urban problem. At regional level, the central region ranks top among those with the highest unemployment rate (6.8%), followed by Northern region (6.2%). The existence of Kampala in central region contributes significantly to the high unemployment rates.

Table 15: Youth Unemployment Rate by Sex, Residence & Age

Sex	2005/06		2009/10	
	Unemployment Rate	Jobless	Unemployment Rate	Jobless
Male	3.1	3.7	2.7	3.2
Female	2.2	9.8	4.4	8.5
Residence				
Urban	9.6	17.0	10.2	13.8
Rural	1.4	4.6	2.4	4.2
Region				
Central	4.5	10.2	6.8	10.3
Eastern	0.9	3.9	2.7	4.4
Northern	4.5	9.0	3.2	4.9
Western	0.9	4.1	1.4	3.6
National (12-30)	2.7	6.9	3.6	6.0

Source: Uganda National Household survey 2005/06 and 2009/10

Uganda’s economic structure and trends are not encouraging either. The formal sector is small with low growth rate and therefore cannot absorb majority of youth seeking employment. Moreover, government’s efforts to encourage development towards industrialisation has still not attracted youth – the proportion of youth entering the labour market in the manufacturing sector has remained very low²⁰. The informal sector, which has a very high rate of job creation and therefore where majority of youth find employment, is largely unorganised. At the same time, youth reported facing major challenges in securing employment including corruption, nepotism and exploitation. According to the IYF

20 MGLSD, 2009 “Employment and job creation in Uganda, Status and Growth prospects” - Discussion Paper 19

(2011)²¹, Uganda will not economically benefit from the large youth population because of low investments in job creation. The emerging pattern is one of increased poverty and social pressure resulting from a lack of employment opportunities for youth. There is an ongoing need to ensure that opportunities for economic growth translate into employment opportunities for the poor.

4.2.3 Gender and Social Exclusion

Gender and social exclusion also emerged as key drivers of poverty amongst youth in the country. It is widely accepted that gender inequalities can exacerbate poverty. Majority of girls in both Nakasongola and Buvuma districts interviewed during the study had dropped out of primary school due to pregnancies, many acquired through Gender Based Violence (GBV) or refusal by parents to fund girls' schooling preferring to invest in boys. The International Youth Foundation in 2011²² recorded the gender differences among youth and noted that the unemployment rate for females (ages 18-24) was at 27 percent compared to 9 percent for males in the same age group in 2009. Young women face greater constraints than their male counterparts in finding decent work due to cultural norms and gender stereotypes. Majority young women in the study reported being involved in agriculture and housekeeping as maids. They were operating on the margins of society, could not find decent employment and were excluded from the main aspects of life. The high rate of joblessness among females compared to males is attributed to employers' preference of men to women in some types of jobs. Female youth are also reluctant to search the job market and compete for employment opportunities.

Poverty and social exclusion seem to be mutually reinforcing among youth. An inability to find work creates a sense of uselessness and idleness amongst young people. They become or feel increasingly marginalised. They feel constrained to take up or try available opportunities and exercise their right to be fully productive members of society. This in turn exacerbates their poverty. Such youth find themselves involved in early sexual debut often leading to ill health, unwanted pregnancies or the HIV/AIDS epidemic; substance abuse,

21 International Youth Foundation (IYF), 2011. Youth Map Uganda. Navigating Challenges. Charting Hope. A Cross-sector Situation Analysis on Youth in Uganda.

22 International Youth Foundation (IYF), 2011. Youth Map Uganda. Navigating Challenges. Charting Hope. A Cross-sector Situation Analysis on Youth in Uganda.

and delinquency; which causes them to be more vulnerable and further marginalised through lack of education and unemployment.

In particular, the sense of social exclusion experienced by unemployed young people is likely to weaken their commitment to social norms. Marginalised young people are likely to seek out alternative sources of self-worth, self-esteem and social status and to find deviant or unlawful means of acquiring the material trappings necessary for recognition by their peers. This can lead to increased crime, mental health problems, violence, conflicts and drug abuse. Young people in the fishing areas like Nakasongola and Buvuma districts emphasised that redundant youth are involved in activities linked to drug abuse and child prostitution. Study teams observed that girls are forced into prostitution as early as 13 years. They linked pregnancies, promiscuity and increased violence amongst young people to un-employment, poverty and a lack of parental guidance.

4.2.4 Disability

Disability is a recognised driver for poverty during youth-hood. A strong relationship exists between disability on one hand and poverty, gender inequality, social exclusion and other forms of social disadvantage and marginalisation on the other. Poverty is a major contributor to disability, and disabled young people are poorer than their counterparts and are at great risk of slipping into, or deeper into poverty. In general, people with disabilities and their families are poorer than the rest of the population. People with disabilities are also likely to have lower education and literacy rates than the rest of the population.

In this youth study, the number of disabled youth that was reached is small. The data collected is unreliable and therefore insufficient to give an accurate prevalence of disability amongst young people in Uganda. However, it was observed that there exist high levels of stigma attached to disability, to the extent that youth with disability were not willing to come forward and participate in the focus group discussions even when approached. This was particularly the case in Nakasongola and Buvuma district. Nonetheless, the findings from the few respondents with disability, which was corroborated by their counterparts without disability, indicate that there is a general lack of services that would respond to specific and peculiar needs of youth with disabilities. This in part explains why majority of them would remain poor.



5. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

This section explores the social integration of young people, their involvement in organisations and organised activities and their relationships with others. It provides an overview of government programs and civil society initiatives to promote the growth and development of young people in Uganda; and presents the views of youth on key government programs that aim at empowering youth and how they engage in the country's civic processes.

A recurring theme in this report – and indeed in the literature on Ugandan youth as a whole, is the concern that sections of young people remain on the margins of society. Many young Ugandans are seen as disengaged. Against a background of high levels of youth unemployment, the decline of social institutions and the ravages of HIV/AIDS, many youth in Uganda are not effectively participating in the transformation process. This situation is facilitated by the education, career and livelihood deficiencies discussed earlier, which hinder integration of young people into society and their active participation in development programs.

5.1 Youth Focused Policies and Programs

The National Youth Policy was created by the Government of Uganda in 2001 as “a statement outlining our vision, the values and principles that guide us, the issues that challenge us and initiatives, programmes and delivery mechanisms being planned and implemented to improve the social economic well-being of our youth”. The mission of the policy is “youth empowerment” and focuses on the following set of underlying principles: respect for cultural, religious and ethical values; equity and accessibility; gender inclusiveness; good governance and national unity; youth participation and youth empowerment.

The National Youth Council (NYC) was established by an act of parliament in 1993, with the overall objective of mobilising Ugandan youth in activities that benefit them and the country at large. The creation of the NYC is attributed to the acknowledgment that youth have a crucial role to play in national development processes. While

the NYC is a well-organized entity, recent results from a survey of the Uganda Youth Map showed that a cross section of youth representatives have negative perceptions of the NYC because of its association with the government and a perception that it is a partisan entity²³. The National Development Plan (NDP) acknowledges that nearly half of the population is below the age of 15 years and the population structure is expected to remain youthful for the next fifteen years but falls short of referring specifically to the participation of youth in the national development process. However, it does refer to a national skills programme to impart skills to unemployed youth, and implementing a national youth employment policy (NDP, 2010).

The Department for International Development (DFID) in its report “Youth Participation in Development (DFID, 2010) notes that “promoting youth participation can take many forms, from encouraging youth volunteering in community development projects, to empowering young people to offer their perspectives on world issues, to having youth serve as members of advisory boards, become peer mentors, and lead development programs, non-profit organisations and small businesses”. This is undoubtedly true, but what is most important is that in all these cases, attention is paid to the quality of this participation - to ensure that young people are not just token figures, but that they are meaningfully engaged in ways that strengthen their problem-solving, decision-making and leadership skills. This prepares and engages young people today to actively build both a better future and a better present.

The study sought to understand how the youth participate in a selection of national programs. Overall findings are mixed. Many youth participate in various forms with varied levels of satisfaction. What seems to be emerging is the question around meaning and benefit of participation for youth.

5.1.1 National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)

The National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) program of Uganda is an innovative public-private extension service delivery approach, with the goal of increasing market oriented agricultural production by empowering farmers to demand and control agricultural advisory services. Empowering farmers, targeting the poor,

²³ International Youth Foundation (YF), 2011. Youth Map Uganda. Navigating Challenges. Charting Hope. A Cross-sector Situation Analysis on Youth in Uganda.

mainstreaming gender issues and deepening decentralization are some of the key defining principles of NAADS²⁴. The NAADS program targets the economically-active poor □ those with limited physical and financial assets, skills and knowledge, rather than destitute or large-scale farmers □ through farmers' forums based on specific profitable enterprises.

Services meant to alleviate problems in agriculture like NAADS should provide tailor made programs which specifically address the needs of the youth taking into consideration their unique situations. However, youth participating in the study across the country reported they are only partly benefiting from NAADS. Those who acknowledged receiving support from NAADS regarded it as insufficient. Since youth are not considered a special interest group, they are not given special considerations when it comes to benefitting from programs like NAADS. On the whole, it is the progressive farmers who benefit from the program. They also reported arbitrariness in the provision of services where the needs of the beneficiaries are determined by the service providers leading to mismatched priorities. This has led to exclusion of youth from this service, increased poverty and wastage of resources.

5.1.2 Youth venture Capital Fund

One of the challenges facing young entrepreneurs in Uganda has been securing capital. In order to address this challenge, Government of Uganda in Partnership with DFCU Bank, Stanbic Bank and Centenary Bank has made available a venture capital fund of UGX 25 Billion. The Fund should be used to support growth of viable and sustainable SMEs by the youth in the private sector. The objective of this initiative is to lend venture capital debt finance to viable projects proposed by the young entrepreneurs as well as enable the youth benefit from associated mentoring services from the participating banks.

The Fund is available to support the business ventures owned by young entrepreneurs. Eligible sectors include: manufacturing, agro-processing, primary agriculture, fisheries, livestock, health, transport, education, ICT, tourism, construction, printing and service contractors among others. Eligible borrowers are expected to comply with some basic requirements such as local business licensing; enterprises must

24 See NAADS 2000; Master Document of the NAADS Task Force and Joint Donor Groups

have been in operation for a minimum period of three months; with each able to provide employment to at least four (4) people by the end of the loan period; and beneficiaries should be willing to receive advice and be ready to participate in financial skills training for proper business management. Youth are also expected to borrow through companies registered by the Registration Services Bureau.

Youth and interviewees constantly described the Youth Fund as the latest and hottest development program for the youth. There was agreement however; that the basic requirements for young entrepreneurs to access the funds were too stringent and out of touch with the reality of majority young people across the country. They complained that it is virtually impossible to satisfy all of the requirements and warned that the money will remain untouched and therefore will not benefit the youth.

5.1.3 Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF)

The twenty years of insurgency, instability and conflict in Uganda led to high rates of poverty and unemployment in northern Uganda. By 2005, a measure of peace and stability had returned to the region. The centrepiece of the post-conflict recovery plan was a decentralized development program, the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF). To stimulate employment growth through self-employment, in 2006 the government launched a new NUSAF component: the Youth Opportunities Program (YOP), which provided cash transfers to groups of young adults for self-employment in various trades. The YOP intervention had two official aims: raise youth incomes and employment; and improve community reconciliation and reduce conflict. The program, targeted at youth from ages 16 to 35 years, required young adults from the same town or village to organise into groups and submit a proposal for a cash transfer to pay for: (1) fees at a local technical or vocational training institute of their choosing, and (2) tools and materials for practicing a craft.

An evaluation of the program showed that the vast majority of beneficiaries made the investments they proposed. Most engaged in vocational training and approximately two-thirds of the funds transferred to youth groups, was spent on fees and durable assets (not including other start-up costs or materials). The evaluation concluded that relatively unconditional cash transfers have the potential to be an efficient means of improving livelihoods and, potentially, improve

social cohesion and stability²⁵. Indeed, a section of youth participating in FGDs in Northern Uganda testified to learning their skills through a mentoring program under NUSAF; these youths have been issued with start-up tool kits so that they are able to practice the skills. KIIs in Pader District on the contrary perceived the program as having produced no tangible results, especially because having acquired skills and some tools; the labour market conditions were not necessarily conducive for them to sustain their enterprises.

5.1.4 Mentoring and Apprenticeship Programs

Mentoring and apprenticeships are programs that are implemented as part of several distinct interventions to pursue the general goal of promoting positive youth development during the transition from school to work. For young people this is a critical stage of social, psychological and economic transitions, and for many, it means making important choices that can affect their life course and determine their chances of inclusion in the society through access to work. An effective school-to-work transition system also spurs the countries' economic growth, productivity and ability to compete in the global economy²⁶.

The Government of Uganda established the Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) program to respond more flexibly to changing work and employment patterns and in a way that closes the gap between the world of work and training. To achieve this, the Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training Act, 2008; strengthens BTJET through separation of delivery and quality assurance functions and greater involvement of business. The Act formalises a number of reforms including: the introduction and promotion of modular training which is flexible to suit the trainees occupational or skills requirements; the introduction of assessment that is competency – based; the introduction of certification based on a Vocational Qualification Framework; recognition of prior learning; recognition of formal and non-formal training and the implementation quality assurance mechanisms.

In relation to mentoring or apprenticeship programs, majority of youth and key informants alike said they were not aware of any opportunities

25 Blattman C., Fiala N., &Martines S., 2009.Impact Evaluation of the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Youth Opportunities Project, Uganda.

26 See USAID, 2011, Livelihoods and Enterprises for Agricultural Development (LEAD) Newsletter, Vol. 2, Issue 2, March 2011

to address youth skill needs in their area (districts). Amongst those that indicated knowledge of a mentoring or apprenticeship program they perceived these to mean vocational training programs or apprenticeships. They mentioned the following as the commonest: tailoring, motor vehicle repairs, NAADS and carpentry.

The overall finding of the study is that mentoring and apprenticeship are not common concepts. Only NGOs and a few business owners carry out some kind of mentoring often at a cost to those who want. The most common private sector players that offer some kind of mentoring or apprenticeship include hair dressing salons, tailoring workshops, welding workshops and motor vehicle repair garages. In focus groups, youth said they were constrained by a lack of funds and limited social capital to participate in the informal mentoring programs. For those that receive some kind of mentoring, the next envisioned step is to start their own workshop or business. However, they are again constrained by a lack of capital to buy equipment or start a business. At the same time youth who had not participated in any such programs consistently cited financial constraints as the reason they cannot find a mentoring or apprenticeship program.

As the findings above illustrate, many youth in the country enter the workforce at an early age. Once out of school, youth gravitate towards trades that are already familiar to them or trainings that offer perceived rapid opportunities for making money. When asked what kind mentoring or apprenticeship they wanted to receive, male and female youth for the most part mentioned the same types of trades across the regions; hair dressing or tailoring for women, welding, carpentry, and motor mechanics for men. These were the kinds that were known to them and existed in their communities. When asked the reasons for being satisfied with a given mentoring or apprenticeship program, the majority cited acquisition of skills, employment opportunities and making money. It is evident that due to a lack of mentoring and career guidance, youth across the country lacked exposure to creative jobs or income generating ideas. Additionally, youth lack role models of youth working in less traditional professions and lack information about opportunities for training and complementary education.

5.2 Youth Participation Indicators

5.2.1 Awareness of Youth Roles and Participation Structures

Awareness of young people’s roles provides the barometer of the public’s trust in their capacity to contribute positively to development and community well-being. As Table 16 shows, the percentage of young people who indicated that their community was aware of youth roles in the socio-economic and political development path of the country is very low.

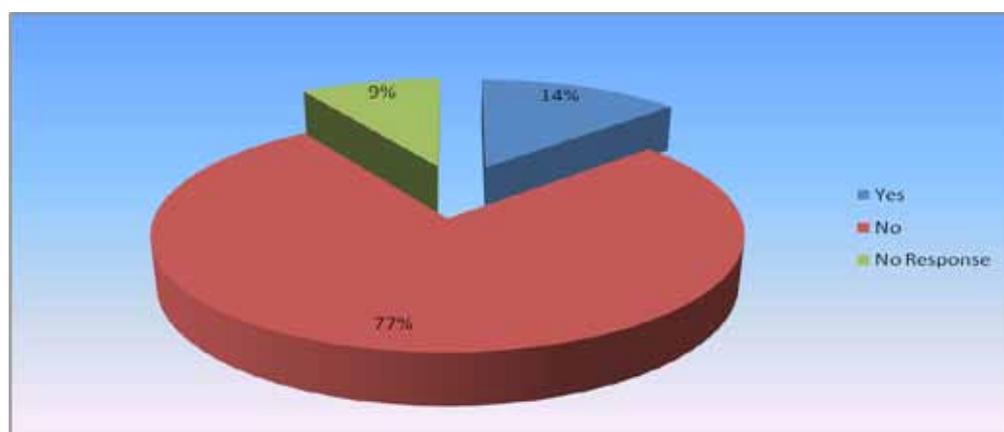
Table 16: Community Awareness of Youth Roles in Development

Awareness	n	%
High	86	8.30
Medium	294	28.38
Low	475	45.85
No Response	181	17.47
Total	1036	100.00

Source: Field data 2012

At the same time, young people themselves seem to have very low awareness of their roles as expressed by the very low level of awareness of the National Youth Policy among respondents (figure 3).

Figure 3: Awareness of the National Youth Policy



Source: Field data 2012

Young people are not enthusiastic about participating in youth structures partly because they are not aware that they exist. Respondents were asked to name the structures that exist for young

people to participate in the socio-economic and political development of the country and the region. As table 17 shows, the majority of the sample cited LCs, elective politics and SACCOS. Participants in focus groups indicated that while these structures exist, they are not effective and have not promoted youth engagement and participation.

Table 17: Awareness of Available Structures for Youth Participation

Youth Structures	n	%
Local & National Youth Councils	496	48
Clubs & Associations e.g. Sports, UNSA	70	7
Public & Private Sector Initiatives	16	2
Others	454	44

Source: Field data 2012

5.2.2 Involvement in Community Organisations

Involvement by youth and community organisations is regarded as an important indicator of youth civic engagement, as well as a predictor of involvement in civic and political affairs in later life. In general, FGD responses showed that youth involvement in local leadership processes is very low because they are not sensitised about their roles and that they do not know that they can greatly contribute to the development of their community. The highest levels of involvement were reported in youth savings and credit societies, established to benefit from the Youth Fund and church groups’ activities. Perhaps worth-noting, involvement in sports, music, dance or drama was very low, with only 7% of respondents reporting that they were aware of and participated in sports teams, school societies or clubs. Furthermore, only 11.8 percent of respondents admitted to being involved in designing or implementing a youth focused program in the previous 12 months period (Figure4).

Figure 4: Involvement in Designing and Implementation of Youth programs



Source:Field data 2012

Within a context of very high levels of youth unemployment, sports have the potential to provide alternative sources of activity, to divert unemployed youth from less healthy and even destructive pursuits, such as substance abuse, risky sex and even crime. Sports can also provide opportunities for personal development, self-discipline, leadership, teamwork, social networking and ultimately, promote the integration of young people into society. The implications for this situation are therefore important because these activities have the potential to alleviate the marginalisation of young people especially those who are excluded from the economy. The ability of young people in Uganda to participate actively and positively in society is determined by their level of commitment to and knowledge of the importance of participation, and their awareness of different ways to participate. Overall, youth did not expressly recognise the importance of their social and political participation, unless related to a specific program. It is evident from focus group reports that youth saw as more relevant participation in programs with economic benefit and political action components.

“We would like to participate but corruption (nepotism, misuse of funds) limits our participation. Information on government programmes does not reach us; Leaders do not listen to the needs of the youths. That’s why when some projects come to the community; youths do not participate because they do not address our needs” (Youth Chairman Luuka T/C)

5.3 Impediments to Youth Participation

Young people are not enthusiastic about participating or initiating participatory actions, partly because they feel closed out of many opportunities. Respondents mentioned that organisations in the community are not open to youth participation, which causes youth to feel frustrated and disillusioned. They noted the following as the most common barriers to participation in socio-economic and political processes:

Lack of skills: At a fundamental level, many focus group participants admitted to being ill-educated or being illiterate and therefore ill-equipped to substantively participate in decision-making processes. They have not developed the necessary analytical skills for critical thinking or problem-solving through participatory, active learning. In

some cases young people are given the opportunity to participate in decision-making without ensuring that they receive adequate training or access to the appropriate information that would enable them to make informed decisions. They indicated that they are not willing to participate in development programs where they perceive that they lack requisite skills.

Cost: The cost of development programs targeting young people is very high. As such, these programs are in a way exclusionary, leaving out a substantial number of young people. Focus group participants persistently noted that limited resources are available for all forms of programs for engaging young people. In their opinion, development programs targeting young people should be long termed in nature and development actors need to allocate sufficient funding for them in order to improve on their inclusionary ability.

Poverty and social exclusion: Interviewees suggested that poor youth are often left out of community initiatives and processes. They do not receive information about available opportunities, if they do, it is after when most other people have received the information and grabbed the opportunities. In addition, young adults who have been known for example to have abused drugs are restricted from participating in mainstream community activities making it harder for them to reach higher levels of participation. Addressing inequality and the social exclusion of particular groups of young people is a big challenge within the youth sector, even for youth organisations.

Voice or the lack of it: Not only do youth lack self-worth as individuals, they perceive that they lack a voice in society, while they also distrust authority. Focus group participants constantly complained that their voices are not respected and that those that are elected to represent them serve their own interests. Youth also complained that in many occasions, government targets the educated youths, leaving out the un-educated ones.

Corruption: Corruption negatively affects the credibility of government programs and erodes civic participation due to increasing distrust among citizens. Developing youth into active citizens and bringing about positive change in youth is challenging due to the corruption they face. Young adults who have been victims of corruption have a tendency to distrust political institutions and even to distrust

other people. There was a common perception among interviewees that youth are also constrained by a corrupted ethic amongst the population represented by unreasonable expectations of monetary benefits. Interviewees reported that youth are not interested in leadership processes because they are not patient and are interested in financial gains that sometimes are not part of the leadership role they have to play in the community.

Weak participation infrastructure: Many young people lack direct access to institutional systems and structures within governments, the media, the private sector and civil society. This severely impedes their ability to advocate for their rights. In the rare cases where young people have been able to influence or make decisions, barriers within complicated infrastructure have tended to limit implementation. This destroys young people's confidence and trust in such mechanisms. In all the districts where this study was carried out, there exist youth structures at all local government levels, however, majority are not operational and lack financial and technical support.



6. EMERGING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUTH

This section provides an assessment of impacts of the changing contexts within which Ugandan youth function. It covers the impacts of the youth surge, rural urban migration, the state of health of young people, ICTs and a new culture all analysed from the perceptions of the participants in the study.

6.1 The Youth Bulge

Despite Uganda's sustained economic growth over the past decade, the trends are not very encouraging for the increasing youth population. Several reports analysing recent trends in private sector investment²⁷ labour productivity, un-employment and under employment²⁸ suggest that the "youth bulge" in Uganda will not have positive economic benefits because of the low levels of investment and job creation. The projected large increases in labour force, especially among the youth, will not be absorbed in the formal labour market, which is a tiny share of the labour force absorbing only 15 percent of the current labour force²⁹.

The Young Leaders Think Tank for Policy Alternatives presents the "youth bulge" and the expected shortage of employment opportunities as an urgent issue. They suggest that government provides tax incentives for enterprises that create jobs for young people and creation of national job centres that facilitate interaction between employer, training institutions and young job seekers³⁰. Detailed analysis and projections of population growth taking into account a wide range of factors including migration and projections of growth in employment opportunities based on economic conditions reported in a study of the urban labour force³¹ leads to similar conclusions: that there is a significant and growing youth surge in the demographics of

27 See UBOS , BOU & UIA., 2011

28 See MGLSD, 2006, UBOS 2010, IYF 2011)

29 See Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2009.Report of the Findings of the Urban Labour Force

30 (YLTPA, 2011).

31 See Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2009.Report of the Findings of the Urban Labour Force

Uganda and that employment prospects for young people are poor given projections for economic growth.

Youth and KIIs acknowledged that the failure of the Ugandan economy to generate sufficient jobs for its growing workforce is a cause for deep concern. The current youth surge means that the need for jobs will continue to become more pressing with every passing year as a growing number of those currently under the age of 12 enter the workforce. It was clear to participants in the study that the increasing youth population has brought about a crisis in the Ugandan labour market, because the increasing number of youth entering the job market desperately needs jobs, yet the job market does not seem to have the capacity to absorb them.

6.2 Rural – Urban Migration

Uganda is a “nation on the move”. The literature reviewed for this study describes how demographic growth, poverty, unemployment and the adverse impacts of changes in the climate continue to push people out of rural areas to towns. Urbanisation is growing - there are noticeable signs of new construction projects in the different Town Councils visited for this study. New opportunities in newly established Town Councils are attracting youth from the rural areas. Interviewees mentioned opportunities for work, electricity, better education, better social services and the potential for small enterprises as the major attractions that push youth from the villages to the town.

In terms of agriculture, youth draw away much needed labour from the rural areas leaving most of the work to older persons and children. In many areas visited for the study, the young men only return to the villages during harvest. Around the major lakes, fishing also draws a considerable number of males from the villages to the landing sites. The secondary impact of this trend is a growing decline in investments in household farms because youth in the labour force invest their money in retail businesses in the urban areas. In the rural areas visited for this study, participants admitted to a growing trend of many youth migrating to urban areas in search for quick cash and a better life because the villages are cash poor, an indication of the socio-economic stagnation of rural areas.

The negative social and economic impacts of migrating to urban areas were well understood by youth and key informants alike.

Interviewees mentioned unemployment, crime, promiscuity and diseases (especially HIV) as the most critical impacts young people face when they move to urban areas. FGD participants were acutely aware of the growing number of young girls available for paid sex and the increasing cases of substance abuse. The Uganda Police Force in Nakasongola and Wakiso districts confirmed that youth in the area “use opium, abuse alcohol and are badly infected by HIV”. Likewise, leaders in Buvuma District indicated they were no longer willing to do anything to pull youth out of risky behaviour because many were high on drugs and the majority had only just migrated to the fishing camps.

Despite the widely recognised benefits of urbanisation, rapid increases in the urban population are also associated with increased pressure on education, health, housing, and transport facilities, with new migrants being particularly susceptible to inadequate and overcrowded housing, and limited access to employment and health care. Rural to urban migration exacerbates urban poverty. Interviewees in the Kampala area perceived a significant influx of young people from Northern Uganda, South-western Uganda and Rwanda. Interviewees were aware of the vulnerabilities of these three segments of youth. Many are living in slums and are vulnerable to commercial exploitation, including sexual exploitation.

6.3 Information and Communication Technologies

Utilisation of mobile technology has grown exponentially throughout Uganda, providing communities the ability to more easily communicate and access important information. Access to information and communication systems via mobile networks has proven to be a key, low-cost tool for individuals to improve their socio-economic status throughout Uganda. In recent years, successful cell phone communication networks have been established, allowing students for example to obtain examination results by SMS text messages and farmers to research market prices in local markets. Access to market information allows farmers to get the best price for their produce and ultimately increase their revenue.

Mobile technology has also paved way for rural health care providers such as village health teams to access key health advice as well. Finance lending groups are also using mobile technology to improve their service delivery while education institutions are also accepting

tuition fees through Mobile-Money banking transfers via cell phone. Literacy programs have also benefited from mobile technologies. Mobile literacy has introduced activities that range from multimedia lessons to the proliferation of internet cafes. Mobile technology has paved way for the establishment of small enterprises by youth for phone charging and money transfers.

A large number of youth in Uganda, particularly those in urban and peri-urban areas, have cell phones. Young people use their phones to communicate with friends, parents and clients (in the case of those who were working). The examples range from the obvious, such as the motor-cycle taxi rider giving his number to clients for future business; to the unexpected, such as the vegetable seller who lets her clients know where she has relocated following the closure of a market. The usage of mobile phones was also evident in the ease with which focus group discussions were arranged.

Rural youth did not use the internet at all while a few urban youth also reported using their cell phone to access the internet as well as use their phone to tune into a radio station. A number of urban youth reported to accessing the internet either from internet cafes. Those that did so confessed to using social media for finding friends and dating. On the other hand the presence of improved ICTs was reported by interviewees to have adverse impacts on culture and youth behaviours.

Conversely, ICTs could impoverish a significant section of Ugandan young people as' gambling has become one of the biggest businesses across Uganda. At the moment, sports' betting has spread like wildfire. On the weekends, hundreds of sports betting outlets are filled with young gamblers, most of them without any regular income. Many unemployed youth are being lured into predicting sports results and placing a wager on the income by popular FM radio stations. Youth in Wakiso and Kampala districts admitted to sports betting for survival because they have no jobs.

6.4 Health and Well-being

While the youth ages are documented to be generally healthy (IYF, 2011), they still face significant challenges related to receiving care and quality health education. This study found that reproductive and

sexual health emerged as the priority issues for youth, although drug and alcohol abuse were also raised as issues of importance during interviews and in focus group discussions in urban areas.

Reproductive and Sexual Health: In many FGDs, youth were open about their sexual activity, knowledge and use of protection against Sexually Transmitted Illnesses (STIs) including HIV/AIDS. They reported that many start having sex at a very young age leading to early pregnancies for many. They indicated that sexual health education is needed to stem early pregnancies and the high school dropout rates. Despite an increase in enrolment at primary and secondary school level, adolescent pregnancy remains an important issue due to its prevalence and subsequent consequences. In Nakasongola District for example, all the females interviewed in the rural areas had dropped out of school because of a pregnancy. In Buvuma District, all the girls coming to the FGDs were already mothers.

Health professionals interviewed in several places indicated very low demand for contraception. However, youth also complained of a lack of condoms in several areas (especially the rural areas), even though the males reported a growing interest in circumcision as the only way available to them to protect themselves against HIV. In Wakiso and Kampala districts, this scarcity of condoms was not apparent. The low level of condom usage or their scarcity in the rural districts visited for this study is cause for concern given the sheer numbers of youth who admitted to having multiple sexual partners.

Sexually Transmitted Illnesses and HIV/AIDS: Interviewees stressed the issues related to STIs and HIV/AIDS and perceived a high degree of vulnerability among youth with regard to health. Youth in Nakasongola and Buvuma districts openly reported that many of them suffer from Gonorrhoea, Syphilis and HIV/AIDS. Like focus group participants, interviewees (both youth and KIIs) suggested a need for more condoms in the area and better education services about HIV.

Youth Friendly Health Services and SRH Programming: An effective SRH model includes access to youth friendly services and provides integrated care and reproductive and sexual health services to youth by means of information dissemination, education counselling and referrals to clinical services. This study has found that apart from Kampala, the other districts visited as part of this study are

characterized by lacklustre services provided at health centres and non-existent youth friendly health services. In several districts, these services are provided by several NGOs and religious organizations. Youth often raised serious concerns on the issue of coverage for health centres and indicated that the private options in poorly regulated clinics were unaffordable. In Buvuma district particularly, not a single SRH program was reported which leaves the majority of young people without access to reproductive and sexual health services.

Alcohol and Drug Use: Youth in focus group discussions indicated that many use alcohol and drugs in their communities. Drug use in the country has gone from being discreet to being totally visible. While the use of alcohol and drug substances (marijuana and opium) was cited in all the study districts, it was more pronounced in the central region around the fishing camps in Buvuma Island and the landing sites Lwampanga Sub-county around Lake Kyoga where youth use money from fishing to procure the substances.

6.5 Youth and Culture

Cultural affirmation and identity are important as a person progresses from childhood to adulthood. Youth in Uganda today are operating within an environment of rapid cultural change. Many are especially restless; they are dissatisfied with the traditional norms where wisdom and leadership were emphasized for the elders. Youth participating in FGDs perceived the current situation as one where old people are not demonstrating wisdom, while young people are not given the opportunity to lead. As youth grow up in Uganda in this time, they realise quickly that the times are changing and encounter beliefs and practices that are constantly in contradiction with theirs. Many of the youth have lost touch with their cultural heritage and shun some of the values of their culture. Ugandan cultural practices, the use of labour, dress, social morals, and relations have been changed by western beliefs and importantly, are continuing to have a strong influence on key institutions such as the family. In the context of this report, participants in the study identified three broad areas where the impacts of rapid cultural changes are manifested.

Changing Social Structures: In Ugandan cultures, the extended family is common and its function, traditionally, is a source of cultural affirmation and identity. It is expected to provide a secure supportive

environment for both children and adults. This traditional system supports youth through the distribution of responsibility and numerous checks against abuse of authority especially during the difficult adolescent years. The current reality, however, is that extended families in Uganda are changing the way youth relate to elders. Increasing mobility and the resultant rural – urban drift have resulted in these changes. For example, law enforcement agents in Nakasongola and parents in the Buvuma Islands perceived a challenge of young people who come from different parts of the country to fish. They are often difficult to control because they lack common cultural bonds.

Interviewees and elders in FGDs admitted that families in many parts of Uganda are in turmoil and facing great difficulties. Many customary practices are taking place but in the context of urbanization and modernization. In many settings, the family has changed its configuration to one where parents are absent and the children have no particular reference point. Where young people have themselves moved away often to attend school, the impacts are worse. Girls living away from their parents may be at risk of exploitation and abuse. Boys living with relatives have an increased risk of dropping out of school, becoming involved in substance abuse, crime or running away to live on the streets.

Monetisation of Lifestyles: The trend towards more urbanized, nuclear families has been brought about by a whole set of challenges. Increased monetization of the economy could be the most important agent that brought this social change. The growing cash economy and the ability to earn wages reduced dependence on land resources that were the basis of social structure.

Influence from the Global Media: In addition to the changes that have taken place in traditional Uganda cultures, youth are increasingly exposed to the global media and receiving messages that are often in stark conflict with tradition. For example, individual rights as opposed to communal rights, puritan Christianity as opposed to puritan promiscuity; formal education as opposed to customary knowledge. For this tendency to be saturated with western values via the media and urban life, many young people do not value their cultures.



7. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

7.1 General Conclusion

Concerns about youth are at the centre of many policy debates. The future well-being of the country depends on rising a new generation of skilled, competent, and responsible adults. Yet majority of youth are at serious risk of not achieving “productive adulthood” and face such risks as substance abuse, adolescent pregnancy, school failure or drop-out, and involvement in delinquency. Depending on their circumstances and choices, they may carry those risks into their adult lives. Public investments in youth programs that attempt to address these and other such trends that affect young people have grown significantly over the past decade or so.

For the most part, these efforts have targeted specific problems and threats to young people. Major funding has been allocated to addressing challenges of livelihoods and economic wellbeing among young people, which drive and maintain them in poverty. Substantial public health investments have been made to address sexual and reproductive health of young people and other health risks. In spite of this, there seem to be glaring gaps in the social and economic well-being of youth. The study revealed that the programs in place have largely not benefited the youth in Uganda. They are infested with little or no education and therefore poor skills, are unable to obtain employment, and if they do, they mostly settle for low skill, low wage employment in the informal sector. These and other associated challenges worsen their wellbeing and drive them into deep poverty.

7.2 Policy Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, we proffer the following policy messages:

1. There is need for harmonisation of the definition of Youth. The National Youth Policy defines youth as persons between the ages of 12-30 years while the Constitution of Uganda on the other hand identifies them as those persons between 18 and 30 years

inclusive. This varying understanding complicates not only analysis of youth issues but also effective programming and targeting as it creates many loopholes for exclusion if service providers choose to use different authorities.

2. Agriculture is still the largest source of livelihood in Uganda. This is true for young people as well. About 79% of youth interviewed are involved in small holder agriculture. Their effective participation is however hampered by a lack of access to productive inputs and extension services, capital, skills and markets for their produce. Improving the plight of youth in Uganda therefore demands an increased investment in the agricultural sector particularly targeting small holder farmers. Addressing the constraints faced will significantly contribute to building a positive attitude and make agriculture attractive to young people.
3. The informal sector as the main exit pathway from unemployment. There is a growing role of the informal sector as a source of employment and income for the youth. Pursuit of better livelihoods is concentrated in the informal sector. While this is main exit route for the youth, the informal sector in Uganda is highly unregulated and characterised by unprecedented exploitation for those in it. Majority of the jobs there offer poor pay and working conditions. There are no benefits (including human rights obligations) such as pension or retirement funds, paid leave, maternity leave, medical benefits among others to support employees cope with risks and vulnerabilities. There is thus need for a balance between activities aimed at creating employment and protecting the potential of the informal sector to generate new job opportunities for young people. At the same time, the sector should be capable of offering better working conditions and protection for workers. Specifically, the state should ensure effective regulation and enforcement of standards in the informal sector. It must ensure compliance with international working standards and fundamental human rights, including access to adequate social security, good working conditions and as a matter of priority and urgency, putting in place a minimum wage.
4. Sports and creative arts is an untapped livelihood source. Many youth are involved in sports and arts for social networking, and a few for income generating purposes. The potential of developing

sports and arts into a profession, employment opportunity as well as income generating source is high. To achieve this, there is need for a deliberate investment in building sports and arts as a profession. Regulations such as copy right laws and facilities to enable youth identify and further develop their talent in various disciplines need to be developed and resources across the country.

5. Public works play a critical role in providing incomes and employment opportunities for youth. Youth unemployment is overwhelmingly high while at the same time, many youth do not possess the requisite skills to fit into the very competitive employment world, championed through the private sector. Evidence from across the world and in Northern Uganda where public works have been implemented demonstrates that they play a critical role providing short term employment and incomes while creating community assets. In the case of Northern Uganda however, there is no specific system of coordinating them or assessing who is and how they are benefiting from them. In order to systematically and effectively benefit youth, the state needs to have a formal strategy of using public works. On the basis of these, public works programs in Uganda can be designed to specifically respond to youth poverty and unemployment.
6. Develop innovative models that encourage work-based training and certification. Many youth have considerable experience in various practical skills but given our job system that emphasises academic qualification, there are few opportunities for their integration into the job market. A system of certifying their experience to equivalent qualifications can go a long way in enhancing opportunities for integrating out of school youth with experience in job market. Knowledge and job centres would be one of such innovative ideas.
7. School-to-work transition programs. According to findings, many youth fail to find work opportunities despite having skills. This is linked to the glorification of “working experience” as a requirement for one to access job opportunities. To bridge this gap, there is need for national school-to-work transition programs where government working with the private sector establishes a mechanism of putting in place short-term experience building

opportunities of up to 6 months, for out of school graduates to enable them acquire practical experience for the job market.

8. Gambling and betting - a new driver of chronic poverty among the youth. Many youth are abandoning participating in productive activities to gambling, especially sports betting. This has emerged as both a rural and urban phenomenon and has increased idleness, diversion of would be productive resources with a hope of winning bets. Many youth have lost resources that have exposed them to chronic poverty. There is need for regulation of this industry and more sensitisation on the dangers of this practice.
10. Tokenism and co-optation of youth in participative governance is not achieving the desired goal of democratic governance. Simple inclusion within state decision-making procedures should not be the ultimate goal of youth involvement. There should be evidence of increased democratisation in terms of: (1) the extent to which participation and control are substantive rather than symbolic; and (2) the range of issues that are regarded as being under democratic control. To achieve substantive participation of youth in governance and development processes, youth should be allowed opportunities for agenda-setting powers and decision-making roles. A deliberate effort should be made to build skills of young people in participative governance, and continually provide them with the information they need to participate effectively.
11. Government needs to systematically build / boost its capacity to design and deliver non-adhoc and relevant youth programs in a systematic way. Working with and for youth requires serious investment in time, financial resources, consistent and dedicated leadership, as well as integration of youth programming with national development at both local and central government levels. This suggests that the role of the public sector in meeting development needs of young people – and which needs – depends largely on its capacity and resources, as well as the strength of community resources like schools, healthcare services and community development fictions. Funding agencies and policy makers need to invest in a more focused way in youth programs the serve low-income communities, can reach youth with little or no education, and also in building institutional capacity, including human resource development, for delivery of youth interventions.

Programs should appeal to and meet the diverse needs of youth, and be based on a developmental framework that supports acquisition of personal skills.

In conclusion, we emphasise that the approaches we are suggesting are not just about developing infrastructure and providing resources. They are also about supporting specific opportunities for young people who are at present competing with more experienced adults in all spheres of life, but most especially in the careers and livelihoods arena. Given the large population of youth in Uganda, the increasing tasks facing them and the complex skills they must develop for future careers and livelihoods, policy actors need to re-examine their role in supporting youth. Being less affluent and less integrated into the larger society, youth are particularly reliant on the state, through community structures, to provide needed goods and services, and for connection to opportunity and information.

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