

USAID/Uganda Youth Assessment Key Findings

Uganda has the world's youngest population with over 78 percent of its population below the age of 30. With just under eight million youth aged 15-30, the country also has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although Uganda is making strides economically, it faces significant challenges in meeting its youth's needs today and their challenges tomorrow as its population continues to grow at a rate of 3.2 percent annually.

To assist the U.S. Government in directing youth program investments effectively in the face of these challenges, the International Youth Foundation and FHI 360, in partnership with the Centre for Basic Research, launched YouthMap Uganda in April 2011. This holistic, cross-sectoral youth assessment covered urban, rural, and peri-urban areas in twelve districts.

The assessment focused on youth-related issues articulated in USAID/Uganda's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS): fostering employability of and economic opportunities for youth, especially related to the Mission's new Feed the Future (FTF) initiative; assessing and strengthening youth focused interventions in the area of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) to address Uganda's extremely high population growth; and engaging youth constructively within civil society and the governance and political life of Uganda. Key "take-aways," recommendations, and current and future youth related programming for the Mission are highlighted below:

YOUTH INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INTERNSHIPS

Finding:

- **Contrary to popular belief, the majority of youth are interested in agriculture and ag-enterprise development** but need more practical skills, agriculture inputs, and access to land and finance. However, their interest in agriculture is not known at the district or national level.
- **Youth are interested in small business development but are constrained by lack of resources.** Business, technical, and vocational training is only one part of business success: credit and land constraints are major impediments to youth starting businesses. Financial support for tools, combined with mentoring, is much more valuable as it allows youth to take the next steps.

Recommendations:

- Programs under FTF could identify entrepreneurial opportunities in the agriculture value chain for youth, and provide them with the skills and financial support necessary for youth starting businesses.
- USAID Mission and implementing partners could hire Ugandan graduates as paid interns or for entry-level positions on USAID projects, particularly in Karamoja.

MARGINALIZATION OF YOUTH AND DESIRE FOR INCLUSION

Finding: Youth are frustrated with programs run by the Government of Uganda (GOU) and others and feel excluded. However, despite feelings of disempowerment and discouragement, Ugandan youth are interested in their role as citizens and are politically aware.

Recommendation: USAID should include youth more actively in the design and implementation of USAID development efforts and ensure their voices are integrated throughout the CDCS period.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Finding: **The private sector is willing to increase the capacity of its staff and to pay for additional training for youth.** Private sector companies noted that it is very difficult to find qualified graduates in Uganda and therefore they need to provide on-the-job training. Many companies are open to working with development partners to find ways to increase the capacity of their future workforce.

Recommendation: USAID should work closely with companies to leverage and combine resources, develop demand-driven training programs, and increase capacity of youth to take on the available jobs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

Finding: **Almost every young person interviewed had access to a cell phone. However, nearly three quarters of youth reported little or no computer/Internet usage** (60 percent never used a computer before). This limits their ability to access information on training and job opportunities, use social media or participate in public forums online.

Recommendation: USAID should consider maximizing the use of mobile phones to promote youth political and civic engagement for disseminating and exchanging information (e.g., related to elections, or reporting violence or cases of corruption), and encouraging greater political and civic participation – since many youth do not have access to social media or other online avenues.

Finding: **There are significant, dramatic differences across regions and between rural and urban areas in terms of youth poverty.** Despite significant investments in Northern Uganda, the region remains underdeveloped. Between 73-86 percent of youth live on less than \$1 a day in Northern Uganda, and over 60 percent in the rural areas.

Recommendation: USAID should continue to support a major development presence in the North and in rural areas and work with the GOU to ensure development priorities are focused there.

HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING

Finding:

- **There is a great need to enhance communication around SRH issues between adults and youth.** While Uganda has done a good job of improving access to primary education and to integrating SRH into school curriculums, messages don't reach a number of youth, especially those that are most vulnerable to pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Many adults also still believe and propagate inaccurate information regarding family planning.
- **Despite gaps in knowledge, youth have internalized messages around the economic benefits of having smaller families, linked to contraceptive use.** This fact can be leveraged with our SRH efforts.

Recommendations: Keys to improving contraceptive use among youth, and SRH overall, include:

- Integration of specific information on contraceptive use and healthy reproductive health choices into the PIASCY program and the proposed Literacy Project.
- Providers should understand standards of care regarding contraceptive methods for youth.

INTEGRATING YOUTH IN PROJECT DESIGN, M&E, AND CLA ACTIVITIES

Recommendations:

- Requests for Applications and Proposals (RFAs/RFPs) should include a summary of relevant youth issues. Also, the RFA/RFP should include a youth line item in the evaluation criteria so that points are awarded for thoughtful analysis of youth.
- Include indicators to disaggregate youth involvement in and benefits from USAID programs.

USAID/UGANDA CURRENT AND PLANNED YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Development Objective (DO) 1:

- A new biodiversity conservation and tourism activity will train youth in business and protected areas management, and promote them as active participants in community tourism groups. Youth will gain knowledge and skills to set up self-employment, and stay employed and productive in a changing economy.
- In the Community Connector project, youth will participate in project implementation as community “change agents” or stakeholders involved in agriculture/nutrition activities.
- A new food security program will provide special assistance to farmer organizations that support youth in the cultivation of focus crops.
- A new agriculture inputs activity may promote youth as agro-input dealers, community facilitators, and extension agents.
- A new project focusing on the agriculture sector’s enabling environment will strengthen the organizational capacity of youth-led enterprises working in the coffee, maize, and beans sectors. It is envisaged that the youth can turn their energy and ideas into business opportunities, thereby increasing their incomes and creating employment.
- A new public-private partnership initiative will work to increase employment, particularly for youth.

DO 2:

- The recently completed Strengthening Multi-Party Democracy program empowered youth in civil society and political parties, offered internships, and introduced new technology tools like social media for youth to enhance communication and advocacy.
- In July 2011 USAID organized a national youth festival, together with 18 youth organizations and 26 youth clubs from universities. Over 7,000 youth attended the event including 24 youth organizations, three youth Members of Parliament.
- As part of National Youth Day celebrations, USAID sponsored the Green Light Movement, which serves as a platform for young people to openly discuss and advocate for youth issues. The Green Light Movement sponsored the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs, gave advocacy training on the use of social media, hosted a local radio talk show, and partnered with a local school and municipality in a tree planting event.
- In May 2011, USAID supported a summit for Karamoja and Turkana youth, bringing together over 500 hundred young women and men from different ethnic groups in the Karamoja region. There will be second Karamoja-Turkana youth summit in December 2011.

DO 3:

- Health programming supports youth-related services in family planning and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment, and social development.
- Youth-focused components contribute to positive health outcomes via increases in access and utilization of health services such as male medical circumcision, better health communications, HIV counseling and testing, and prevention of mother to child transmission.
- The portfolio also supports economic security, food security, psychosocial support, and legal protection services for youth and their families.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports, our education program supports Uganda’s Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth, providing age-appropriate messages to empower youth with knowledge and life skills that influence positive behavior change, and as a result, help stay safe from HIV/AIDS.