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Youth and Agriculture in Uganda: An Assessment

Combining agriculture improvements and youth development shows promise for both.

October, 2014

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Erik Butler and Allen Kebba and a team of youth assessors engaged through the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Program, implemented by the QED Group, LLC.

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The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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ACRONYMS

AgCLIR	Agriculture: Commercial Legal and Institutional Reform
BTVET	Business Technical Vocational Education and Training
CRB	Credit Reference Bureau
CPMA	Commodity Production and Marketing Activity
DFCU	Development Finance Company of Uganda
DfID	Department for International Development
DIT	Directorate of Industrial Training
DSIP	Development Strategy and Investment Plan
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
EPRC	Economic Policy Research Center
FAO	United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization
FOB	Freight-on-Board
FTF	Feed the Future
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOU	Government of Uganda
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labor Organization
JI	Joseph Initiative
LMIS	Labor Market Information System
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NAEP	National Agricultural Education Policy
NCDC	The National Curriculum Development Centre
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OAF	One Acre Fund
PMA	Plan for Modernization of Agriculture
PSAET	Post-Secondary Agricultural Education Training
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SMS	Short Message Service
SPEDA	Skills for Production, Employment, and Development in the Animal Industry
UGX	Uganda Shilling
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
UVQF	Uganda Vocational Qualification Framework
VOSESA	Volunteer and Service Enquiry South Africa
VPO	Village Procurement Officer
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
VTI	Vocational Technical Institute
WFP	World Food Programme
YALE	Youth and Adult Learning

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

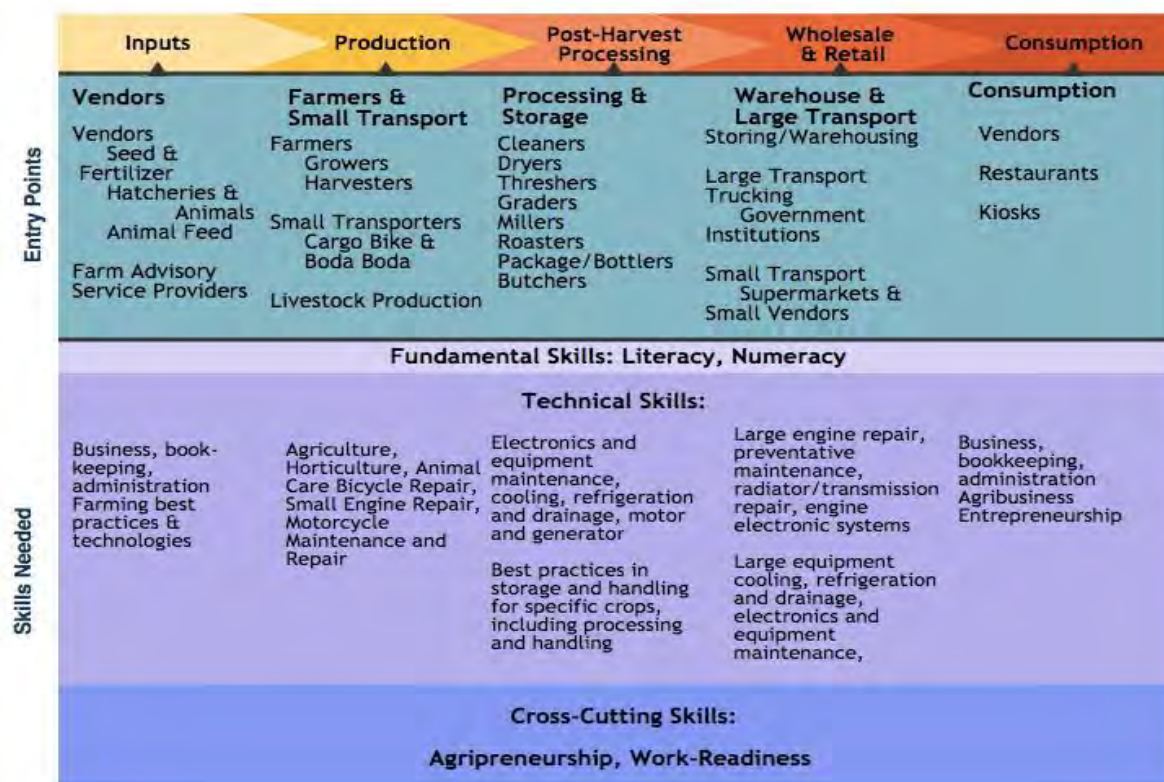
During the months of August and September, a small assessment team conducted an assessment entitled “Youth Leadership and Agriculture.” This final report draws from a comprehensive desk review of more than ninety report and other data, interviews of more than 50 key informants, and insights from 24 focus groups with nearly 400 young people, most aged between 15 and 25.

The goal of this assessment is to provide information and a “lay of the land” overview that will inform the development of a sustainable, effective, and results-oriented youth development initiative connecting support for agricultural growth with youth leadership and skills development. This assessment is meant to assist USAID to broaden its understanding of issues related to agricultural growth and the potential of value chain development and to connect these to opportunities for youth to develop skills and livelihoods.

It is clear from all available data that Ugandan youth are struggling to transition into the formal workforce, with the labor market able to absorb only 80,000 new workforce entrants out of the 400,000 youth entering the labor market each year. Weak demand for workers, coupled with a lack of access to finance or to other resources such as land, provides youth with very few pathways to enter formal work, either at an existing workplace or a startup enterprise of their own making. Compounding the issue, youth tend to be pushed into the labor market early—largely in subsistence, family owned farming—in order to meet household needs. In consequence, the supply of skilled labor is minimal, and Uganda’s formal education system has few options for school leavers to continue to learn.

As the world’s most youthful country², with nearly 80% of its population under the age of 30³ and more than half of its residents below the age of 15⁴, it sits on the cusp of being able to harness the youth dividend. Without a more broadly diversified economy, seizing the opportunities presented by Uganda’s youthful demographic will call for understanding both young people, and a focus on the aspects of agriculture that will need to grow and change to meet the challenge.

The assessment team concludes that there is great potential value in developing youth participation in agriculture value chains; achieving the potential will require both expansion of agricultural modernization and investment in skill building with young people. Indeed, this was the core of the challenge to the work of the assessment. Crucially, the engagement of youth in agriculture will require two sorts of ongoing –and accelerated – investment. The “two hands clapping” of agricultural growth are continued expansion of agricultural modernization, **and** a significantly upgraded public and private attention to skills development among a young workforce. Here is a graphic presentation of a systemic approach:



The report concludes with several recommendations for consideration by USAID:

- 1) Do follow the path of engaging youth in existing and evolving agricultural value chains – as employees, as independent service providers, as cooperatives or small enterprises. Attention should be given to establishing “resource bundles” to promote information sharing, vertical integration, and establishing trust across actors.
- 2) As USAID pursues value chains, consider linking leadership and youth engagement directly with value chain-related entrepreneurship opportunities, and with learning and skill building through a “service learning” approach.
- 3) In designing and executing a new initiative, we recommend taking an expansive and long-term view of youth skill development, but linking skills training explicitly to value chain, “demand-side” initiatives.

As suggested in the title of this assessment report, the assessment team believes the evidence of desk review, some 50 “key informant” interviews with donors, program directors, private employers, and program implementers that an initiative (or “suite” of initiatives) that combine a value chain approach to improvement of agriculture with youth and skills development is desirable and feasible. Nowhere is the cliché that “youth are our future” more true than in this youngest of the world’s countries. Explicitly, in Uganda, that future lies in agriculture. Uganda will benefit greatly from a thoughtful strategy that engages them both.

PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

Purpose: To identify and analyze current challenges and opportunities for achieving large scale, systemic opportunities for youth to:

- Develop and exert leadership and demonstrate civic engagement
- Build livelihoods through participation in agriculture value chains

Sub-objective 1: Understand and try to quantify youth livelihood skill gaps in Uganda from point of view of systems and of youth themselves. In particular, what opportunities exist or may be created for youth with minimal skills?

Sub-objective 2: Identify promising labor market demands, trends, and opportunities for youth in agriculture along the value chain in priority areas

Sub-objective 3: Develop a snapshot of the existing policies and institutional capacity in public and private organizations

In conducting the research, the team was guided by a set of overriding questions that in one way or another we asked everyone:

- What are the most important opportunities and challenges facing young people in Uganda?
- What attitudes, skills, and other attributes will serve young Ugandans best?
- What changes and improvements in agricultural practice are the most promising?
- What will need to be expanded or deepened in order for young people to enjoy productive livelihoods, especially in agriculture?

DESIGN PRINCIPLES, METHODOLOGY, AND LIMITATIONS

Purpose

The goal of the assessment is to provide a landscape to inform the development of a sustainable, effective, and results-oriented youth development initiative that will connect agricultural growth with youth leadership and skills development. This assessment will assist USAID to broaden its understanding of issues related to agricultural growth and the potential of value chain development and to connect these to opportunities for youth to develop skills and livelihoods.

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Principles

The Assessment observed several guiding principles drawn from USAID experience elsewhere in East Africa, and from the guidance of the Uganda USAID Mission:

Listening to the voices of youth: An underlying value of USAID's evolving experience with youth programs is authentic youth engagement at all stages of a program's development. The imperative to listen to youth's voices and youth's needs guided the planning and execution of this assessment. The assessment team spoke with 372 young people in more than 20 focus groups throughout the sampled districts. The team engaged and trained youth assessors as fully integrated team members, and their advice and counsel, coupled with the direct feedback from and interaction with so many rural (and formerly rural, now urban) youth, formed the basis for many of the findings and most of the recommendations contained in this report.

Understanding the role of the Ugandan government, at all levels (national, district, village and parish): The assessment team recognizes the complexities of the Ugandan government system, as well as the relative strength of decentralized authorities, and the need for government collaboration on any future endeavor. As a consequence, the team consulted with government representatives nationally and in each district as a matter of both

protocol and information sharing to ensure positive coordination with government actors at all levels.

Focusing on sustainable youth development mechanisms: The assessment recommendations emphasize the importance of adopting strategies that are self-financing and thus able to continue in the absence of donor project support. While some short-term supports are recommended, most recommendations focus on income generating activities and authentic value chain connections that will be sustainable beyond availability of donor funding or subsidy.

Disaggregating youth: The assessment team's working definition of "youth" centers from 15-24, conforming to the International Labor Organization's (ILO) categories as well as to USAID's "gold standard" definition. In practice, both data collection and program interventions often make this categorization imprecise. The Government of Uganda (GOU) defines youth as aged 15-35, and often recommends younger ages, sometimes as young as 10 for "youth" interventions. However, with the objective of understanding the challenges of the "transition to work" population, the team has focused on 15-19 and 20-25 as the most important age groups for this report. These two cohorts comprise the targeted population for analysis and strategy and program recommendations.

Promoting Gender Equity: Young women in Uganda have historically been more marginalized than their male counterparts, particularly in regards to livelihood opportunities. The assessment team gave particular attention to the female youth voice by holding female-only focus group discussions in several districts. The assessment team also consulted with both national and regional government and non-governmental institutions working on gender issues.

Investigating emerging trends: Given Uganda's unique political and economic systems, the team paid close attention to emerging trends that will likely impact livelihood opportunities for youth. For example, the phenomenon of migration from rural areas to larger population centers, towns and cities emerged as an important factor and is reflected in the assessment's findings and recommendations. Similarly, with the expansion of the telecommunication sector, the use of information technology will likely be expanding rapidly in rural areas in the near future.

Methodology

Following protocols recommended by the 2009 EQUIP3 Guide to Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessments, three days of meetings held August 4-6 in Kampala were used to train interviewers and focus group facilitators. Through these meetings, the team jointly developed lists of common (and therefore comparable) questions for key constituents, informants, and young people.⁵ The team confirmed targeted regions, and scheduled appointments for key informant interviews and focus group meetings with youth both in Kampala for the beginning week, and in districts for the following week. The teams then deployed to four regions nominated by Feed The Future staff and confirmed by the balance of the USAID Mission team.

Over the next four weeks, the team conducted more than 50 key informant interviews with local and regional government officials, Feed the Future implementers and their local partners, international and local NGOs either knowledgeable about youth or operating current programs, employers, municipal or local (village) leaders and elders. The team also conducted 24 structured focus groups with 372 youth across 7 districts. While some focus groups were mostly female, just under twenty percent of all focus group participants overall were female. Participants were both in-school and out-of-school youth, ranging in age from 13 to 35 (with a few older youth supporters), though most clustered in the targeted 15-25 year range, matching the above criteria. Youth were recruited for focus groups through community youth workers, local youth councils, private agriculture companies, FTF implementing partner projects, and local schools.

A common set of questions guided the focus group conversations. Discussions focused on searching for commonalities and differences in life and livelihood experiences, and in opinions and recommendations, following the structured protocol developed in the first three days of meetings. In addition, youth were asked to respond to questions, and their responses were counted. Each evening, each team filed reports⁶ on each interview or focus group – following common formats, which the senior specialists then reviewed so as to begin analyzing, comparing findings, and formulating recommendations.

In the third week, team re-convened in Kampala for reporting, review, and analysis, and initial findings and recommendations were generated for a mid-course discussion with a team of Feed The Future, Education, and Economic Growth specialists in the USAID Mission. Several additional areas of exploration were developed, and youth focus groups and key informant interviews continued in the weeks following the mid-course review.

Limitations

A rapid assessment – only three weeks in the field – is by definition limited in its ability to be comprehensive. While ambitious and intense, this one is no exception. Several are worth mention here:

- A very small team – two professional consultants, supplemented by two volunteers and two youth assessors – can only speak with so many people on short notice, and there are always individuals who are unavailable. Similarly, there are always programs and people whose identities emerge during the assessment with whom it is impossible to connect during a brief window of scheduled fieldwork.
- A targeted focus on agriculture meant that the team chose not to speak to many other youth-related organizations whose insights might have been unrelated *directly*, but nonetheless useful for a broad view of youth development.
- Except for a small number of schools the team was able to visit in person the research on education was limited to schools with an online “presence”, which excluded many small, non-formal programs.
- Similarly, even the focused review of donor-sponsored programs could not be exhaustive or complete, leaving the team with the apprehension that it would be good to know more about other promising models.

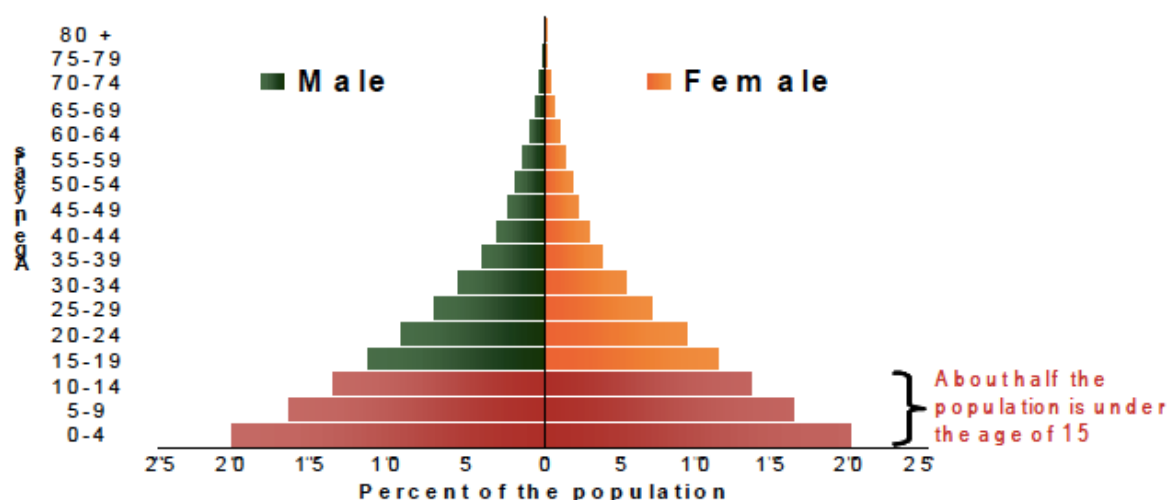
Instead of being able to be *comprehensive*, the assessment team is hopeful that the people we interviewed, schools and programs we visited, and the youth who spoke to us were *representative*. We believe they were, and present the following observations with some confidence.

INTRODUCTION

The average Ugandan, is “an 18-year-old who lives in a rural setting, and is moderately literate but no longer attending school” (YouthMap, 2011, p. 10). Living in the world’s youngest nation⁷, this average Ugandan faces compounded challenges to her wish to transition into adulthood. She is likely held back by familial circumstances making it difficult to save and often foreclosed from a smooth to transition into a workforce that is poorly equipped to provide her with economic opportunity. While similar challenges face her male counterparts, the fact that she is female complicates the challenge significantly. Notwithstanding the challenges, many Ugandan youth—male and female alike—remain optimistic and hopeful about their futures, and are less likely than many young people in developing countries to believe that they must relocate to succeed.

. Uganda’s total GDP for 2013 was \$22.6 billion USD, with per capita income (PPP) of approximately \$1,500⁸. The State of Uganda Population Reports for 2012 and 2013, as well as USAID’s Feed The Future Multi-Year Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2015, suggest that malnutrition or under-nutrition remain an overwhelming problem; cross-border cattle rustling to the East⁹ remains a concern of both the Government of Uganda (GOU) and other stakeholders.

Figure 1. Uganda Population Pyramid



Data Source: State of Uganda Population Report, 2012

The USAID FTF Strategic plan highlights trends that may lead towards potential food insecurity: over the last decade agriculture has fallen to 23.1%¹⁰ as a share of GDP, with few corresponding gains in productivity (See Table 1 for Sector by GDP and Employment). Increasingly, agriculture is the mainstay of the older generation¹¹, and there is a growing trend for youth migrating to urban areas in search of employment¹². Uganda’s rapidly growing population, at 3.24% per year¹³, suggests that despite being food secure today, the long-term trend is a move towards increasing food insecurity¹⁴ especially among subsistence farmers and among those in Uganda’s North and East, where child under-nutrition and stunting are already widespread¹⁵ and 1.1 out of the 1.2 million people in the area regularly receive 70% of the World Food Program’s

standard ration level in food aid¹⁶. In the Southwest and in the North, stunting rates due to under-nutrition are as high as 49.6 and 40%, respectively¹⁷.

Table I. Economic Sectors by GDP and Employment

	Share of GDP, %	Employment, %
Agriculture	23.1	82
Industry	26.9	5
Services	50	13

Data Source: CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ug.html>; Accessed October 2014

Ugandan agriculture has great growth potential, but faces an uphill battle in its need to modernize. Uganda represents nearly half the arable land in East Africa¹⁸, however most of its agricultural production remains low-input and low-yield. As a landlocked nation, significant barriers exist to market and to value-added pathways for growth. For example, it takes, on average, 48 hours for Ugandan produce to reach ports in Kenya, with an average of 12 hours spent idling at checkpoints along the way¹⁹. Uganda must widely adopt agricultural best practices, both in order to grow enough food to feed its growing population, and to deepen its export-oriented value chains. Nonetheless, bright points are evident in Uganda's agricultural landscape. Ugandans primarily grow and harvest *robusta* coffee – a mainstay of coffee blends (as oppose to single-origin beans). Uganda's *robusta* beans earn a premium over other *robusta* grown world-wide, and demand for its coffee is growing at 2.4%²⁰ a year; within its market, Ugandan *robusta* is “a standard setter.”²¹ The World Food Programme (WFP) is the single largest institutional buyer of Uganda's maize, purchasing up to 50% of Uganda's output each year, which acts as both a stabilizing and confounding force²² in Ugandan grain markets. There is tremendous potential for agriculture to become a dynamic, interesting, and youthful sector; in order to harness this potential, significant and systematic improvements – from policy to production to market development – will be required.

Uganda also has a long history of youth civic engagement. Uganda's National Youth Council was established in 1993, and it serves to provide youth with a voice in national development policy. Representatives at the national level are elected by youth from local councils. Despite its stated role as a representative of youth voices, the council does not enjoy a reputation for authentic or widespread support among Ugandan youth. Fewer than 70% of youth say they are aware of the National Youth Council²³ and participation in the elaborate system of youth council elections is low. Uganda's National Youth Network, an alternative youth leadership mechanism founded in 2002, aims to give youth a voice in relevant policy debates. As a registered NGO, the National Youth Network functions as a “forum for consultation on proposed legislation and government policies with the aim of advocating for policies which are pro-youth.”²⁴

In 2010, The Network released a youth manifesto, a “political document”²⁵ with policy demands such as increasing opportunities for education, employment, and better access to health care. The importance of the manifesto should not be understated, as the demands closely align with the needs uncovered in this report. Ugandan youth representatives understand their country's context, and they understand the needs of their cohort. Their thoughtful policy demands ought

to be given heed, while steps are taken to increase widespread credibility of the network – a preferable step to starting over.

This report examines available literature on three intertwined aspects of Ugandan society in order to assess which pathways provide the Government of Uganda, USAID, and other stakeholders the highest degree of leverage in moving Ugandan youth forward. These three elements are: 1) Economic opportunities for Ugandan youth, including an examination of skills mismatches and the current state of the educational system; 2) Agriculture, specifically, entry points for youth that reflect Feed the Future's selected value chains of coffee, maize, and beans; and 3) Civil engagement or service learning opportunities for youth that enable them to learn soft skills and then to use those skills both to further their own opportunities and to benefit their communities.

UGANDA'S YOUTH LABOR MARKET

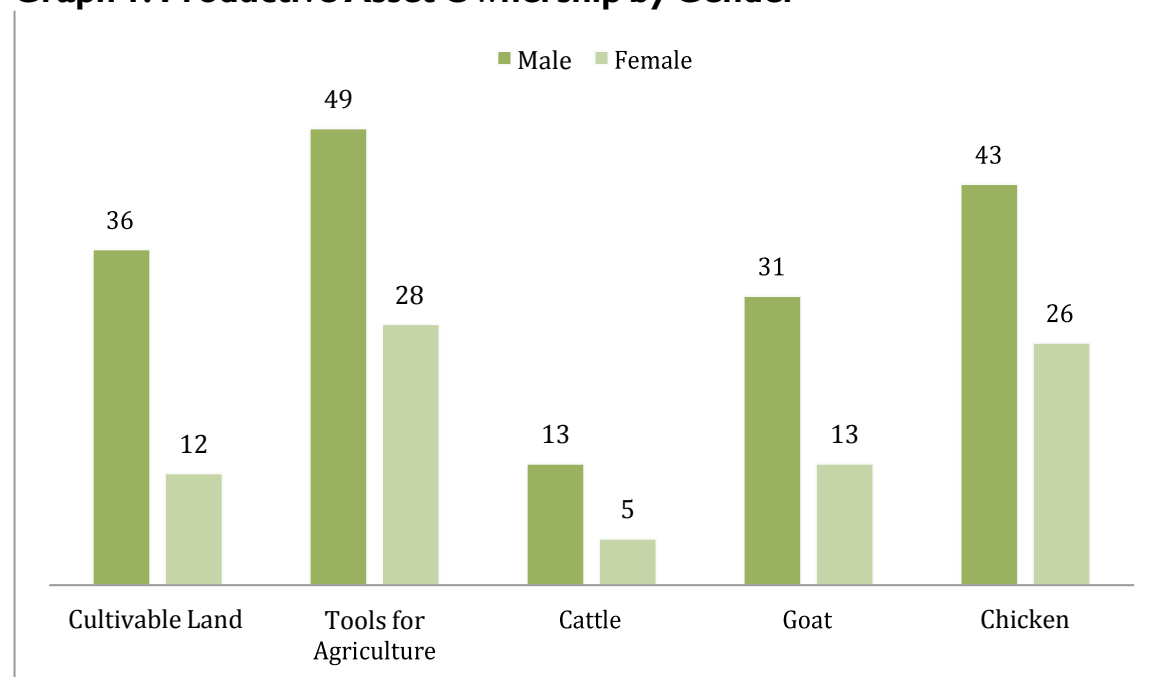
Youth surveys²⁶ have expressed that for Ugandan youth navigating the transition from youth to adulthood is fraught with difficulties. Ugandan families are large²⁷, and youth are often pressed to contribute to family resources at quite a young age. The YouthWatch (2012) report begins its section on *Youth in the Household* with the following quote: “morning comes and you have no work, but you have to eat...That is why our parents see us as a liability” (p.38). The 2010 Uganda National Household Survey²⁸ reports increasing rates of early labor force engagement, with 60% of youth ages 15 – 24 participating in the labor force, an increase from 44% in 2006. Indeed, the 2013 Uganda Bureau of Labor Statistics Report on Child Labor finds that over one-third (33.7%) of Ugandans under the age of 17 both attend school and work, while an additional 5.9% work only. In Uganda, early labor force entrance is linked with a reduction in schooling²⁹ a trend matched by youth reporting that work to meet household needs was a contributing factor to leaving school. Twelve percent of girls not attending school claim that they do not attend because they must help with household chores³⁰. Overall, fewer girls than boys progress to secondary school – 64% of boys and 60.5% of girls transitioned to secondary school in 2010³¹ – and by tertiary school the gap widens significantly, with only 3.8% of females and 14.3% of males enrolling in tertiary education in 2011³². As in many other cultures, Ugandan youth often quit school, and start to work in order to help their families. Making this traditional (and understandable) trade-off forecloses for many the option of developing higher-order livelihood skills through education.

While the assessment's focus was on agriculture, and therefore on rural development, we nonetheless encountered young people – and employers – in larger towns, and in Kampala. Here, most evidence about livelihood patterns and work is anecdotal, but it is consistent. A relatively small formal employment sector has established habits of employment, favoring family and “connections” over formal labor market mechanisms of recruitment and job matching. In larger enterprises (like the employers we interviewed in Kampala in an effort to understand the coffee and maize value chains), the traditional pattern is supplemented by a consistent preference for university graduates over secondary graduates, and to the exclusion of dropouts from earlier schooling. The legend of the young person (almost always male) who leaves the village, comes to the city, and becomes a “boda boda” driver has some considerable validity. The desire for “quick cash” is a more powerful motivator than career aspirations. On the employers' side of the equation, thoughtful informants urge attention to practical technical skills (see value chain graphic, below, p. 35), and to the so-called “soft” skills cited everywhere – communication, self-presentation, teamwork, reliability, and the like – and a requirement for higher rates of literacy and numeracy.

Like in many African countries with small formal economies³³, Ugandan youth leaving education are able to find some work, although most options open to them are informal employment in subsistence agriculture³⁴. Of those employed, only 6.7% are paid for employment, while the vast majority, 78.6%, work for their families³⁵. In various surveys, between 41 and 79% of youth participants reported work on smallholder farms³⁶ and these farms are most often family farms. In Uganda, as in most of Africa, youth acquire most of their know-how and knowledge about agricultural through this process³⁷. When youth work on family farms, by and large, they are not paid for their efforts^{38, 39}. This common experience means that youth find it difficult to develop pathways towards financial independence. In addition, when working their parents'

land, only .5 – 5% of youth report being able to make decisions regarding work and crop cultivation⁴⁰, hinting at a disconnect between those who might be learning best practices and those who are making decisions about how to farm. Some youth⁴¹ are given a small portion of their parents' land to cultivate as their own, while they are still living in the home, but common practice holds that youth should not be granted ownership of their parent's land while their parents are living⁴². Youth access to land and other productive assets differs by several factors, including customary practice, ethnic group and gender⁴³ (see Graph 1).

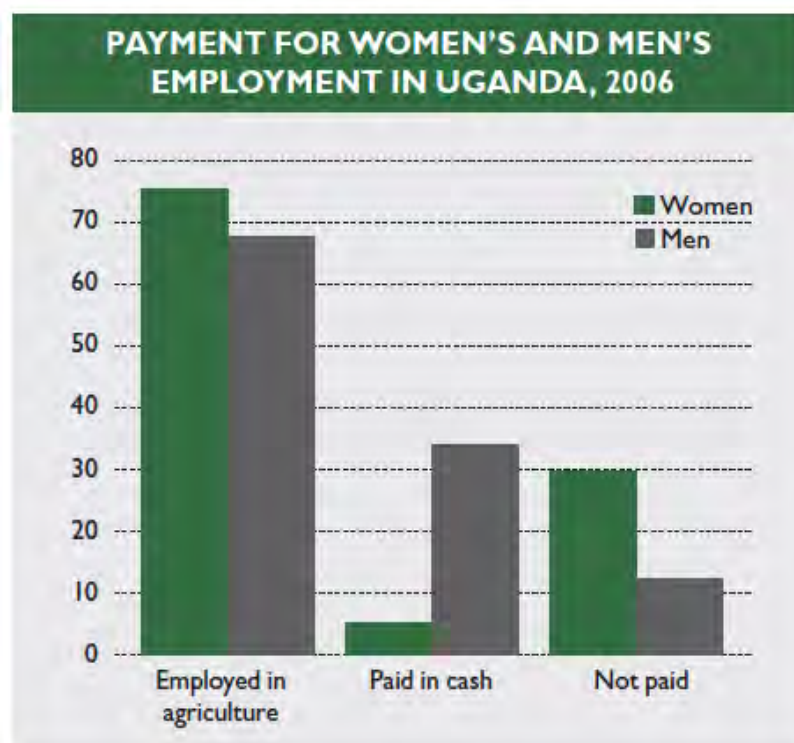
Graph 1. Productive Asset Ownership by Gender



Source Data: YouthWatch 2012, p.29

Of these, gender might be the most significant, with male youth most likely to be provided access to land and payment for work, as female youth are expected to move away from the family once they marry⁴⁴. Indeed, the trend for women to be unpaid for agricultural persists into adulthood (Graph 2). Even when young women have a legal claim to land, it can be difficult for them to enforce it because they frequently lack the education and financial resources to press a claim⁴⁵. More commonly, women work land that belongs to others, yet are excluded from ownership or decision-making. It became clear from both the secondary research the team conducted and from field interviews that this was a critical distinction. While access to land is an issue for all youth, women are disproportionately affected because land is typically inherited by sons. As a result, even though young women have access, it is typically to smaller plots, and they are relegated to hands-on work of traditional sort. In short, women and girls may be required to work the land, but have little to no control over decisions regarding crops, harvest, or sales, and are largely excluded from the means to modernize. In the North, youth we spoke to are more likely to have access to land but lack the capacity to prepare it so that it is ready for farming; most youth state that they lack access to oxen, tractors and other common agricultural tools.

Graph 2. Payment for Employment by Gender in Uganda



Source: USAID Ag CLIR, 2010, p. 37

Youth themselves echoed these points throughout the focus group discussion:

"Women in this region don't own land and most of the land is given to men," said a male youth from Gulu,

"However, when a women is given land from her husband's family she may cultivate but later the husband sell[s] the harvest for his own gain or alcohol."

"I lost both of my parents and after a while the uncles took all our land and property for their own use, so I had no alternative but to come to town and sell sweet bananas in my basket to earn income," explained a female youth in Kampala on why she no longer farmed.

"Land is there and it is fertile, but the biggest challenge we have is that youth don't own land. Land is owned by elders," said a youth farmer working with the Joseph Initiative in Masindi.

"I have the land, but no ox plough thus making it hard for me to compete," said a youth living in rural Gulu.

“There are many opportunities for earning income,” said a youth in rural Masindi, “but the problem is capital and access to land which is expensive.”

Nearly all donors and programs interviewed had or wanted a component of apprenticeship/mentorship in their programming as a means of providing information, hands-on experience, and connection with the market after the training has ended in potentially precarious time when participants are often starting new small enterprises or trades. Most are small, but offer lessons for the future. Here are some examples:

- *The AgriSkills 4 U* (ICCO is partner, Dutch-funded) has apprenticeships in the private sector for both their formal and non-formal students to prepare youth for having or working in a business. They may be several months long, and youth and mentors arrange a schedule (young women with more household responsibilities sometimes work fewer days in a week). The project provides kits for the apprenticeship of basic materials/equipment partially because the business is afraid the apprentice will spoil/break theirs.
- *Ours By Right* (UYONET is partner, British Council-funded) included a mentorship component that at first did not work because mentors were British Council alumni who had been to the UK and were too busy and didn’t have enough common ground with the young leaders. The project then switched to mentors from the districts, asking youth to propose people. Many of the youth chose district officials & some chose people they hadn’t gotten along with before. OBR had a management and accountability forum to practice the skills that brought together young leaders, civil society, district leaders, political leaders, and technical officers. As they worked more with young leaders, district officials began to realize that they often made assumptions that services were being delivered and that young leaders could be partners and not threats.
- Other related programs that offer potential lessons include: Mastercard Foundation; NUSAF; SNV; Grow Movement

Needs, Gaps, and Promise Identified

The experience of the assessment – the desk review, conversations with key informants in the private and governmental sectors and with donors and partners revealed several gaps in information and programming needed to promote young people’s success as agricultural leaders in their communities. Not unusually, publicly available labor market data was incomplete, and only partially useful. And what was useful was also national. Several key informants cited a need for local market analyses to understand the labor force, what markets already exist, what markets are projected to grow and by how much, in what activities people are already making money, and what skills and resources would be needed to access opportunities in growth sectors. These analyses would inform programming as well as curricula for Vocational Technical Institutes (VTIs) and other vocational institutions. A handful of such market analyses already exist – one carried out by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DfID) and another being undertaken by MasterCard Foundation, and done sometimes at a district level, but leading youth partners and agriculture partners are not accessing the information. The market analyses could also be used to identify opportunities within and across value chains that would be well suited to youth’s interests, constraints, and resources.

In general, the programming that focuses on building the skills of young people does not sufficiently enable them to connect with the markets (which are generally informal, often distant) and information to sustain their enterprises. Some efforts – especially smaller, donor-funded projects -- begin to make these connections, mainly through apprenticeship or through working with financial institutions to reach out to farmers and young people.

AGRICULTURE

Ugandan agriculture is defined by a preponderance of smallholders: nearly 75% of households engage in agriculture and smallholders produce 70% of “marketed produce,” (USAID/FTF p. 11). Women produce approximately 90% of Uganda’s total food output⁴⁶, and 50% of its cash crop production⁴⁷. However, most farmers use low productivity farming techniques, and there is a widespread suspicion of higher quality inputs due to a high rate of counterfeit products⁴⁸ resulting in very low yields. For example, in the maize value chain, Ugandan farmers yield tenfold *less* produce than is yielded in Ugandan agricultural research stations^{49, 50}. Despite this, farmers receive an estimated 70 - 75% of the freight on board (FOB) price⁵¹ indicating a lean post-harvest value chain. Most gains in agriculture come from increasing land rather than increasing productivity⁵², suggesting the opportunity for a large dividend should come through education, especially for women, around the spread of agricultural best practices.

In some value chains, over 25% of the harvest is lost due to poor storage or other factors⁵³. In response, many large aid programs⁵⁴ have build post-harvest storage facilities; some interesting models have also sprung up (see example on Joseph Initiative as an example of the maize value chain, p.31) for minimizing post-harvest loss. In addition, most women farmers, tasked with childcare and household work on top of food production, often cannot take produce to market⁵⁵. This further degrades their power as smallholders and reinforces the traditional role of farmers as price-takers. Innovators like the Joseph Initiative⁵⁶ provide a model for increasing the bargaining power on the part of smallholders yet providing a value-added service for farmers.

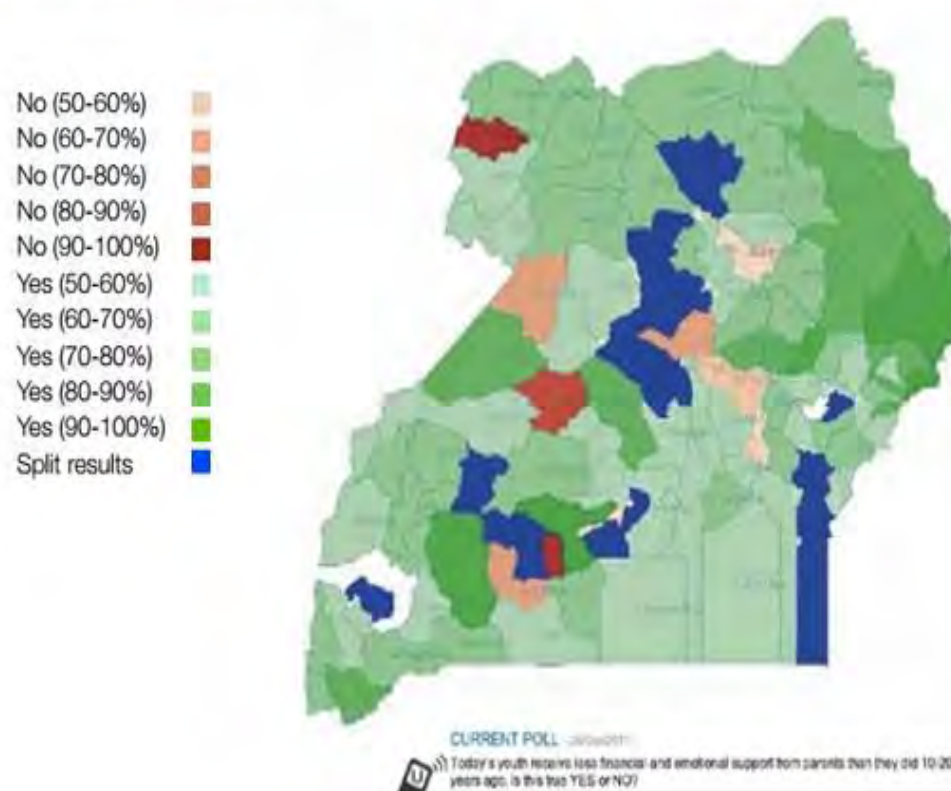
Confronting Youth Attitudes about Farming

The common perception in Uganda is that youth dislike agriculture, and do not see it as a viable future. This stems from real concerns that as youth move into services, as the Ugandan population continues to grow, and as the percentage of GDP contributed by agriculture declines (if productivity remains stable) that Uganda will face increasing food insecurity. A closer look at the data and at youth self-reports suggest a more multi-faceted reality.

Most youth are engaged in some sort of agricultural activity⁵⁷. For the most part, however, youth do not see the attractiveness of agriculture as a primary income generating activity. Young Ugandans are interested in agriculture in terms of second income generation, and many of them respond positively to the question “do you want to be a farmer in the future” (see Figure 2, below). However, they react negatively to subsistence farming, which is the form of agriculture to which most youth are exposed⁵⁸. This distaste for subsistence farming is not unwarranted, as low agricultural yields⁵⁹ and the natural vulnerability of crops prompt many youth to perceive diversification of income as a stronger livelihood strategy⁶⁰ than a singular focus on farming. As such, many youth seek pathways to the workforce that still allow them to ‘keep a foot in the door’ of agriculture, especially as many youth believe that they will one day return to their parents’ land⁶¹.

Figure 2. Map of Youth Responses to “Do You Want to Be a Farmer in the Future?”

Map of Uganda illustrating positive responses to the question, “Do you want to be a farmer in the future?”



Source: Unicef U-report

Data Source: YouthWatch 2012, p. 66

Throughout focus group discussions, youth emphasized their own interest in agriculture as a business, and they perceive those who have succeeded in agriculture as role models. However, they are acutely aware of the limitations of current agricultural practices in Uganda, and are eager to learn how to become better farmers:

“My brother is earning and developing himself from trading agricultural products like corn to the consumers. I want to be like him,” said a rural Gulu youth.

“I consider farmers who are successful in the agricultural production to be the role models of youth in the region”

“It is only through farming that is how I am living. The future of Uganda depends on agriculture.”
Youth attending Restore International Academy in Gulu

“I have a brother of mine who started small with rice growing and trading, but as I speak, he owns land a four room house,” said an Mbale youth.

“I want to become a very rich farmer, because people eat every day and mostly feed on agricultural products,” said a Mubende youth in boda mechanic training.

According to an urban Masindi youth, “If you sit down and concentrate on agriculture, you can earn a living. You can even earn more than someone working in an office.”

“We want to use more technology in fertilizers, planning and growing,” said a youth from Kamikka Youth Leadership Group in Mubende.

“Youth should get involved in agricultural activities that require limited resources and take small pieces of land like poultry and piggery,” said a rural Lira youth.

“If you could introduce a program of growing flour, sorghum, ground nuts- then if the maize price fluctuates other prices may be stable, there should be diversification. To me relying on one thing is not good. People here have beans and other crops which don’t have a market and we would also like to raise animals, ” said a Joseph Initiative youth farmer.

Training in Agricultural and Related Skills

Within agriculture, training is rare, and has tended to focus on production more than on value addition and on commodities that required little capital, land, and time such as horticulture, piggery, poultry, and beekeeping. In each of agriculture, vocational, and youth-focused programming, there have been three main approaches for supporting training among donor-funded programs. Only the first focuses on agriculture directly. (The others, discussed elsewhere, focus on apprenticeships or mentoring, the third on strengthening of educational institutions).

In agriculture, typically, training centers are established to bring youth, farmers, or their leaders together for intensive trainings for a few days at a time. Attendees then take back what they had learned to practice themselves or become models or trainers of trainers. These were (or are) usually small efforts, but may be instructive.

- For example, KOICA is nearing completion on building a National farmers’ leadership center in Mpigi. It will be focused on training rural leaders and village leaders for 1-2 weeks in
 - changing mindsets - keep time, work hard, think about new technology and science
 - modeling good commodity practices and farming technologiesand will include lectures, hands-on farm work, and discussion. When trainees go back, they can make and involve their community in a model farm.
- Others worth exploring further include the SNV farmer-to-farmer “peer” learning, British Council Active Citizen master facilitators support young facilitators who work with more young people in their communities.

A small number of donor-supported programs do or are starting community-based training or apprenticeship/mentorship on the rationale that this will equip young people with skills for which there is local demand and be less expensive. Informal trainings – sometimes linked with local vocational training institutions, train participants for 2-6 months in specific agricultural sectors.

Programming that combines training in multiple topics is typical, and savings are mentioned frequently by key informants as a critical topic for most programs. A typical program might include training in a set of specific agricultural skills and training in one or more of savings such as why and how to save, or how Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) work, business and entrepreneurship skills, including long-term planning, networking, recordkeeping, or personal and professional management such as developing timeliness or abiding by contracts.

Access to Finance and Other Productive Assets

For youth, and especially for youth in agriculture, access to finance is a particularly difficult challenge. Most youth work informally and for families, and these youth are unlikely to have opportunities to save. However, 59% of youth in Uganda do report some cash income⁶², although for only 12% of youth is this income stable and monthly⁶³. When youth save, they prefer to do so informally, at home (60%) or with friends and family (16%). Thirty-five percent of youth save by using a bank account⁶⁴, although a Finscope (2009) survey of Uganda found that for rural youth ages 16 - 17, the rate of those unbanked was 73%⁶⁵. However, the Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescent Girls Project⁶⁶ and a study by Austrian (2011) demonstrated that providing Ugandan girls with bank accounts, training, and access to savings groups (through Savings and Credit Cooperatives and Rotating Savings and Credit Associations) creates significant impacts far beyond increasing savings. These additional impacts include increasing the likelihood that other family members will open bank accounts⁶⁷, reducing a girl's risk for gender-based violence⁶⁸, and increasing the likelihood that she will state additional education as a future life goal⁶⁹. These derivative or secondary impacts of introducing savings groups should not be underestimated, as these provide potential contact points for additional intervention.

Finance is not restricted to savings. For many small businesses, loans are critical for startup and growth. However, the percentage of youth reporting that they have loans is minimal, ranging from a high of 14% in Kampala to a low of 5% in the Northern region⁷⁰. A 2013 sample of farmers found that among youth in agriculture, only 2.8% received loans, in contrast to 8.3% of farmers categorized as being of “prime age”⁷¹. Lack of access to credit is associated with a lack of ability for young farmers to purchase inputs⁷², a factor identified by USAID⁷³ as one of the major contributors to the low yield of Ugandan agricultural production.

In 2011, a public-private partnership between the GOU, DFCU Bank, Stanbic Bank, and Centenary Bank was established to address youth access to finance. The Youth Venture Capital Fund, intended to provide youth with a total of 25 million UGX (equivalent to 9,000 USD), was targeted to youth-owned entrepreneurial businesses across multiple sectors. So far, 3,000 youth have received loans through the fund, and an additional graduate fund has been established. As yet there is only incomplete evidence that the fund has enabled job creation⁷⁴

While the venture capital fund has reportedly been useful for youth-owned small businesses seeking to expand, its recipients were primarily clustered in retail, and 70% of funds disbursed went to projects owned by male youth⁷⁵. Indeed, the fund included a bevy of requirements that severely limited access, such as: a business' certificate of registration, two guarantors, a minimum period of operation of 3 months prior to loan application, and the ability to provide employment for 4 people by the end of the loan period⁷⁶. These requirements inadvertently created a structure that excluded women, youth interested in more volatile ventures (such as agriculture), as well as those youth needing access to finance for small livelihood projects. For young smallholder farmers and for those interested in nonfarm agricultural jobs, increasing access to finance is key in enabling youth to take the first steps away from family farms and into entrepreneurship.

Building financial literacy and creating opportunities for young people to save were seen as critical components that helped young people generate enough capital to start small enterprises, relieving very difficult credit and capital constraints. Several organizations also noted that the soft skills in business and in personal management at least anecdotally seemed to be the most impactful in terms of young people being able to start and/or maintain their livelihood activities. Reproductive health counseling was often raised as a necessary or positive component in that it supported young women's ability to participate and that there was interest and demand among the youth.

Groups were a common way of engaging individuals in savings and in agricultural activities. Although there is a sense that youth enjoy working in groups because of the social aspect, there are mixed experiences working with youth-only groups and mixed-age groups. Youth tend not to be members of existing farmer/producer organizations but do value working with groups. There may be a need to create "safe spaces" for young farmers to engage with each other.

Access to finance is but one of several bottlenecks that prevent youth from generating the momentum they need to become active participants in the workforce. As mentioned above, youth are constrained in their access to cultivatable land and other productive assets (farm animals, tools, cash for work). Compounding these constraints, a lack of viable pathways to vocational education programs stymies youth attempts to engage in the formal economy (See Education, p. 41). For young people in Uganda to establish livelihoods of their own, they need to navigate the hurdles of access to finance, access to land (and other assets), and access to vocational education. It is unsurprising that many youth fail, despite their efforts, to transition into the workforce.

Beyond training in these areas, there is a felt need for continued access to advice and information, materials, finance, and market demand that must be met in order for young people to successfully and sustainably put their skills to use. Approaches (with different degrees of resource intensity) to make these connections include apprenticeship, slightly older and more experienced youth acting as mentors, local/community mentors, youth enterprise groups to access information and financing, and potentially mobile technology (SMS for information or networking, banking).

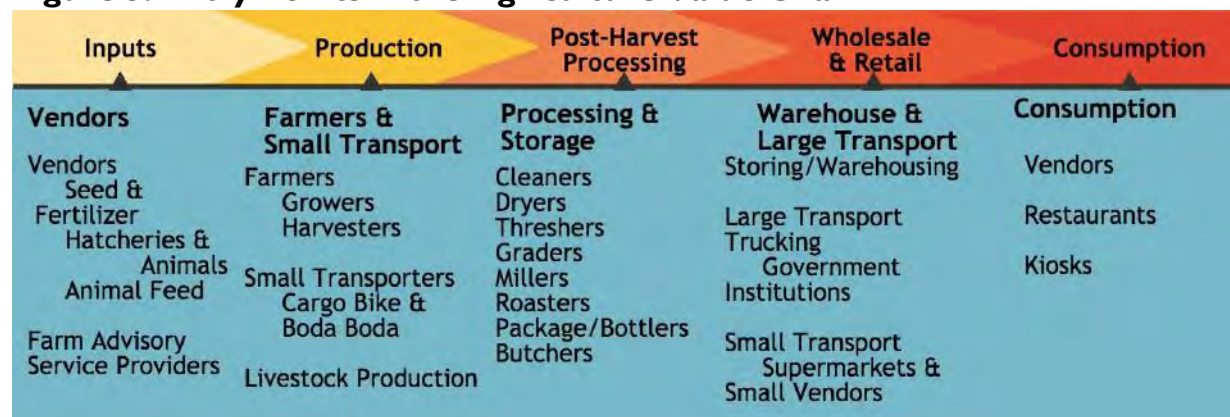
THE PROMISE OF FEED THE FUTURE VALUE CHAINS

The U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines agricultural value chains as “ the set of actors and activities that bring a basic agricultural product from production in the field to final consumption, where at each stage value is added to the product. A value chain can be a...linking or a network between various independent business organizations and can involve processing, packaging, storage, transport and distribution” (FAO, 2010, Box 1). In the Ugandan context, the value chain represents the linkages from farmer to market; conceptualizing *jobs* as branching off of each node of the value chain might be particularly powerful to expand job opportunities for youth (i.e., for any given node, such as storage, several types of work, or jobs, are necessary).

Youth, like anyone, can only respond to opportunities they know about; for many and especially rural youth, most of the value chain is an abstract process. Grading, milling, roasting, and other post-harvest production activities tend to take place away from the farm. Without the opportunity to learn about these opportunities, youth are likely to respond to the most immediate, low-hanging fruit. USAID's AgCLIR paper⁷⁷ notes that youth buy motorcycles at a much higher rate than they do tractors⁷⁸. The reasons for this are likely many, foremost of which might be that a tractor is far more expensive than a motorcycle. Nonetheless, youth buying motorcycles opens one entry point into agricultural value chains – as the transporter between smallholder farmers and associations, millers, roasters, or other post-harvest links. The excellent Montpelier Panel paper, *Small and Growing: Entrepreneurship in African Agriculture*, suggests opportunities in “working in a commodities market as well as employment in processing, transport, marketing and retailing (p. B-8)” as examples of potential entry points for youth entrepreneurs. In addition, this paper provides concrete examples of value-chain upgrading and deepening, such as development of water storage, shelling/milling micro-processing, and strengthening village associations⁷⁹.

There might be additional, and even less expensive entry points for youth, such as a cargo bikes, that could be structured to form a continuum. The figure below (Figure 3) is one potential model for understanding the agricultural value chain and potential entry points for youth entrepreneurs.

Figure 3. Entry Points in the Agriculture Value Chain



As one moves from left to right along the above figure, different potential entry points are identified. Taking for example the maize value chain, once maize leaves the farm gate after it is harvested, it is transported either by farmers or their agents (in the case of most women smallholders, by their husbands) to a post-harvest processing facility. The transport, itself, provides an opportunity for youth – boda boda or cargo bikes can be used to transport a harvest, and with forethought and support, an entrepreneurial youth might be able to generate income by providing a service to smallholders through transporting their goods. Further along the value chain, once maize is received by a post-harvest processing facility, there are a number of tasks that must be undertaken before the maize is sold, either to the WFP, or to local wholesalers and distributors. The maize must be cleaned and dried, it must be graded to determine its quality, and then it must then be milled and packaged for sale. Each one of these tasks is done by personnel who are skilled – whether they have formal certification or not – in that domain. Each skilled task, then, could be linked towards certification in the BTVET system through short-courses, or youth might be able to learn these skills on-the-job. Again, each task, therefore, represents a potential youth entry point. Once the maize is bought by the WFP or by, for example, a local supermarket chain, it is then transported again, to the warehouse or distribution center of the buyer. Because of scale, this transport opportunity is likely quite different from the smallholder-to-post-processing transport: perhaps trucks are more likely to be involved than motorbikes. Nonetheless, trucking companies hire skilled drivers. Similarly, warehouses and storage facilities need to hire workers skilled in maintaining the infrastructure of a warehouse – electricians, cooling technicians, book-keepers and administrators. These skilled jobs are tied to, but not directly part of, the agricultural value chain.

Feed the Future Select Value Chains for Uganda

Feed the Future has selected three value chains out of Uganda's top ten priority commodities, as defined by Uganda's Agricultural Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP)⁸⁰. These three are maize, beans, and coffee; maize because of its strong market linkages, beans as a nutritional staple and overlap with maize post-harvest infrastructure, and coffee for its high global demand as a cash crop⁸¹ (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Feed the Future Select Value Chains for Uganda and Selection Rational

Maize: For Regional Food Security	Beans: For Nutrition	Coffee: For Growth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong local market link for small farmers to WFP for regional security needs • 2/3 of population grow maize • Regional shortfalls/unmet demand for quality maize • Untapped production potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition staple for Ugandans • 2/3 of population grow beans • Accessible crop for poor and vulnerable • Similar post-harvest infrastructure as maize • Increases soil fertility (and production) when combined with maize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uganda's top agricultural export and top 3 contributor to GDP • Small-scale coffee farmers receive 70% share of coffee profits • International demand to outstrip supply for next 10 years---increasing 2.4% annually • Gains in <i>robusta</i> as a high-end, specialized coffee niche

Source: USAID FTF, 2011, p.21

Indeed the 2013 Economic Policy Research Center report analyzed value chain “sections” with regard to employment opportunity and noted that without increased production (upstream) from farmers there would be little opportunity for job growth (downstream) with traders and agro-processors. This report made one of the more explicit links between job stimulus and value chain development, arguing for “increasing productivity at farm level, and promoting youth enterprise development associations through which primary maize production activities can be clustered together with wholesale maize grain trading and milling where profit margins are high.” For example, because there are high profit margins in wholesale maize trading and agro-processing, the EPRC argues that these areas should be targets for “job stimulus programs.” Specifically, the EPRC report found that maize milling provided 6,468 jobs; wholesale trading, 3,276 jobs; and flour trading, 2,053 jobs. Their analysis found that “urban wholesalers add the most value...and earn the highest margins.” As a result, the EPRC recommends building farmer cooperatives that would absorb labor at primary production, but provide opportunity to maximize profit in downstream processing and trading⁸².

For most rural youth, much of what takes place after their harvest leaves their farm is not opaque. In order for youth to find pathways into skilled work, they must first determine what jobs are available, then how to obtain the relevant skills, then develop a plan to amass the necessary capital, land, or assets to move forward. This is a complex process, and difficult for most youth to manage alone. The assessment team came across an innovative approach to helping youth bridge these gaps, termed “resource bundling,” several examples of which are illustrated below in two of the three select Feed the Future Value Chains.

The coffee value chain (an example)

The Kaweri Coffee Plantation, a part of Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, operates in Central Uganda growing coffee on 1,600 hectares of land and employing between 1,500 and 3,000 casual laborers. According to Kaweri’s Human Resources Administrator, Edward Sali, 60% of Kaweri’s employees are between the ages of 18-35. Youth learn coffee cultivation techniques through

on-the-job training and, given the right opportunities, could utilize their new skills in independent coffee cultivation. Neumann Stiftung, a private foundation linked to the Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, supports smallholder farmer projects to improve livelihoods and strengthen competitiveness. Neumann Stiftung provides training to teach improved cultivation techniques and works to develop farmer organizations which “increase market access and help farmers add value.” Neumann estimates they have reached 53,000 farmer households and that coffee farmers participating “have seen a 20-25% value addition to their product through bulk selling, transportation, processing and export.” While Kaweri has not made this a youth focused enterprise, *per se*, they believe a) that most of the work they see accomplished under this practice are younger than 30; and b) that a specific initiative targeting young farmers would be effective (see key informant interviews with Kaweri at the Kaweri Coffee Plantation and Neumann Stiftung in Kampala, in Annex V).

At *Ibero Uganda Limited*, a coffee processing operation in Kampala, Eugene Nsereko, the operations manager, noted that youth need both stronger technical skills and direct connection to work experience. Youth can find both of these things through apprenticeship programs, but even finding pathways to apprenticeships program may be difficult for many youth. Nsereko believes that youth need apprenticeships as a starting point where they can then begin thinking strategically about work.

Ibero, when seeking interns and new hires, looks for youth with hands-on work experience. According to Nsereko, youth need to be able to relate directly to others in the workplace and “shouldn’t be afraid of getting their hands dirty.” Ibero is consistently looking for skilled small engine mechanics and industrial electricians. A successful young employee at Ibero will demonstrate both technical skills and the “soft skills” of work maturity and work readiness. This employer preference for skilled workers—as illustrated by Ibero—highlights the difficulty that youth face in identifying and pursuing opportunities to gain skills. A more comprehensive effort must be made to align skills training institutions with employers like Ibero, channeling new and skilled labor into internship programs. Promoting deeper integration between employers and educators is a necessary first step.

Several key informants interviewed for this assessment commented that certain technical skills are always in demand. Processing plants always need youth with crop-processing skills; storage warehouses always need electricians. Nsereko stressed the importance of teaching youth hands-on, practical skills over theory, and his comments echoed what a current university student had also said at a meeting in Masindi, “Ugandan education is mostly theoretical, not practical. *You learn mulching in class, but you don’t go to the garden.*”

Although Nsereko commented that youth could be better trained for jobs in agro-processing, he also acknowledged that there are not yet enough agro-processing industries in Uganda to create jobs for youth. Even with the most appropriately trained and prepared youth, there would be many more applicants than open positions. “The absence of industry becomes a real big challenge for youth.” Nsereko said youth must become more entrepreneurial. “Youth should become more enterprising and find opportunities at the lower level (trading, coffee production, cultivation).” Nsereko added, “We do not have enough coffee growers. The coffee growers here are all old people.” Ibero buys mostly from traders and young people could be cultivating more coffee and selling their crops to Ibero.

Nsereko strongly recommended that USAID invest in apprenticeship programs. And within these programs, Nsereko said the most important element is the direct connection to work after the apprenticeship. Youth need market knowledge to increase their opportunities to earn an income in the agriculture value chain. Youth may begin university degree or diploma programs without accurate information regarding the job market for the skills they may develop. Without the appropriate job market knowledge youth are unable to position themselves and prepare for their futures.

The maize value chain (an example)

The Joseph Initiative (JI), based in Masindi, is an agricultural trading company that focuses on sustainable rural development for Ugandan smallholder farmers; since JI is a for-profit company, it sells its product to market. JI owns and manages an entire vertical supply chain, from farm to market, for dried grains, primarily maize. Their comprehensive approaches, termed “resource bundling,” allows them to build incentives for sustainable development at each product stage, from production, to market, to finance, while remaining responsive to market signals and demands. Both farmers the assessment team spoke with, and JI’s employees in the processing plant, were young, (average age of farmers was 24, of laborers 26), and JI cites a particular focus on developing opportunities for young farmers to improve the quality of their production, and to enter the value chain at other points. Site visits to JI extended beyond headquarters to a village collection point and to the modern JI maize processing plant, and focus groups at both location confirmed the belief that the value chain concept had promise for the concept of youth engagement (and leadership) in agriculture.

JI integrates market access, access to finance, and high quality inputs to enable smallholder farmers to maximize gains from their harvest. These inputs are carefully managed throughout their supply chain, so that JI can maximize knowledge available to actors at each level.

Market: JI pays cash-on-delivery to smallholders, providing farmers with access to market price signals. This type of information is often removed from the direct experience of most Ugandan smallholders, as most smallholders (women) do not take their product to market. Smallholders benefit greatly from cash-on-delivery, allowing them to immediately reinvest or spend earnings.

Finance: JI provides direct lending to farmers, and uses Village Procurement Officers (VPOs) to help align its lending portfolio with a personal understanding of each farmer’s risk and credit-worthiness. VPOs spend considerable time providing farming advisory services and learning and meeting each smallholder farmer. Because of this personal relationship, VPOs are able to make decisions regarding creditworthiness that allow them to lend to farmers in the absence of formal credit ratings. JI also uses in-kind repayments to limit the risk that loan proceeds go consumption rather than to production.

Production: With a certified inputs program that delivers high-quality fertilizers, seeds, and herbicides to the farm gate, 50+ best practices demonstration plots, and free farm advisory services, JI enables farmers to produce the highest quality grain. USAID

has identified a lack of quality inputs—due to a lack of trust in input dealers—as the single most severe limiting factor of productivity in Ugandan agriculture⁸³. By guaranteeing inputs and pairing inputs with demonstration plots and training, JI establishes its trustworthiness in an environment where many input vendors are considered suspect.

By combining trustworthy inputs and training, access to finance, and access to markets, JI creates a complete bundle of resources that integrates information across levels of the maize value chain, from smallholder to VPO to seller. As a result, JI has seen significant impacts throughout its value chain. These include a reduction in post-harvest loss by 50%, an increase in productivity by 50%, and a reduction in production costs by 20%. Overall, these combined impacts have resulted a 2.5 times increase in net income across the value chain. JI's goals extend beyond value chain deepening, to empowering women, developing human capital, and ensuring job creation and prosperity. JI's value chain enables Ugandan smallholders to grow and prosper by integrating incentives with best practices at each step of the agricultural value chain. In turn, JI is able to reinvest in its workers. JI, therefore, serves as an excellent model for considering how to approach agricultural value chains so as to maximize benefit.

Needs, Gaps, and Promise Identified regarding Youth Role in the Agricultural Value Chain

There is great potential value in developing youth participation in agriculture value chains; achieving the potential will require both expansion of agricultural modernization and investment in skill-building with young people. Crucially, the engagement of youth in agriculture will require two sorts of ongoing –and accelerated – investment. The “two hands clapping” of agricultural growth are continued expansion of agricultural modernization, **and** a significantly upgraded public and private attention to skills development among a young workforce.

It is conventional wisdom that young farmers – indeed all farmers – need access to markets, increasing yields, higher prices, higher quality crop output and diversification in order to increase profits and improve their livelihoods. Even then, better cultivation practices and increased farm production may not fully address the labor surplus and help Ugandans with low income. It is wisdom just as conventional in educational circles and among employers that young people need more education and better skills. *The challenge is to bring these two needs – agricultural modernization, and skills development – together in coordinated effort.*

Key constraints for young people to engage in agriculture include limited access to land (less so in the North) and other productive capital/equipment/materials; limited access to collateral, and finance; lack of specialized agricultural skills; and limited understanding of market opportunities. Activities seeking to engage young people in agriculture would do well to do activities that

- Require little capital, land, or finance;
- Have a fast turnaround time to earnings;
- Do not require the digging or drudgery associated with production.

The majority of bilateral and other donors are funding the agriculture sector. Although few have agricultural programming purposefully targeted to youth or actively considering youth's needs and perspectives, their programming is understood to reach young people, especially

young people in their mid-to-late twenties with their own households by virtue of Uganda's demographic structure. However, donors and implementing partners generally have either not collected or not analyzed information to understand the extent and nature of young people's participation in their programs. "Agriculture as a business" is a common theme, but programming tends to focus more on skills to be an entrepreneur than linkages with markets. Although there is a consensus that young people want to move beyond production, the majority of agricultural programming for them is production-based because that is what the local economy is based on.

This assessment confirms that there are pieces to work with, in both dimensions. There are practices of agricultural modernization being demonstrated, and showing success, not only in USAID's Feed The Future initiatives, but also in the work of other donors and civil society. Within agriculture, training among donor-sponsored programs still tended to focus on production more than value addition and on commodities that required little capital, land, and time such as horticulture, piggery, poultry, and beekeeping. Building financial literacy and creating opportunities for young people to save were seen as critical components that helped young people generate enough capital to start small enterprises, relieving very difficult credit and capital constraints. Several organizations also noted that the soft skills in business and in personal management at least anecdotally seemed to be the most impactful in terms of young people being able to start and/or maintain their livelihood activities. Reproductive health counseling was often raised as a necessary or positive component in that it supported young women's ability to participate and that there was interest and demand among the youth.

There is insufficient understanding of what the opportunities are in different value chains, in general and specifically for young people, to in value addition and services as well as how to build young people's skills and resources to engage there. For example, if aggregating and transporting maize would be beneficial to farmers and processors, what combinations of amount of grain, geographical coverage, equipment, or mode of transport would be both feasible for young people to access and move and still be profitable?

There is consensus that technology is important to engaging youth in agriculture because it lightens the drudgery and workload and helps agriculture seem more modern and relevant. However, apart from a small number of concrete examples (mobile banking, transitional beehives, seed/ling multiplication), there is little-to-no systematic thinking or experiments about how technology (agricultural or ICT) can increase young people's participation in and benefit from agriculture. It is not clear whether the absence of a more systemic approach arises from differing needs and existing use of technology across geographies or from other reasons.

Young women are typically not a focus of agricultural or vocational programming in either recruitment or design. Programs with a youth focus tended to have a better balance between the sexes, while women's participation rates ranged widely in agricultural programming. Constraints especially affecting young women's ability to participate in and benefit from programming – childcare, reproductive health, mobility, land access, and decision-making over agriculture and earnings – are largely not addressed in agricultural or vocational programming with the frequent exception of providing space and care for children.

Groups were a common way of engaging individuals in savings and in agricultural activities. Although there is a sense that youth enjoy working in groups because of the social aspect, there are mixed experiences working with youth-only groups and mixed-age groups. Youth tend not to be members of existing farmer/producer organizations but do value working with groups. There may be a need to create “safe spaces” for young farmers to engage with each other.

The same is true on the skills side. As indicated later in this report, there are promising policies and practices in place or underway, worth understanding better and potentially building upon. No one current scheme is adequate, nor fully successful, nor is there a natural inevitable evolution – all will require stimulation and alignment. Figure 4 suggests one potential model for understanding the multiple interdependencies between skills, the value chain, and youth entry points along the chain.

Taken together, however, the “skills side” of the equation is still relatively weak. Helpfully, there are both public and private sources of insight and lessons about the need for focusing on skills in agriculture. A majority of donors supporting youth-focused activities are also supporting vocational and/or business training, albeit on a small scale. Among organizations involved in vocational training, there are two main approaches (1) Work directly with colleges that are networked to VTIs (which are more informal and have a broader reach) to improve the curriculum, quality, and better link with demand, and (2) In the process of developing project-specific training consult with the private sector and VTIs and encourage VTIs to adopt new materials. Both approaches emphasize involving the private sector and hands-on training. Several vocational programs also include financial literacy, discussed later.

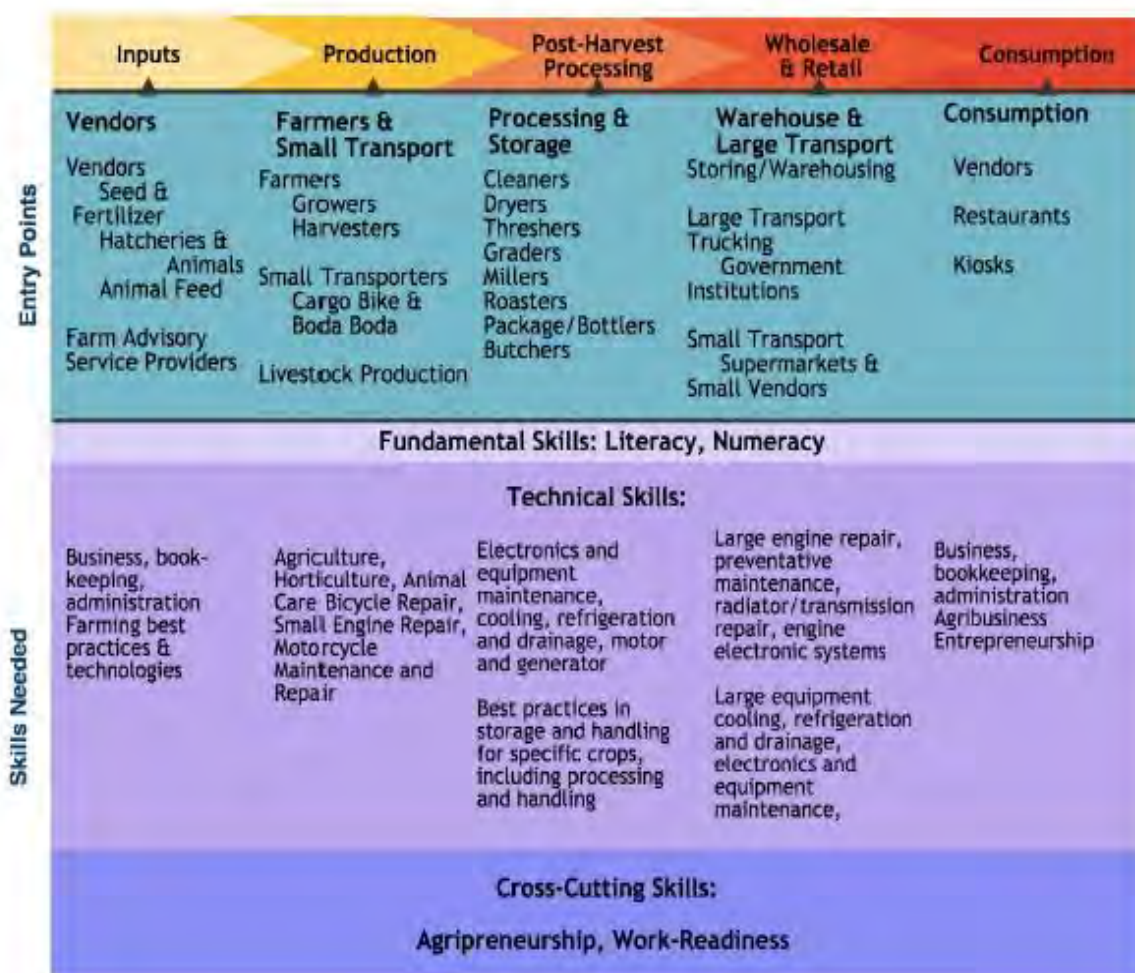
There is strong agreement among donor programs interviewed – as well as among employers – that to have successful livelihoods and enterprises, young people need to have at least threshold levels in several skills:

- Literacy and numeracy
- Health knowledge and services
- Credit and financial services
- Certain specialized technical skills
- “Soft” skills or work readiness training

There is a good deal of interest in the idea to link livelihood opportunities and skill development to agricultural value chains. This notion is outlined below in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Entry Points and Skills Needed for the Agricultural Value Chain

Agricultural Value Chain and Underlying Skills



The Government of Uganda, development partners, various key informants and youth themselves recognize that there are opportunities for youth to earn a living in the private sector agriculture value chain. With a large youth labor surplus and a majority youth population it is essential that the GOU and its development partners implement policies to absorb labor and link youth to opportunity in agriculture. The assessment confirms that there are lessons to be learned about this from the work of several donors, as well as the formal and informal education institutions, described below. As discussed above, but worth reviewing in this context, there appear to be several common approaches among donor-supported programs:

- Training centers would bring youth, farmers, or their leaders together for intensive trainings for a few days at a time. Attendees would then take back what they had learned to practice themselves or become models or trainers of trainers.
- Intentional strengthening of formal educational institutions – local schools, VTIs, college systems – in agriculture included making curricula more hands-on, modern, and informed by the private sector and creating standards for what it means to be skilled in different trades/sectors.
- Nearly all donors and programs interviewed had or wanted a component of apprenticeship/mentorship in their programming as a means of providing information, hands-on experience, and connection with the market after the training has ended in potentially precarious time when participants are often starting new small enterprises or trades.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In the absence of a robust formal labor market, an alternative method of harnessing youth energy and channeling into productive avenues is through using civic engagement, and especially service learning. Service learning is the practice of combining teaching with community service⁸⁴. Well designed service learning programs create opportunities for youth to learn critical employability skills, enable youth to become actors in civil society, and can allow youth to play an active role in addressing community challenges. Given the dominance of agriculture in the Ugandan economy, and in the daily lives and future concepts of Uganda youth, it seems probable that service learning and other opportunities for leadership ought to begin with agriculture. Interestingly, other examples from the region go beyond a single economic sector in search of leadership opportunities for young people. Nonetheless, there are lessons to be learned from experience. Here are a few:

Examples of Youth Civic Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa

A meta-analysis by the Volunteer and Service Enquiry South Africa (VOSESA) group examined 17 youth service programs in sub-Saharan Africa to determine best practices for youth civic engagement⁸⁵. Among these best practices are: “focus explicitly on developing young people as citizens with productive capability” and “...actively assist young people to find exit opportunities as they approach the end of their service period, (p.2)”. These two best practices are, fittingly, the first and last on the VOSESA list. They highlight the potential of a well-designed service learning or civic engagement opportunity to serve as a bridge into the formal workforce.

Youth benefit most when they are enabled by an environment that helps them to develop their productive capacity—especially in terms of leadership and employability skills—and then provides them with clear strategies for moving into the workforce⁸⁶. For youth in Uganda, who are struggling not only to navigate the transition to adulthood but who are also perceived as criminal and idle⁸⁷, a service learning program is one potential strategy for connecting Uganda’s immense youth population to the broader community.

There are other models of youth civic engagement and service learning in Africa – one from Kenya and one from Mali – that represent contrasting answers to the challenge of deciding on *general* youth leadership as distinct from sector specific. Both are USAID-generated:

Kenya: Yes Youth Can

Yes Youth Can brings youth together in a hierarchical structure of village groups (bunges), county groups, and national representatives. At each level, groups select projects to take on, ranging from income generation to community service, to arts projects. Youth implement the projects, with funding from USAID and county-level groups. The project is designed to empower youth and enable them to become active and engaged citizens.

Both youth and community stakeholders view the village groups as helping to improve relations between youth and their communities, especially in villages where there no youth group existed prior to Yes Youth Can. According to a parent of a Yes Youth Can Participant⁸⁸:

[I see] a very big difference because now... you cannot just go there and find [youth] sitting there idle, yes at least you find them preoccupied with either farming or some other kind of job related duties...you can see youth coming up now and [addressing]

various issues at the society level, you can see youth coming now and they impact positively on the way things are being done...

Despite its success in improving community ties, an assessment of Yes Youth Can found that participants were unlikely to move on to further positions of leadership, or to experience significant improvements in economic capacity⁸⁹. However, Yes Youth Can's council system is similar to Uganda's National Youth Network and therefore lessons learned from increasing civic engagement in Kenya might be adaptable to Uganda.

Mali: PAJE Nieta (Mali Support to Youth Entrepreneurs Project)

The PAJE Nieta project targets rural, mainly out-of-school youth through the creation of a volunteer corps. Members of the volunteer corps are college-educated youth who serve in rural communities to support literacy training, work readiness training, and the development of income generating activities⁹⁰. This project has not yet been assessed formally, but its model of developing a rural youth volunteer corps focused on agriculture might translate well to the Ugandan context. Since most Ugandan youth are rural, with low education levels, and eager to deepen their knowledge about livelihoods and technical skills, an agricultural-based Ugandan Volunteer Corps might be able to spark and support the development of agricultural youth entrepreneurs.

Returning to VOSESA's best practices, providing youth with an exit strategy that helps them to identify and pursue employment (or self-employment) opportunities is critical to bridge the gap between service and work. While community engagement and the development of leadership skills are worthy goals in of themselves, the best service learning programs have embedded within them partnerships with the private sector, links to tertiary training, or access to local and national job placement agencies⁹¹. These exit strategies ensure that youth do not return to idleness after their period of service. Exit strategies allow service learning to be a bridge for youth, a method for them to transition into the formal workplace⁹². Any model developed for Uganda ought to include in its design formal bridging strategies to channel service learning volunteers into self-employment or formal employment. One possible avenue, for example, might be to extend the Venture Capital Fund to allow exiting service learning volunteers to benefit from seed funding for the development of new enterprises.

Ugandan Programs Targeting Youth

Aside from youth civic engagement modeled through the National Youth Councils and the National Youth Network, few donors explicitly target youth leadership development, skills, or service learning. Table 2. identifies relevant current donor-funded programs on agriculture, youth leadership, civic engagement, or service learning. For a deeper listing and analysis, please see Annex I.

Interviews with donors typically found that donors see the national GoU as the main actor for implementing at scale and/or selecting what components of a project will/can be adopted and scaled. Ministries donors are engaging with are MGLSD, MAAIF, MoES. This seems to be mostly at the national level and not as much at the districts. The MoES is the partner and gatekeeper for reforming curricula in public education institutions (including VTIs and BTVETs as well as primary and secondary schools). The World Bank is working with the national government to create sectoral curriculum standards and transform universities/colleges to

sector skill hubs that can also support TVETs/VTIs. They are also engaging the private sector in developing these standards and in general are pushing for competency-based education and certification in the educational system as opposed to theoretical classroom learning being the goal. Programs are engaging more with district-level and local governments, especially in the area of developing youth leaders so that local leaders see young leaders as partners instead of threats.

The main ways donor appear to be working directly with the private sector are

- Linking farmers and/or young people with financial services and financial skills
- Developing curricula designed to build practical skills – donors are doing this more at the national level by working with industry leaders and institutions of higher education; partners are doing this more with local businesspeople to serve as mentors and/or influence community-based or more local VTI-based skills building
- Developing standards for certification

Table 2. Select Donors And Programs

Donor / Program	Program Type	Partners	Districts / Regions
British Council	Leadership/Governance	EU, UYONET, local CSOs	Pallisa, Nebbi, West Nile, Apac, Bushenyi, Kampala
DFID	Vocational, Agricultural and Business/Financial Training	AgDevCo, UNICEF, VSO, Enterprise Uganda, VTIs	In the North
Dutch Embassy (also funds ICCO AgriSkills 4 You below)	Agricultural and Business/Financial Training	IFDC, Wageningen University, Rabobank, DCFU, ICCO, ag research institutions, smaller seed dealers	
EU	Leadership/Governance and Vocational Training	Swiss Contact - Germany, ADRA Denmark, War Child Holland, Concern Worldwide, AVSI, World Vision, Plan International – UK	Karamoja Region; North (Kotido, Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Amuria, Oyam, Apac, Amolatar, Lira, Tororo)
GIZ	Vocational, Agricultural and Business/Financial Training	GoU, Private companies (in utilities), banks (Bank of Uganda, Centenary)	Karamoja, West Nile, Nebbi
JICA	Agricultural Training	MAIF (NAADS), Universities, African Development Bank (irrigation), Namuronge (rice research & extension)	Central, North, West
KOICA	Agricultural Training	GoU (esp. Min of Ag)	Agroprocessing - Covers all regions of Uganda (but especially Iganga, Soroti, Bugiri, Doho, Kibale, Masindi, Hoima)
Mastercard Foundation	Vocational, Agricultural and Business/Financial Training	BRAC, CRS, Habitat for Humanity, International Child Development Initiatives, Microfinance Transparency, Opportunity International,	

Donor / Program	Program Type	Partners	Districts / Regions
		Opportunity International Canada, Save the Children, SEEP Network, Swisscontact TechnoServe, UNCDF YouthStart, University of Minnesota, Water.org	
World Bank	Vocational and Agricultural Training	GoU, (DFID mentioned for NUSAF)	National through GoU, but Ag college in Bukalasa will be ag sector training hub
aBi Trust	Vocational, Agricultural and Business/Financial Training	Many bilateral funders; YSA, ACODE; Centenary Bank; Private Sector Fndn Uganda; banks, businesses, producer orgs, trade groups	Iganga, Jinja, Kyankwanzi, Isingiro, Kiboga, Lamwenge, Mubende, Mayuge, Lira, Oyan
SNV	Vocational and Agricultural Training	Some ag funding from IFAD, UNICEF	Lots in West Nile Region
Mercy Corps	Leadership (conflict mitigation), Vocational, Agricultural and Business/Financial Training	USAID, USDA (working on Mastercard, CIDA); Restless Development; financial sector; agribusinesses (esp. inputs), farmer groups; VTIs	Concentration in North – (Acholi) Karamoja, Kitgum, Gulu
Save the Children	Vocational and Agricultural Training	Schools, VSLAs, local community, VTIs	North Eastern, Northern. Western, Central (http://uganda.savethechildren.net/about-us/where-we-work) West Nile,
ICCO - AgriSkills 4 You Project	Agricultural and Business/Financial Training	BTNETs, Private sector companies, DIT (evaluation), connecting with other Dutch-funded activities (seeds, value-chain, IFDC catalyst farmers)	Lango & Acholi regions
UYONET (Uganda Youth Network)	Leadership/Governance	British Council, youth-led organizations in membership, local government (informally), Parliamentary Youth Network, Ministries (MGLSD?) for policy analysis, East African Parliament / Community	Pallisa, Nebbi, West Nile, Apac, Bushenyi, Kampala
Youth Entrepreneurship Facility	Vocational and Business/Financial Training	MGLSD, ILO (funder)	Focused on urban areas of 11 districts - Kampala, Jinja, Mbale, Soroti, Oyam, Lira, Gulu, Kitgum, Arua, Nebbi, Zongo
Forum for African Women Educationalists	Vocational Training	MGLSD, Forum for Education NGO's in Uganda, MoES (on Gender Task Force), UNICEF, PLAN Uganda	
Kilimo Trust	Agricultural and Business/Financial Training	private sector businesses, BMGF, CTA	

EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

In 1997, Uganda formalized universal primary school, and primary attendance rates increased dramatically, to 89% in 2013⁹³. However, only 37% of young people progress to lower secondary school and 12% of children complete secondary school⁹⁴. After the transition to secondary school, rates differ for males and females, with young women dropping out of secondary and post-secondary education at significantly higher rates than men⁹⁵, ⁹⁶. Finally, a paradoxical link between higher levels of education and a higher likelihood of unemployment works as a disincentive for youth. In Kampala, the youth unemployment rate is 32%, yet for those with a university degree, the rate climbs to 36%⁹⁷.

Box 1. Humans of New York in Uganda



"I spent four years studying to get a degree in law, and I've spent almost as long trying to find a job. Here, unless you're the family of someone in government, nobody will hire you. I sold my last cow, and now my money is almost completely gone. I'm getting evicted so I'll have no choice but to go back to the village with my grandparents. At least we have farms there. After all this time in school, I've almost forgotten how to dig."

Kampala, Uganda

© Humans of New York Photoblog

Youth, however, still see schooling, and in particular—vocational education—as a positive force that can help them to earn a living. Youth surveyed in YouthWatch 2012 overwhelmingly reported that vocational training would help them to get ahead and to achieve employment (Table 3). Indeed, young people⁹⁸ are more likely than their parents to perceive vocational education positively, and for many, and especially for male youth, skills training correlates closely with skill utilization, (see Graph 3, below; traditionally male skills include brick laying,

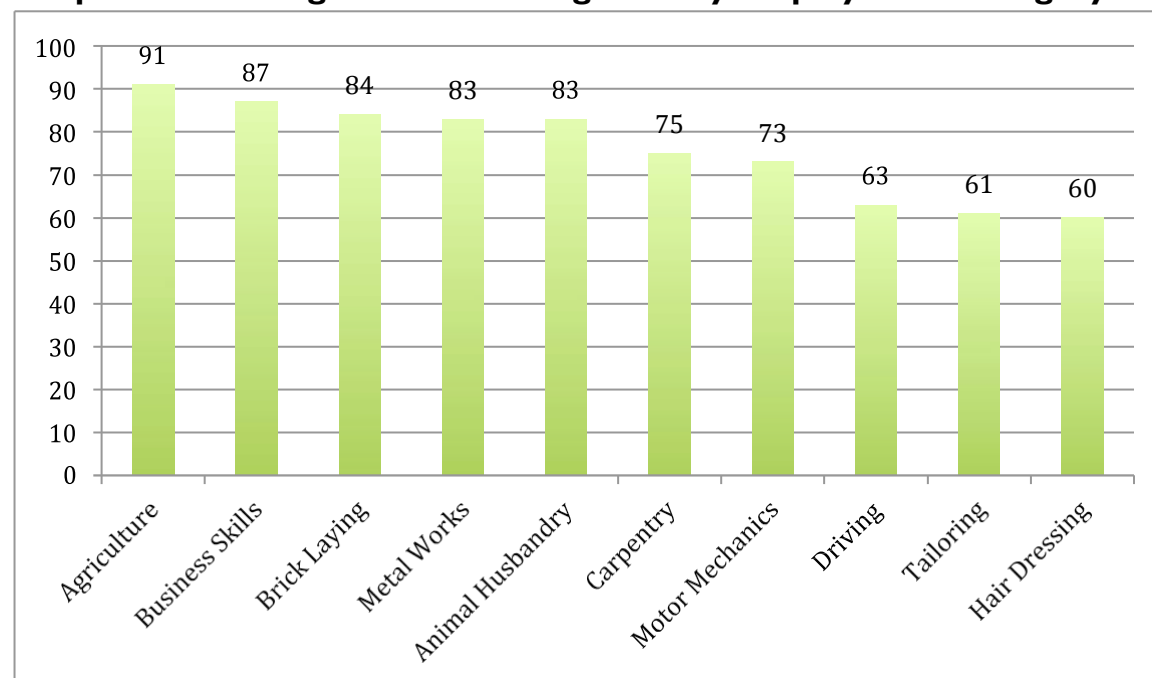
carpentry, and motor mechanics)⁹⁹. Female youth are less likely to find employment in the vocations for which they have trained, which likely further degrades their earning power. In Uganda's Youth Network's Manifesto (2011 - 2016) the first policy demand is employment, and the second is education¹⁰⁰. Both policy demands are presented with clear targets that express youth desires for how Uganda might move each demand forward. Of the 6 targets that support the youth manifesto policy demand for more education, 5 relate to increasing opportunities for vocational education, livelihoods, and technical skills training, including increases in the number of Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) schools.

Table 3. Percentage of Youth Responses by Region to the Question: What do you believe is among the most important things you can learn?

	Kampala	Central	Eastern	Northern	Western	Uganda
Vocational Training	88	92	85	94	91	90
Formal Schooling	50	72	76	77	82	75
Financial Literacy	66	58	61	57	54	58
Life Skills	44	35	36	34	40	37
Communication Skills	31	35	23	27	22	27
Negotiation Skills	18	3	13	8	10	9

Data Source: YouthWatch 2012, p. 12

Graph 3. Percentage of Youth Using Skills by Employment Category



Data Source: YouthWatch 2012, p. 18

Skills Development

In formal labor market terminology, skills development is the “supply side” of the workforce development equation – the “other hand clapping” to match the demand side. There has been consistent reinforcement by key informants in public and private sector, and by young people themselves of the need to support and upgrade the skills of young Ugandans. There is anecdotal demonstration of good and promising skill development programs – some governmental, some private – yet very little collective evidence of an effective system for preparing young people for work. Through the lens of agricultural modernization, and especially the emerging concept of “value chains”, Figure 5, below, suggests a way of thinking about practical skills development in three categories: Foundational Skills, Technical Skills, and Cross-cutting Skills.

Figure 5. Foundational, Technical, and Cross-Cutting Skills Underlying Employability



Increasing enrollment is a key goal of Uganda’s BTVET (Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training) Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2020, called *Skilling Uganda*. This initiative seeks to address several gaps in Uganda’s national BTVET model, particularly as it relates to agriculture and food security. Additional strategic goals include: increasing the availability of BTVET education to out-of-school youth; addressing lack of access in Uganda’s Northern and Eastern regions; addressing a lack of focus on agriculture and entrepreneurial training; and increasing options students to finance their educations¹⁰¹. An additional concern is that BTVET schools have been subsumed under the tertiary university system as a result of current higher education reforms. In some cases, this has translated to a “loss of some of their original courses (or much less status and importance given to them under university control), with a corresponding loss of some qualified technical and administrative staff” (Okinyal, 2012, p. 17).

A particular challenge to Uganda’s BTVET system, as it relates to issues of food security, is that it does not supply adequate pathways for youth interested in agriculture; for example, private BTVET institutions focusing on agriculture are able to enroll only 4,600 students per year¹⁰². Of

the system's 26 public and private tertiary schools, only 6 have an agricultural or forestry focus¹⁰³. Skills 4 You, a Dutch program launched in 2012, is working to build capacity and to upgrade agricultural training in BTNET schools in Northern Uganda. Skills 4 You identifies three fundamental mismatches that inhibit youth participation in agriculture:

- Between demand (mainly by youth) for agricultural vocational training and the supply of agricultural vocational training available;
- Between the agricultural skills needed/demanded (by mainly youth) and the supply of training in those skills by existing vocational training providers; and
- Between the agricultural skills needed/demanded (by farmers) and the supply of training in those skills by existing service providers like the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Farmer Associations and Farmer Field Schools¹⁰⁴.

These mismatches persist nationally throughout the BTNET system, and addressing them is critical if Uganda wants to counter the traditional subsistence agricultural practices transmitted from parent-to-child as youth work on family farms.

A final and critical issue that must be addressed is the lack of agricultural training targeted towards lower education levels and to women. These are deeply intertwined: as women are the vast majority of Uganda's smallholders and agricultural producers, and as women are most likely to leave the formal school system after primary school, in order to improve agricultural best practices, Uganda must create educational pathways that target Uganda's young women, and in particular, those who leave school.

In recent years, small projects to develop alternative education pathways have been developed, such as the Skills for Production, Employment, and Development in the Animal Industry (SPEDA) project, housed in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Makerere University¹⁰⁵. This program, started in 2010, is expected to run for 5 years. SPEDA targets post-secondary school leavers, and combines entrepreneurship training, agricultural practices, and a value chain approach in value chains such as meat, poultry, dairy, and fisheries. This valuable "agripreneur" approach would seem to make sense, but anecdotal reports question the extent of its actual implementation. If there is evidence of even partial effectiveness, it could be considered for youth at lower education levels.

As part of the charge to the Assessment, we offer 1) a portrait of the *present status* of vocational training; 1) a summary of the *skills training landscape*, represented by public and private institutions; and 4) a snapshot of *donor-supported* training providers. Taken together, these are the elements of a potential workforce training *system* with which to partner, or upon which to build an appreciably more systemic supply side approach. For additional information on the policy environment influencing the direction of future developments in public vocational training and an in-depth analysis of the current skills landscape, please refer to Annexes III and IV.

The BTNET Secondary School Landscape

Available data shows that BTNET is delivered through public, private and firm based institutions. The status of BTNET indicates that there are a total 737 registered and licensed BTNET institutions including 144 public institutions along with about 600 private service training

providers. There are an estimated 1,000 private training providers registered with the Association of Uganda Private Vocational Institutions (UGAPRIVI) including (some) public BTVETs that are also registered with the association. This cross-registration is attributed to the fact that public institutions are required to operate as profit making organizations for sustainability purposes, making them *both* public and private entities simultaneously, with a key feature of both public and private student enrollment in these institutions. It is also important to note that registration by UGAPRIVI does not bestow legality to operate, as licensing is the sole mandate of GOU/MOES. By implication, 400 private BTVETs registered with UGAPRIVI **cannot** award officially recognized certificates or diplomas.

Total annual enrollment in public BTVET formal and non formal vocational institutions is about 30,000 students and trainees, enrolled in institutions ranging from: community polytechnics; technical schools and vocational training centres; farm schools; technical institutes and vocational training institutes; colleges of commerce; technical colleges and specialized training institutions as indicated in Table 4, below.

Table 4. Public BTVET Numbers and Enrollment

BTVET Institution Category	Numbers	Agriculture Offered	Enrollment	Final Award
1. Colleges of Commerce	5		1,600	Diploma and Certificate
2. Technical Colleges*	5		1,750	Diploma
3. Technical Institutes, VTIs	34	Yes	11,250	Certificate
4. Community Polytechnics	16	Yes	11,160	Certificate
5. Technical Schools VTCs	24	Yes		
6. Farm Schools	5	Yes		
7. National Health Training	5		1,103	Certificate and Diploma
8. Technical Colleges (non formal education capitation grants)*	5	Yes	14,796 non formal trainees 2,754 school leavers	Work Pass
Total	99			

Source: CAP EPR Report 2013

Field visits by the Youth Assessment Team to mostly private and a few public TVET institutions revealed wide variance in regional numbers and distribution across the country as well as infrastructural, equipment, management and other capacities.

Enrollment in public and private agriculture BTVET at all levels is low, accommodating only about 4,600 new trainees annually. This is against a backdrop of the well-known statistic that more than a half million new labor market entrants annually that are considered might seek work in the agriculture sector. The BTVET agriculture training is also reported as insufficiently diversified in terms of specialization, unevenly distributed throughout the country, and not targeted as needed to different target groups, either by age or by gender. While the BTVET

strategic plan envisages investment of UGX 100 billion (USD 40m) into the expansion and improvement of agriculture BTVET over the 9 year plan implementation period, there is a wide-ranging emphasis of investment among specialized institutions, including the promotion (or expansion of) forestry colleges, fisheries training institute, agricultural colleges, wildlife training institutes, hotel and tourism centers, among other priorities.

Interactions with management of the BTVET institutions revealed that for many students, the motivation to enroll in these institutions is still driven by a need to acquire any form of paper qualification, usually for academic advancement or for employment in the formal sector; and not necessarily for the acquisition of demonstrable employability skills.

The BTVET Tertiary School Landscape

There are 15 public (5 universities) and 41 private (24 universities) tertiary level institutions. A report commissioned by the NCHE 2011 indicates that between 2006 and 2011, the number of universities increased from 26 to 29 with Government owning and funding the public *cum* private institutions while the private entities were owned by individuals and organizations. Commercialization of university academic programs has reportedly resulted in a shift of focus to “mass” education as opposed to elite education. Others posit that the shift to commercialization has resulted in the erosion of the main goals of universities from teaching and research to “vocationalism.”

The Uganda Association of Private Vocational Institutions

The UGAPRIVI brings together 1,000 BTVET providers in Uganda with the main objective of advocating and lobbying for the member organizations. UGAPRIVI also collaborates with GOU and the private sector on issues affecting the institutions as well as building relationships with development partners willing to support BTVETs in the areas of infrastructure development, capacity building and other priority areas. While we have combined data from the 400+ UGAPRIVI institutions registered and licensed by BTVET, the organization represents many more private, often non-formal training organizations – often but not always very small – that constitute a significant potential resource for an ambitious skills development agenda.

A summary of the skills training landscape in public and private BTVETs

The BTVET system is based on certificate and diploma programs, with few short course or informal training programs available to youth. A sample of 74 BTVET institutions, selected on the basis of availability of information on the UGAPRIVI BTVET Portal and the UTEB Training Portal, were used to develop a deeper survey of available skills and skills attainment pathways. Of the sampled schools, 22 are public, 42 are private, and 4 are informal or non-formal schools. In addition, 6 formal schools (3 public and 3 private) also provide courses identified as informal or short courses. BTVET training areas offered range in representation, defined as the number of schools reporting certificate or diploma programs for a specific training topic (see Table 5). Courses of interest for the development of linkages with agricultural value chains are starred.

Table 5. BTVET Training Areas by Percentage of Schools Offering Relevant Courses.

Training Area	Percentage of Schools Offering Courses
*Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Care	24%
Arts, Media, Publishing	5%
*Automotive	34%
Beautician, Hairdressing, Cosmetology	7%
Building and Construction	54%
*Business, Administration, Finance	25%
Catering and Food Handling	1%
*Electronics, Electrical Repair	28%
*Engineering and Manufacturing	19%
* Forestry and Fishing	1%
Health and Nutrition	15%
Hospitality and Tourism	13%
Information and Communication Technology	47%
Instructor and Instructional Materials	13%
Language, Literature, Culture	5%
*Preparation for Life and Work	17%
*Retail and Commercial Enterprise	8%
Tailoring, Garment Handling, Footwear	50%

Note: Most schools offer more than one training topic and therefore the percentages listed are not cumulative

The most relevant programs to this assessment, such as Agriculture, Horticulture, and Animal Care, appeared as a training area for 24% of the sample schools. Preparation for Life and Work – a clearly important training area – was offered in only 17% of schools sampled. The most over-represented training area, Building and Construction, was offered in 54% of schools. As cited above, there is considerable anecdotal doubt that many of these are effective or practical

programs (there appear to be no objective evaluation data), but as they match up with the skills described as needed for the value chain “connection,” we cite them here as possible building blocks for a future initiative.

Thirty-two schools in the sample identified themselves as offering a certificate (22) or diploma (10), with all diploma-awarding institutions also awarding certificates. The standard length of a certificate program is 2 – 3 years, and the standard length of non-Certificate short courses is 6 – 9 months. Informal programs were most likely to be funded by donors, and donor programs were most likely to be shorter than non-Certificate courses offered by institutions. Of these, St Jude Family Projects (affiliated with the Foundation for Sustainable Development) ran the shortest programs, of 3 to 14 days in length. These short programs, however, revolve around very narrow and targeted topics—mostly in terms of best practices—and are conducted on demonstration plots on the 3.7 acre St. Jude Farm.

Schools rarely make their course content public, and it is unclear what standards underlie many BTVET competencies. As stated above, not all BTVET schools carry MOES registration, and therefore many certificates or diplomas awarded may not carry official approval. In addition, National Quality Standards are still in flux and the only online source of reference for MOES-registration is the UTEB website, which is therefore not accessible for those lacking online access, such as students who may be researching schools to attend. This is an ironic reality, of course, as the question of the practical quality of many BTVET offering is a current and lively one. While the team was impressed by the classroom presentation and curricula of several of the institutions we visited, none had a real connection with potential employers or with other means of developing hands-on, practice-based training.

A list of courses by specialty, or training, area is available for Nakawa Vocational College (see Table 6 for select courses in two training areas), offering a glimpse into a potential opportunity to align training with agricultural value chain upgrading and deepening. Nakawa Vocational College, originally established in partnership between the GOU and Japan’s International Cooperation Agency, targets industrial skills development. Located in Kampala, Nakawa does not have (nor need) an agricultural focus. Nonetheless, with small additions, such as entrepreneurship training, motorcycle maintenance and repair, industrial refrigerator maintenance, specialization in industrial grade crop-processing machine maintenance, it is clear how the course content could provide pathways to the agro-processing or transportation industries. Referring to Figure 5, above, these are among the skills required for successfully “entering” the value chain.

Table 6. Courses offered by Nakawa Vocational College under the training areas *Motor Vehicle and Electronics*

Motor Vehicle Courses	Electronics Courses
Automatic Transmission	Domestic and Industrial Installation
Radiator Repair	Motor and Generator Rewinding
Engine Overhaul	Programmable Logic Control
Auto Electrical	Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
Body Care	Domestic Appliances

Preventative Maintenance

Youth also perceive the need for better matching between formal educational content and skills. Even the most foundational skills, such as numeracy, play a critical role in daily marketplace interactions. Youth perceive these linkages, and, through organizations such as the Ugandan Youth Network, have submitted manifestos calling for more and better vocational education.

“There is a need to equip youth on the math skills as most are cheated at the weighing scales or places of sale,” said a youth in a rural Gulu community.

“Ugandan education is mostly theoretical, not practical. You learn mulching in class, but you don’t go to the garden,” said a Joseph Initiative (JI) farmer in Masindi.

“Personally, I think the most important thing is knowledge. And two, it is about the quality of the products you are producing. Because of the quality of products I produce it has opened the market,” said a Masindi farmer living in Masindi town.

“Our farming knowledge usually comes from our parents, but if technicians come they can sensitize or educate people to use a small piece of land,” said a farmer with the JI

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

RECOMMENDATION: engage youth in existing and evolving agricultural value chains – as employees, as independent service providers, as cooperatives or small enterprises. Attention should be given to establishing “resource bundles” to promote information sharing, vertical integration, and establishing trust across actors.

Take an adaptive management approach to launching and expanding value chain-linking initiatives for youth

While it is tempting – given the dire situation facing young people in Uganda – to “go big” quickly, the assessment team recommends a staged approach. Perhaps selecting a single initiative for each of several targeted districts, and for each selected value chain; implementing, say four demonstration programs in each of five districts, planning consciously to evaluate each from the beginning, and then expanding, adapting, and replicating the successful approaches. This would be consistent with USAID’s adaptive management approach, and – provided concurrent, “real time” evaluation were in place from the beginning – could make expansion plans built on evidence of effectiveness.

Learn from (and collaborate with) current public (GOU) and donor-sponsored initiatives to design new programs

This is not absolutely new territory, for USAID, for fellow donors, or for the GOU. Even failures or modest successes hold lessons for program design in this area. The Youth Capital Venture fund is an outstanding example of an approach to providing capital to youth for small enterprise development. While early lessons are unsurprising (e.g., youth need more than capital, and require business skill development), the resource and experiences are promising and worth connecting. Similarly, USAID’s own experience with a variety of approaches to providing modern agricultural inputs ought to be studied and built upon.

Focus on initiatives for youth that support second income generation

Many young people told the assessment team that they both need to, and *want* to, work two jobs – especially if one is in farming. In the larger communities, this might include part-time retail or service work, in smaller communities and villages it might be work at home plus working for a neighbor. In a new initiative, this preference (and need for cash) should be accounted for, even for young people in training or who return to school.

Focus on the rural “middle youth”

These are youth often described as, out-of-school young people in their late teens and early twenties who are not farming their own lands. This population is less served than older youth (whom it is believed are reached by agricultural programs) and in-school youth, is the sub-population of youth seen as being most affected by under/unemployment and the most politically problematic. In 2011, young people aged 15-24 were approximately 25% of the population in both rural and urban areas. Critical issues to address will be finding these young people and designing programming and M&E that accounts for their potentially more mobile lifestyle.

Reach out to young women

Young women face social and logistical challenges to continued participation yet have shown great promise in several organizations’ agricultural programs and who are then more likely to create multiplier effects of healthier families. It will be critical to understand these women’s needs for programming, to decide what number of participants through what approaches is feasible, and to allocate budget for engaging young women.

Offer training and supports for small-scale “agripreneur” livelihoods as a starting point; expand as successful

While not recommending elaborate “entrepreneurship training” of the Business Plan/Accounting/Marketing sort, there are basic business skills needed to support a young person’s entry into the matter of “doing business” – basic planning and logistics, making something and selling it, buying something for one price, selling for more, growing something (a crop or an animal), and understanding cost planning and understanding one’s market enough to succeed. These are basic skills that were mentioned frequently by young people, and that ought to be part of a new youth initiative. Moreover – and as practically vital – access to agricultural inputs, small amounts of capital, and incentives for success will need to be part of any plans to support youth in small, value-chain related enterprises. What CPMA’s Joseph Initiative call a “resource bundle:” a bundle of seed, financing, training and “market facilitation to maximize profits” is one such approach. Another approach, taken by aBi Trust was to develop “change” agents, who became key to program success. Change agents received training in agriculture, technology, communication, entrepreneurship, and counseling, and were paid to deliver training and supplies to farmers.

Consider a “household approach”

A household approach is one where members come together to make a plan and pool resources was noted as potentially useful for women and for youth to raise households’ perceptions of their potential contribution and, accordingly, their access to resources, especially where young people have limited access to land.

RECOMMENDATION: consider linking leadership and youth engagement directly with value chain – related entrepreneurship opportunities, and with learning and skill building through a “service learning” approach. This could have several advantages:

A service learning volunteer corps of university graduates can empower youth with higher education to return to rural areas to serve as mentors to other youth.

Given the unfortunate correlation between higher levels of education and a higher likelihood of unemployment in Kampala, college graduates – probably those with farming backgrounds -- may welcome an opportunity “return home” to be placed in rural leadership positions. The creation of a service learning volunteer corps, with an small-enterprise focus, could help seed the countryside with educated and motivated youth mentors. This has been productively developed in Mali by the USAID funded *Mali-Paje* program, which began to function at scale in 2011.

Structure the service learning corps to promote learning about enterprise start-up and small income generating activities

Service learning corps members could be charged with a challenge of engaging community youth in a start-up project that provides **secondary** income generation to youth. Given Ugandan youths’ stated preference for additional livelihood strategies and income diversification, the goal ought to be relatively small in scale (i.e., supplementation, not replacement, of current income generating activities). Youth so engaged in ought to be able to participate in profit-sharing if the enterprise they design is successful. This crucial step could incentivize participation and channels youth into market-driven, demand-driven enterprise formation.

The opportunity to establish a small enterprise allows youth the space to learn the required steps (logistics, planning, market analysis) necessary to follow through with a start-up. An example of a potential project might be creating a bicycle transport or bicycle repair company.

Encourage soft skills development, collaboration, and leadership by encouraging youth to become mentors

Service learning corps members, if provided with initial training, could serve as mentors to local youth as youth embark on the challenge task. Asking youth to compile the initial start-up fund as a group may be a useful strategy to create buy-in across youth without falling into the “handouts” trap.

Build incentive through the development of exit strategies, for both service learning corps members and the youth they mentor

Service learning corps members, after a serving for a contracted amount of time, ought to be given preferential treatment for loans – perhaps through the existing GOU Venture Capital Fund, if it can be made accessible for such a purpose. Building such a linkage might incentivize corps members to take treat their service term as a “trial run” of business start-up. Allowing enterprises created through service learning programs to expand through Venture Capital Fund

loans also may encourage participating youth to commit to the start-up and growth phases of enterprise development.

Consider engaging with International 4-H to develop a village and community-based voluntary approach to learning hands-on about agriculture, both crops and livestock.

It could be that the engagement and volunteer-based learning about agriculture could be accomplished with the assistance and leadership of the well-regarded volunteer program, 4-H, which is now working in sub-Saharan Africa through a base in Tanzania.

RECOMMENDATION: In designing and executing a new initiative, we recommend taking an expansive and long-term view of youth skill development, but linking skills training explicitly to value chain, “demand-side” initiatives.

Plan and deliver skills development through a network of regional partnerships, in close consultation with private sector and government offices

Linked to the recommendation for an adaptive management approach to value-chain initiatives, skills training could be organized similarly. Select targeted regions and value chains would each have a skills training “menu”, and training partners would be designated for each. Training partners could be public or private BTVET institutions, tertiary institutions, or experienced NGOs.

Consider establishing local or regional public-private “councils” to establish dialogue between private sector drivers of value chains, youth serving organizations, and training institutions.

If the regional approach is followed, it would be useful to establish mechanisms to nurture communication and coordination. Responsible councils would jointly consider training priorities, policy coordination, and collaboration. Such a group could establish joint efforts, such as advocating and even carrying out local and regional labor market surveys. There are good examples of successful such councils in the USAID network.

Content of training should include basic skills of literacy and numeracy, targeted technical skills as required by the relevant value chain(s), and work readiness training

Simple assessments can identify literacy and numeracy needs, and existing curricula can be adapted for use by the training partner. Short technical courses would be developed by training partner with advice from potential employers or customers, possibly to include literacy and/or numeracy content.

We recommend that the activity include practical, hands-on training and practice in:

Agriculture:

Although basic principles of agriculture and farm management are necessary, the focus should be on one to two specialized agricultural trades (for example beekeeping, piggery, or grafting) taught in an applied way. In developing this strategy, look for current gaps and for complementarity – for example, there is a tertiary degree for post-harvest processing but components (such as grading) might lend themselves well to BTVET certificate programs

Savings: Understanding why to save and how to save was viewed as critical by nearly all organizations. Youth learned that they could save and that small amounts of savings could make a big difference to their enterprise.

Business & Entrepreneurship: Although a wide variety of skills fall in this category, skills mentioned as key to successful and resilient enterprises included recordkeeping & bookkeeping, cost-benefit analysis, networking, organizing others, long-term planning, interpersonal skills, and other soft skills. Organizations observed that these business, planning, and soft skills were essential to young people believing they could start a business, persisting, seeing opportunities, and treating agriculture as a business. It would be helpful to look more closely at different curricula and approaches and talk with facilitators to understand which aspects of content & delivery have been most impactful.

Sexual and reproductive health training: Both young men and young women have a demand for SRH education and services. Incorporating it into the activity taps into that demand, supports young women's continued participation, and supports young people to achieve the longer-term plans they may create as part of their soft skills.

Particular care should be given to focus on creating pathways to return to formal education for out-of-school youth and for women who left school early and who would benefit from basic education and a credential.

This activity can be seen as a “second chance” approach to education re-enrollment and completion, and ought also to be explicitly developed as a “feeder,” or pathway into vocational short courses, business skills development, and value chain employment or enterprises.

Basic business skills training – “what you need to know to be your own boss” – could be offered as an option, and ought to be a significant menu option, coupled with mentoring and advisement.

This is the “agripreneur” option. There will be opportunities arising from the connection to value chain operations for young people to form their own enterprises. They will need skills, advice and mentoring, and guidance in basic business strategies. While it is clear that “letting a thousand flowers bloom” is not an adequate strategy, there is also considerable experience in the USAID programming world in how to tailor entrepreneurship skills to the skill level of young, largely primary-level educated, rural youth and young farmers. The work of Making Cents, International Youth Foundation, and Education Development Center come to mind, and there are surely other adaptable models.

Work at the policy and donor coordination levels in parallel

A piece of the “adaptive management” approach ought to be to translate lessons from experience in real time to the policy environment. Solidifying a National Qualifications Framework and urging the creation of a real Labor Market Information System are two recommendations that could be reinforced, even without the experience of local or regional programs. Beyond those “Enabling Environment” measures, however, there is a real need among both public and private training institutions to adopt and adapt programs and curricula that will be developed in this initiative – ranging from agriculture-related short courses in requisite skills, to skills assessment techniques, to work readiness and entrepreneurship. These content strengths are simply not present in most current institutions, yet their participation will be required if this approach is to go to significant scale.

Further coordination among stakeholders (donors and implementers) could fill a need and opportunity to better share existing information; measure and distill lessons from programming; identify opportunities for scale; and articulate and answer key questions in programming for and with young people, especially in agriculture and in entrepreneurship. The support, coordination, dissemination of market analyses, such that they are usable by implementing partners, VTIs, and young people, is one potential gap that could be filled that would enable training programs to focus more effectively on relevant opportunities. To measure impact, participants would ideally be tracked 1-3 years after leaving any initial training to assess the sustainability of their enterprise and ability and opportunity to apply their skills.

Conclusion

As suggested in the title of this assessment report, the assessment team believes the evidence of desk review, some 50 “key informant” interviews with donors, program directors, private employers, and program implementers that an initiative (or “suite” of initiatives) that combine a value chain approach to improvement of agriculture with youth and skills development is desirable and feasible. In particular, we suggest that:

- Growing the demand and supply aspects of Uganda workforce development system requires continued investments in agricultural modernization by all actors. We recommend USAID consider linking certain current FTF investments explicitly with initiatives for youth.
- Succeeding at skills development will require significant investment in a program design that a) starts with deliberate speed and an adaptive management and learning approach; b) confronts capacity development in public and private training institutions; and c) is clear about the criteria for moving to scale at an accelerating pace.
- The content of training will be important, and while existing curricula (e.g. for literacy, vocational skills, and work readiness/soft skills) are available – and have been built often with USAID funding – serious adaptation, to Uganda, to agriculture, to language will be required.

Nowhere is the cliché that “youth are our future” more true than in this youngest of the world’s countries. Explicitly, in Uganda, that future lies in agriculture. Uganda will benefit greatly from a thoughtful strategy that engages them both.

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