Problem or Promise?
Harnessing Youth Potential in Uganda
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>Enumeration Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents (BRAC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGA</td>
<td>Income-generating activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC1</td>
<td>Local Council 1, the lowest administrative unit in Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoGLSD</td>
<td>Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAADs</td>
<td>National Agriculture Advisory Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>National Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUSAF</td>
<td>North Uganda Social Action Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEAP</td>
<td>Poverty Eradication Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>Probability Proportional to Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSCA</td>
<td>Rotating Savings and Credit Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RoU</td>
<td>Republic of Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACCO</td>
<td>Savings and Credit Cooperatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRH</td>
<td>Sexual and Reproductive Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>STD</td>
<td>Sexually-transmitted Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STF</td>
<td>Straight Talk Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBOS</td>
<td>Uganda Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UgSh</td>
<td>Ugandan Shillings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHS</td>
<td>Uganda National Household Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE</td>
<td>Universal Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.E.A.H</td>
<td>Youth Empowered and Healthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOP</td>
<td>Youth Opportunities Programme (part of NUSAF)</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uganda’s youth hold the key to their country’s social and economic development. Their energy, vibrancy and entrepreneurial spirit – not to mention their commitment to improving their own and their communities’ lives and circumstances – will be a huge asset for the country if these passions can be harnessed, especially given the size of their cohort. Uganda has the world’s youngest population and displays the highest prevalence of poverty among its youth. Little is known, however, about what this means for young men and women in Uganda in terms of their experiences, perceptions and realities as they try to negotiate the transition to adulthood within these difficult circumstances.

To assist in deepening BRAC’s youth programmes and sharing lessons from our research and programmes with Ugandan youth, the Research and Evaluation Unit travelled to every corner of Uganda. Based on mixed-methods research, including a nationally-representative survey of youth, focus groups, and in-depth case studies, the findings presented here highlight the difficult situation facing youth in every dimension of their lives. The report offers a dynamic framework through which to understand and assist youth to realise their potential as they strive to become adults and citizens of Uganda.

Chapter 1 introduces the conceptual framework used in this report and describes the research methodology.

For a healthy transition to adulthood, youth require a set of assets (education, health, natural and physical assets) and supportive institutions (social, cultural, political and economic) that create opportunities. Positive outcomes feed into their aspirations for a better future, while negative outcomes lead to youth losing hope and zeal in their efforts to succeed. The report is organized around the basic components of this framework.

Chapter 2 presents the asset portfolio of Ugandan youth.

A majority of Ugandan youth drop out of school early. Along with low education, they also face major health risks such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, alcohol and drug abuse. Given their low stock of human capital and the sheer number of unemployed youth, finding formal employment is a challenge for most young people. The report finds that there are no financial returns to primary education, and there is a large unmet demand for vocational training and financial services among the youth. There is a large number of youth who are underemployed, accounting for a major loss in the country’s GDP.

Chapter 3 outlines the position of youth in the family, community and political participation.

Family support, according to the youth, is falling and insufficient for a healthy transition to adulthood. Young people start working to support their own costs at an early age, and particularly for young men, there is tremendous pressure to support the family by working. There is a general stereotype of youth being troublesome or lazy in communities, which restricts communication between them and the rest of their communities. Youth feel that not only are they deprived of respect in their communities, they are also unable to participate in community activities and decision making. The National Youth Council is a positive step towards involving youth in decision making processes. However youth complain that their voices are not heard through this channel.
Chapter 4 discusses the perceived opportunities of Ugandan youth, versus their aspirations.

The aspirations of Ugandan youth are simply to find decent work and be able to support their families. Most youth are engaged in subsistence farming or wage employment, while the most desired occupations are self-employment (own business) and salaried employment. A lack of training and finance deter growth and sustainability of youth-owned businesses, however. Formal employment is also difficult to acquire. Youth reveal discrimination by employers based on age, wealth and social connections. Most youth want to move to urban areas, but are discouraged to migrate by reports of adverse living conditions, a lack of jobs and exploitation by employers.

Chapter 5 outlines the negative outcomes of Ugandan youth, focusing on risky sexual behaviour

Transactional sex is common among young women, who blame poverty and a lack of family support as the root cause of their behaviour. Young men engage in risky sexual behaviour as a result of peer pressure. Given that all other ways of ‘being a man’ (having a good job, supporting a family and becoming respected citizens) are out of their reach, this is the only way for young men to prove their worth. Youth in the middle income quintile are most prone to risky behaviour. For women, the immediacy of early pregnancy and poverty are a greater concern than the long run risks of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

Chapter 6 concludes the report with examples of success stories among youth and identifies the main policy recommendations from the study.

While opportunities for Ugandan youth remain limited, there are some positive examples of young people and development programmes working together to change their fate. The chapter points out that there is need for a comprehensive approach to help turn Uganda's huge youth population into a resource for the future. Employment and institutional support should be the main areas of intervention. Reducing youth un/underemployment will solve many of the social and economic problems that youth face today. Improved support from communities and local governments along with increased access to financial services and vocational training are key to facilitate healthy transition of youth into adulthood.

Poverty for youth starts in the household, with the transfer of assets from the household defining the depth of assets that youth have to draw upon in the transition to adulthood. Key assets for this transition include education, nutrition, land, financial support and other productive assets. Youth in Uganda face strong pressures to become financially independent at an early age. When young people are unable to earn their living, they are viewed as ‘liabilities’ in the household, leading them to become caught in a state of suspended adolescence, burdened with the responsibilities, but not provided with the resources and emotional support they need to meet them. Communities too, although traditionally playing a role in social development, offer little support to their youth members. Excluded from community activities and decision-making by multiple factors – including their poverty, age, and widespread perceptions of youth engagement in crime – limit opportunities for youth participation in most aspects of public life. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the two main obstacles facing youth in the transition to adulthood are securing stable employment and being seen as respected citizens of their communities and country.

The foundations for better employment outcomes are present and young Ugandans are highly active in the labour market, with nearly 80 percent being active members of the labour force. Receiving, on average, 7.7 years of schooling and displaying a literacy rate of 81 percent, young men and women are relatively well-educated in comparison with many developing countries, preparing them for further skills development and future employment. Nearly one in three youth across the country have received some form of vocational training. Education and skills development alone, however, are not enough to secure employment. Under- and unemployment...
rates increase with educational attainment and 27 percent of youth receiving training are unable to utilise their new skills in income-generation, illustrating that to improve labour market outcomes for youth, they require support in multiple dimensions to complement their existing assets and capabilities, including access to finance.

That economic growth has not been accompanied by sufficient job creation has led to severe job shortages, with only 12 percent of youth benefiting from stable monthly incomes. Underemployment is the main problem facing Uganda’s youth, although in Kampala, rates of unemployment reach nearly 20 percent. While nearly half of young people are able to access sufficient employment, this masks significant regional variation, with more favourable labour markets in Central and Western Uganda increasing the national average for full employment. Within this difficult labour market, youth recognise the importance of being job creators, rather than job seekers, with nearly half of all youth naming small business as their preferred future job. Irregular incomes and limited access to finance limits the ability of youth to accumulate capital for this purpose, and the majority of youth are currently engaged in subsistence farming, for which they display limited interest as a future livelihood.

The combination of the multiple barriers facing youth – including limited assets and support, difficult economic, political and social environments, and limited perceived opportunities for the future – negatively influences the self-esteem, motivations, and aspirations of youth. Large numbers of Ugandan youth display low self-esteem, unhappiness and future uncertainty, all of which lead to limited or non-existent aspirations. It is the accumulation of these difficulties and constraints that drive the risky sexual behaviours commonly associated with youth. Young men and women may experience different drivers to their engagement in these behaviours, but their vulnerability to sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and early parenthood is universal, exacerbated particularly for young women.

These negative outcomes must be viewed as a result of the broader set of constraints and challenges facing youth. The difficulties young men face in finding employment, starting and supporting families, and being accepted as citizens is a driver of young men engaging in risky behaviours, as they are forced to redefine ‘manhood’ through behaviours such as engaging in multiple sexual relationships. In contrast, with little parental support and limited economic opportunities, young women from low-income households are drawn into transactional sexual relationships to meet their basic needs. The relationship between poverty, unemployment and risky sexual behaviour plays out at both the individual and community levels. Poor youth are more likely to engage in these risky sexual behaviours, and youth in poor communities are more likely to engage in them regardless of their wealth status.

Employment and support are the two major themes and areas for intervention that cross-cut across the whole report. While the foundations for better employment outcomes for youth are laid, greater success requires a move towards much more integrated youth employment programmes that are not only based upon vocational training, but also address the multiple barriers to skills utilisation, such as access to finance, work experience and mentoring, or business skills. Likewise, policy and programmes must also work towards a much more supportive environment for youth that enables their active participation in all of the institutions that shape their lives, from the household, to the community, to the national level. This requires not only working with youth, but also with adult members of the community. Awareness campaigns or cultural dialogues between generations, for example, will play a key role in reaching a greater mutual understanding between generations and challenging widespread negative perceptions of youth. Together, economic empowerment and a more supportive environment that recognises youth as valued and productive members of the community will foster greater self-confidence, happiness, and aspirations among youth.

The report reveals, however, the multiple faces of youth poverty in Uganda, with incredible heterogeneity in the opportunities and constraints facing youth by gender, age, educational background, region, and rural-urban location, all of which must be taken into account when
developing and implementing targeted programmes for youth. It also argues that programmes for youth must place a greater focus on young men, in addition to the current strong emphasis placed on young women. While young women are more vulnerable in many of the negative outcomes experienced by youth, particularly with regards to early pregnancy, efforts to promote gender equality cannot overlook the importance of focusing equally on the needs and vulnerabilities of young men. The additional pressures and obstacles they face in securing employment and becoming financially independent means that young men face much greater difficulties making the transition to work, family and citizenship. In the process of finding alternative ways to redefine ‘manhood’ – through engaging in risky sexual behaviours such as multiple sexual relationships – they are themselves a driver of the vulnerabilities young women face.
Chapter I

PROBLEM OR PROMISE?
The Centrality of Youth to National Development

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Uganda has the world’s youngest population and the highest prevalence of poverty among its youth. Of its population of 30.7 million, 57 percent are below the age of 18, and a further 21.3 percent are between the ages of 18 to 30 (UBOS 2010). In addition, with around 94 percent of Ugandan youth living below US$2 a day, Uganda has the highest poverty incidence among youth in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank 2008). Less is known, however, about what this means for young men and women in Uganda, including their experiences, perceptions and realities as they try to negotiate the transition to adulthood within these difficult circumstances.

In order to enhance our understanding of the social and economic lives of youth, the Youth Watch team travelled to every corner of Uganda, gathering youth opinions and experiences in urban and peri-urban areas, rural and remote rural areas, and even on an island in Lake Victoria. The findings, as we present here, highlight the difficult situation facing Uganda’s youth in every dimension of their lives, and offers a framework through which to understand and assist youth to realise their potential as they strive for adulthood.

Uganda is not alone in these challenges. The youth population in Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to grow more rapidly than the population as a whole over the next 20 years, making it the region most affected by a population imbalance (Bartlett 2010). This means that youth in Africa face one of the most difficult transitions to adulthood worldwide: alongside the lowest life expectancies in the world, weak infrastructure and poor economic development in the region also impedes on youth development (World Bank 2006). Today’s youth also experience a unique – and vulnerable – status as a ‘bridge generation’ between a past era of explosive youth population and a nascent era of more restrained growth (UN 2007).

For better or worse, given the size of their population cohorts, youth will shape and be shaped by social and economic transformations across Africa (De Boeck and Honwana 2005). While 85 percent of Uganda’s population currently live in rural areas, for example, youth populations are amongst the main drivers of migration and patterns of urbanisation. Likewise, today’s generation of youth also hold the keys to reducing Uganda’s high fertility rate, which contributes to Uganda’s high population growth rate and has severe repercussions on Uganda’s fight against poverty (APRM 2009).1 That Uganda’s youth bulge has the potential to bolster or undermine national social and economic objectives (IYF 2011) means that greater awareness of youth needs and their greater participation in national development is imperative. One key objective of 2011’s Youth Watch report, therefore, is to provide the depth of information necessary to enable Government and other stakeholders working with youth to design appropriate policies and programmes for youth, to ensure that they become a vast resource and opportunity for Uganda, rather than a problem.

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1 Uganda’s fertility rate is 6.9 births per woman, and its population growth rate is one of the highest in the world at three percent per annum (APRM 2009).
1.2 YOUTH AND THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD IN UGANDA

Regardless of achievements in promoting economic growth, improving education, and reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS across the country (APRM 2009), Uganda remains one of the world’s poorest countries. While the proportion of the population living in poverty declined between 2005/06 and 2009/10, the number of poor people in absolute terms remained the same and inequality worsened over this period (UBOS 2010). Of its population of around 30.7 million, nearly a quarter of Uganda’s population (24.5 percent) were living in poverty in 2009/10, with large regional variation ranging from 10.7 percent in Central Uganda to 46.2 percent in Northern Uganda (UBOS 2010). Uganda remains predominantly rural, with 85 percent of its population living in rural areas and depending largely on subsistence agriculture for their livelihoods. A high population growth rate of over three percent per annum – one of the highest in the world – continues to have negative repercussions on Uganda’s fight against poverty (APRM 2009). Youth (aged 18-30) comprise 21.3 percent of Uganda’s population (UBOS 2010), and a further 57 percent of the population is below the age of 18.

Youth is a transition period in which individuals confront transitions in learning, work, health, family, and citizenship, all of which require the ability of youth to draw upon a wide range of resources in order to reach positive and sustainable outcomes for themselves (World Bank 2006). Given the size of their cohort and their centrality to socioeconomic development and poverty reduction, investments made in youth will also impact on a large share of the population and provide the opportunity to reap dividends from a large and strong labour force (Knowles and Behrman 2005; UNFPA 2011).

As the following chapters discuss in detail, Ugandan youth face tremendous challenges throughout each of these transitions, and these challenges – as well as the resources with which they are equipped to confront them – differ by age group, gender, region, and urban/rural location. Many of these challenges result in youth facing huge barriers to employment. Given that economic growth has not been accompanied by adequate job creation, today’s youth in Uganda may be healthier and have greater access to education than previous generations, but large and disproportionate numbers are under- or unemployed, having repercussions on their ability to gain acceptance as adults and citizens (Curtain 2006; UN 2007; Porter et al 2010; Sommers 2010). Youth are also exposed to a variety of health concerns that leave them susceptible to reduced life expectancies, lower educational achievements and work productivity, weakened immune systems and, ultimately, the replication of these conditions in the next generation (UN 2007).

A strong youth-focused policy, therefore, is critical not only to short-term goals of improving the well-being of Ugandan youth, but also to the country’s long-term stability, growth and poverty reduction. So far, both Government and NGOs have failed to sufficiently target youth. The 2001 National Youth Policy highlights that despite their strategic importance, youth have been neither adequately assisted nor involved in the social and economic development of their country (MoGLSD 2001). Likewise, while other crucial documents, including the 2004/05-2007/08 Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) and the 2010/11-2014/15 National Development Plan (NDP) recognise youth as a vulnerable group, they do not outline any specific commitments to or policies for them (Republic of Uganda 2010).

Failure to incorporate youth as a specific target group in national policies and programmes or to secure youth participation in national development would be a missed opportunity to harness this huge potential in human capital, as well as having adverse economic, political, social, and cultural consequences (UN 2007). Meeting commitments made for youth and providing more effective forms of support to them as they negotiate the transition to adulthood will be critical to
reaching positive outcomes both for youth and Uganda’s development. The latter especially will be dependent on a greater understanding and recognition of the experiences and needs of this heterogeneous population cohort, and this report aims to facilitate this process by providing a deeper understanding of the social and economic lives of youth in Uganda.

1.3 “HARNESSING YOUTH POTENTIAL”: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

While the report was initially conceptualised around the five transitions to adulthood (World Bank 2006), it was soon evident that the tight inter-linkages between them rendered it nearly impossible to categorise or analyse these independently of one other. This was made more apparent by the fact that major cross-cutting themes – such as support, opportunities, and aspirations – were difficult to locate in any individual transition and by our increasing realisation that health is not a transition, per se, but a heightened vulnerability as youth negotiate the other transitions to adulthood. After an initial analysis of the qualitative research, therefore, we designed a conceptual framework to illustrate the conditions youth face as they make the transition to adulthood in Uganda (Figure 1). Youth do not, after all, experience these transitions independently of each other, with similar underlying factors providing constraints or opportunities within each transition, depending both on a youth’s stock of assets and their access to assets.

Figure 1. Harnessing Youth Potential Framework

Source: authors’ own
Another motivation behind this framework is its ability to provide a dynamic framework for youth development that encompasses and illustrates pathways to favourable outcomes as well as to negative ones. This views negative behaviours – such as risky sexual behaviours, crime, and drug and alcohol abuse – as outcomes of a much broader set of constraints and challenges facing youth in all aspects of their lives. This is in contrast to most discussions surrounding youth that focus primarily on negative outcomes rather than the underlying drivers of these behaviours (Scales 1999; Scales et al 2000; Reininger et al 2003; MacDonald and Valdivieso 2009). Data collection to learn what is wrong with young people provides a misleading and inadequate knowledge base on youth, as it fails to investigate the factors in young people’s lives that lead to these behaviours (Scales 1999, MacDonald and Valdivieso 2009; Mabala 2011).

The ‘Harnessing Youth Potential’ framework is comprised of three main components, within each of which the analysis draws attention to the major challenges youth face in that sphere and the support they need to lead to positive outcomes. These are:

Youth assets and access to assets

As most development frameworks and theories recognise, ‘development’ or poverty reduction is dependent on one’s ability to draw upon a range of human, physical, natural, financial and social assets (or capitals) in order to secure livelihoods and protect against risks and shocks. The accumulation of assets, or increases in returns to assets are commonly associated with positive developmental outcomes. Chapters 2 and 3, therefore, investigate the assets that youth are equipped with, and how some of the key institutions in their social and economic development influence their access to assets. These find that youth are limited in their asset portfolios, and their access to assets is influenced and greatly constrained by factors outside their control, including economic, social, cultural and political barriers within their households, communities, and the economy.

Youth opportunities and aspirations

As Chapter 4 outlines, it is these two factors – a youth’s assets and the magnitude of the constraints they face to accumulating more assets – that shape the perceived opportunities and aspirations of youth. While aspirations are central to anybody’s ability to think positively and aim high for the future, hopes and aspirations are, in large part, based upon whether or not youth can envision any opportunity for themselves to increase the limited options they have available to them. Whether or not youth can envision the support necessary to meet their hopes and goals is also central to the decisions they make.

Positive and negative outcomes of youth development

The research also investigates what happens when youth can or cannot meet these aspirations (or cannot even aspire). The framework outlines two paths or ‘outcomes’ for youth development, “Youth Problem” and “Youth Promise”. Where youth can neither aspire nor envision future support to help them reach their goals, they have a greater likelihood of being drawn down the path to “Youth Problem”. There are two negative feedback loops from this outcome, with these behaviours reinforcing and exacerbating society’s negative stereotypes of youth, and acting as an additional constraint to their ability to gain greater access to assets and opportunities for participation. In addition, these behaviours, over time, can change the social norms of youth, and where they lead to poor health outcomes or other constraints to development, also reinforce low or non-existent aspirations.

In contrast, where youth receive or can envision the support they need to meet their future goals and aspirations they can move along the path to “Youth Promise”, allowing them to negotiate the
transition to adulthood as healthy, empowered and active participants in Uganda’s development. The report concludes by identifying some key lessons and findings that will be critical in helping a greater number of youth onto the path to “Youth Promise”. Chapter 6 utilises several case studies to illustrate forms of support that have enabled young people to reach their goals in work and citizenship, and these are brought together with the wider research findings to draw attention to effective forms of assistance for harnessing youth potential in Uganda.

1.4 RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

In March 2011, BRAC held a workshop with key stakeholders, both to gather the information needs of those working with and for youth and to draw upon their expertise and experience in shaping our research design and methods. Representatives from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the Ministry of Finance, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and NGOs working with and for youth attended the workshop to discuss our research objectives and methods, as well as key questions of, “What do we know about youth in Uganda?”, “What do we think we know about youth?”, and “What do we need to know more about youth?” (Appendix 5 outlines the findings from this consultation). These discussions fed into the methodological design of this report, which is the result of intensive mixed methods research conducted between January and August 2011.

A combination of both quantitative and qualitative research – including a nationally-representative survey and nearly 75 focus groups – was crucial to meeting the two goals of the report, namely to provide a comprehensive overview and analysis of the experiences of youth in the transition to adulthood in Uganda, and to present findings through reflections on youth perspectives and voices.

Research Methods

Aiming to provide an accurate snapshot of the economic and social lives of Ugandan youth, BRAC, assisted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and the national sampling frame, conducted a nationally-representative survey to reveal the experiences, opinions, and attitudes of Ugandan youth. A Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling procedure was followed stratified by Uganda’s five geographic regions namely Kampala, Central (excluding Kampala), Eastern, Northern and Western regions. A census of youth (15-30) was conducted in all sampled enumeration areas (EAs), followed by the survey of 20 randomly selected respondents in each. Covering 5,361 young men and women across 268 enumeration areas, the survey is representative of youth by region, age, rural-urban location and educational level. The survey reached all four corners of the country, both in urban centres and remote rural areas.

The survey took place between March and July 2011 through a team of 60 young researchers recruited from each region. Enumerators all received one week of intensive training, in which they spent time learning and understanding all questions and piloting the questionnaire. The questionnaire was broad in scope, collecting information on the experiences and opinions of youth regarding their household, education and training, employment experience and expectations, financial behaviour, health, marriage and family, civic participation, and aspirations, amongst others.

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3 The survey covered youth aged 15 to 30 in order to capture ‘youth’ as defined both by Uganda (18-30) and the United Nations (15-24).
Twenty participants (10 young men and 10 young women) were randomly selected from a complete census of all youth conducted in each EA that was carried out by teams of three researchers (two enumerators and one supervisor). Where respondents declined an interview, enumerators were instructed to select the next youth on the census listing, but teams received few negative responses. After hearing our objectives – that we wanted to help Government and organisations working for youth to better understand their needs – few declined their interview. Young people in remote rural areas were particularly enthusiastic to participate, expressing their gratitude that we had travelled so far to hear their opinions. In contrast, youth from wealthy households were less enthusiastic and in some cases declined their interviews, justifying their decision by the fact that their parents support them and they do not, therefore, need programmes designed for them. Five regional supervisors were appointed to support the fieldwork and ensure the accuracy and quality of the data. Interviews were sent back to our in-house Data Management Centre, where they were coded, entered and cleaned before being analysed. Table 1 provides our sample profile.

While nationally-representative surveys of this sort yield powerful data, as with all research methodologies, they have certain limitations. For Youth Watch’s purposes, these limitations include the depth and contextualisation of findings and their limited ability to portray youth voices and perspectives. In addition, certain topics are more difficult to capture in surveys, such as hopes and aspirations, and what it means to be an adult. To complement the survey a range of qualitative research methods were used, namely focus group discussions and case studies. Four focus groups were designed to capture broader opinions of youth on four different themes; the five key transitions; perceptions of youth; employment; and youth participation. In total, 74 focus groups were conducted, comprising one focus group on each of the four themes with both young men

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4 Separate censuses were done for young men and young women in each enumeration area.
and young women in one rural and one urban area in each of the five survey regions (Appendix 1). The research team also conducted several in-depth case studies with a number of organisations – namely Educate!, Y.E.A.H, Straight Talk Foundation and BRAC – presented in Chapters 5 and 6, exploring effective forms of support for improving youth outcomes in Uganda.

Table 1.
Profile of Youth Watch Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kampala</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male (%)</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age groups (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
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<td>22-25</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>26-30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Uganda (18-30 years)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth UN (15-24 years)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently enrolled</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can write in at least one language</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 - P7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>S1 - S4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5 - S6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above S6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received skill training (%)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household head (%)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently married (%)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have children (%)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>LFP rate (%)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un(der)employment rate (%)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of primary earning activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence farming</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial farming</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage employment</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-farm business</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have cash income (%)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations (n)</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>1,182</td>
<td>1,238</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>1,256</td>
<td>5,361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

In Kampala, of course, there are no rural areas, and here 10 focus groups were conducted: four with young men, four with young women, and an additional two with university students.
Another important component of the Youth Watch project was that of youth engagement with the research findings. We wanted the opportunity to take some of the report’s key findings to youth themselves, to receive their feedback on them. As highlighted in boxes throughout the report, we utilised two avenues for this, both of which gave enlightening depth and understanding to key findings. Firstly, we recruited M.S.C, a group of young women from BRAC’s Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents (ELA) programme that have been trained and equipped in participatory monitoring and evaluation methods. Taking our key findings to their youth peers in Mukono (East Uganda), they made a video documentary of their perceptions on these. On a broader scale, we also disseminated some of our findings through U-report, a Unicef-managed programme allowing youth to comment upon burning issues in their communities and the country as a whole. U-report had over 81,600 registered users when our findings were disseminated and our agriculture question had the most popular response rate to-date.

The following chapters provide an in-depth analysis of the three components of the Harnessing Youth Potential Framework. Chapter 2 now explores the asset portfolios that youth have to draw upon in their transition to adulthood, before Chapter 3 identifies the social, cultural, political, and economic factors that limit their access to greater assets. Chapter 4 then discusses the perceived opportunities and aspirations of youth in Uganda, before Chapters 5 and 6 illustrate, in turn, the two possible ‘outcomes’ for youth development. Chapter 5 explores the dimensions of ‘Youth Problem’, highlighting the negative outcomes – particularly in sexual and reproductive health – that arise from limited assets, opportunities and aspirations. Chapter 6 then draws upon in-depth success stories in work and citizenship as well as the evidence presented in the previous chapters to conclude with recommendations for how policy and programmes can more effectively harness youth potential in Uganda.
Chapter 2

YOUTH AND ASSETS

Youth are in a state of transition on the path to adulthood, moving from being dependents in their parents’ or guardian’s household to becoming financially independent and responsible for their own living costs and livelihoods. Having adequate resources and capabilities to draw upon shapes the opportunities youth have available to them in this quest. As this chapter discusses, however, Ugandan youth have limited human, financial, physical, natural, and social assets to draw upon as they embark on the transition to adulthood.

Box 1. Key findings for Chapter 2

- The majority of Ugandan youth drop out of school during primary school years, with young women and rural youth facing significant disadvantages. Only 13 percent get secondary education.
- There are no financial return to primary and secondary education.
- Ugandan youth place a great emphasis on vocational training. Around one in three youth have received vocational training across Uganda. Young women are less likely to have received skills training, as well as less likely to use their skills for income-generation. Urban youth face greater barriers to skills utilisation.
- Youth highlight the importance of health as a prerequisite to finding work. Malaria and early pregnancy are perceived as the biggest risks for young women, while for young men, the major risks are alcohol abuse, drugs, and HIV/AIDS.
- Less than one in ten youth have accessed a loan. While savings behaviour is relatively well-established among youth, most save occasionally and at home given their irregular incomes and limited access to formal finance.
- Youth are asset-poor in the household in both physical and natural assets. Young women are particularly disadvantaged in productive assets, especially in land ownership.
- While youth recognise their potential contributions to community decision-making and development, they feel there are few opportunities for them to participate in these spheres. Barriers to citizenship mean they have limited social networks to draw upon for support and assistance. Peers provide the main form of assistance of for youth, but their similar resource constraints limit the support they access from friends.

2.1 HUMAN CAPITAL

Educational qualifications, skills, and health of young people – together comprising an individual’s stock of human capital6 – are central to their ability to engage in productive activities. Increasing

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6 Personal characteristics such as self-esteem and motivation also contribute to an individual’s human capital, providing the building blocks to future aspirations and success (Rooks et al 2009). Chapter 4 investigates this in greater detail.
urbanisation and greater levels of non-farm employment in developing countries like Uganda mean that investments in human capital are the most important transfer the poor can make across generations (Quisumbing 2007).

**Learning**

*“The few who have achieved it, do enjoy life”*

Youth acknowledge different forms of learning – at school, in the household, or amongst peers. Its role in their lives is uniform, however, expanding opportunities and providing the foundations for future success. The word cloud below (Figure 3) provides a visual representation of youth perceptions of ‘learning’, illustrating the strong emphasis they place on knowledge. Different sources of knowledge and learning that young people draw upon in their accumulation of human capital are also evident. While most discussions focused on formal education, the home was also emphasised as a critical forum for informal learning, given its role in teaching youth social competencies such as appropriate behaviour.

![Youth Perceptions of Learning](image)

N.B: Focus groups were shown a flashcard with “learning” written on it (in their local language) and asked to say the first words they thought. This word cloud shows both the variety and frequency of responses: the bigger the size of the word, the greater the number of responses that word received.

Barriers to learning are the first obstacle youth encounter in the transition to adulthood. While increases in the education of youth have been one of the most significant improvements in Sub-Saharan Africa for this generation of youth (Blum 2007), barriers to school completion remain. Only six percent of youth in Uganda have never received formal schooling, but there are significant regional differences in this indicator, ranging from two percent in Kampala and Eastern Uganda to 17 percent in Northern Uganda (Table 2). Most early school drop outs occur at primary level, with only 47 percent of youth progressing to secondary schooling. Higher secondary schooling (S5-S6) is achieved by 13 percent, and only six percent continue to higher education.
The introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 significantly improved access to primary schooling across Uganda. The transition to secondary schooling, however, is much harder to attain, with Universal Secondary Education not covering all government schools (IYF 2011). School fees and other associated costs of education were still named by youth at all levels of education as the major barrier to formal learning and contribute largely to the justification for nearly one-third of focus groups naming ‘learning’ as the most difficult of the five key transitions.

Kampala, Central, and Western Uganda display the strongest literacy rates, while Eastern and Northern Uganda display literacy rates below the national average. Notable here is the relatively high level of literacy in North Uganda, even though this region displays the highest number of youth who have never been enrolled in school and the fewest youth who have reached secondary school. Literacy rates are higher among younger youth, indicating a rise in literacy rate in the last decade. Almost 85 percent of youth between the ages of 15 and 17 years can read, while the figure falls to 77 percent for those aged between 26 and 30 years.

Table 2.
Educational Attainment of Youth in Uganda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Kampala</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1-P7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1-S4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5-S6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above S6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of education (mean)</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy*</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011,
*Literacy is defined as ‘can write in at least one language

Enrolment rates show that over 35 percent of youth aged 18-21 attend formal education until the age of 21, but the survey reveals a gender gap in educational attainment. While young women experience a slight initial advantage in schooling, their enrolment rates drop drastically at 17 and 18, when enrolment rates for young men become higher (Figure 4). Young women across both rural and urban areas are at a gender disadvantage in educational attainment, receiving 0.7 fewer years of education than young men in both locations.

There are also enormous differences in educational achievement by socio-economic background and rural-urban location. On average, youth from the poorest quintile receive three years less education than those from the richest quintile. Receiving financial support from the family – a characteristic associated with better-off households – is also a key determinant of educational attainment, with those receiving financial support achieving 1.3 more years of education than those that do not. Rural youth, on average, receive 0.4 years less education than those living in urban areas. Youth in Northern Uganda are worst-off in all measures of education. As well as displaying much lower enrolment rates, where enrolled, youth here receive only six years of schooling, in contrast to the 9.4 years of schooling attained by youth in Kampala.

This was followed by the introduction of Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007. See IYF (2011) for a comprehensive overview and discussion of UPE and USE.
Where parents are unable to provide sufficient finances for school completion, youth must themselves find the remaining fees. As young men in Kampala explained, “Parents provide us with education up to some level, but the remaining task is left to us”. They face significant financial barriers to this, however. As Chapter 3 discusses in greater detail, youth are no longer considered dependents after dropping out of school, and financial support from the household is often withdrawn, particularly for young men. The pressures they face in meeting their living costs, especially given their difficulties finding work, means that youth have limited ability to raise school fees. As one young woman in rural eastern Uganda explained, “After I couldn’t raise money to continue my education, it marked the end of my educational career.”

Asking respondents the three most important things that young people can learn, the survey reveals that vocational training is by far the most valued form of learning across the whole of Uganda, followed by formal schooling (Table 3). In Kampala, where youth have relatively greater access to education, youth prioritise the skills they do not receive, placing less importance on formal education and more on softer skills such as life skills, financial literacy, and negotiation skills.

Table 3.
Most important things that young people can learn (% Youth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kampala</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal schooling</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial literacy</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation skills</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
Schooling is recognised primarily for its role in accessing employment (Table 4). Without education, focus groups emphasised, youth struggle to find employment and become financially independent. As young women in rural central Uganda illustrated, “Even people who clean toilets must have gone to school”. The survey reveals that where youth have greater access to employment, the importance of education progresses from the ability to get a job to the ability to get a better (i.e. higher paid) job. A much greater proportion of youth in Central Uganda, which displays the lowest youth under- and unemployment rates (Chapter 3), prioritise education for its role in increasing incomes.

55 percent of young women think that securing employment is the most important reason for education. They are three percentage points less likely than young men to name securing employment as the most important reason for education, perhaps due to the fact that they do not face the same pressures as young men do in securing employment and becoming financially independent (Chapter 3).

Table 4. Why is education important to youth?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>To get a job</th>
<th>To earn more</th>
<th>To make friends</th>
<th>To earn respect</th>
<th>To get useful knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Focus groups emphasised the greater quality of education in private schools, but also highlighted that they were prohibitively expensive for most youth. Just under a quarter of youth (23 percent) attended a private educational institute. Our survey reveals, however, no significant difference in financial returns for those attending private school.

Education also has implications for youth in the transition to citizenship given the higher status and respect it accords to them, particularly at secondary and higher levels. Even the process of schooling – in which parents pay school fees – makes young people feel valued and respected. Young women in rural northern Uganda, for example, saw the primary benefit of education in terms of prestige, as none had any intention of using their education for employment. One young woman had a teaching diploma, but had never worked as a teacher since there were few schools in her area.

We measured the financial returns to education by looking at the income of youth over the age of 21 and engaged in the labour market. The analysis reveals that there are positive returns to education only when youth complete some level of higher education (a diploma or university degree). Although finding it easier to access employment opportunities than those with no education (Box 2), this means that youth completing higher secondary education (S5-S6) earn the same amount of income as those with no education at all. Youth completing higher education,

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8 M.S.C a youth-based team of videographers trained in participatory monitoring and evaluation carried out a consultation exercise with youth in Mukono (Central Uganda) based on Youth Watch’s findings. In this instance, youth were told the finding, ‘Youth with A-level do not earn higher income than those with no education. One has to have higher education to earn more’ and asked their opinions on this.
however, earned 400,000 UgSh more than uneducated youth in the 12 months prior to the survey, although this difference is primarily driven by the positive returns to higher education for young men (A2.2). This finding reveals some interesting consistency and inconsistency when compared with salary expectations of youth (Figure 5). In contrast to reality, youth perceive that salaries increase with all levels of education. They are, however, aware that the role of education is more important in securing employment, as opposed to increasing income.

**Box 2.**

**Responses from youth during video youth engagement with Youth Watch findings**

“An A-level student gets wider chances of getting something to do compared to someone who’s never been to school”

“A youth who has completed Senior 6 has more chances and opportunities. He or she can go somewhere they want someone who knows English”

Youth recognize that those who drop out of school early have little education to draw upon in their search for employment. As young women in urban eastern Uganda explained, “Most youth end up not educated or only receiving a little bit of education, but neither is useful in getting jobs”. There is, therefore, a discrepancy between the value youth place on education and their recognition of its returns in practical terms. While, of course, any education is viewed as better than none by youth, overwhelmingly, they also recognise that given their financial constraints it is unlikely they will get enough education to provide the foundations for employment. The ability to implement one’s skills and knowledge in employment is more important than learning and qualifications acquired. As young men in rural central Uganda emphasised, “A primary seven dropout with a job is in a far better position than a university graduate with no job”. Learning, therefore, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for accessing employment and negotiating the transition to adulthood: it is what you do after learning that matters equally.

**Figure 5.**

**Salary expectations of a ‘typical’ 25 year old youth, by gender**

(Ugandan shillings, per month)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
The low returns to formal education and high costs make schooling unattractive to many youth. “It is better to work than to waste many years in school without being sure there are available jobs”, pointed out a young man in western Uganda. The majority of youth argued that where school fees are available, young people will not drop out of school. As young men in urban central Uganda argued, “Youth cannot opt to work if they have the opportunity to stay in school”. Focus groups acknowledged other motivations for school dropout, including peer pressure and entertainment, alcohol and drug abuse, and for young women, early pregnancy.

Of those who have dropped out of school for a lack of fees, some spoke of their desire to save enough fees to return to school. More than one in three youth (36 percent) not currently enrolled in school expressed their hopes of returning to school (Figure 6). The current employment status of young people has a major influence on these aspirations. Over 60 percent of youth in salaried employment report their desire to return to school, likely due to the educational requirements for career advancement in this sector. Youth with no education also report greater aspirations to go to school in the future. Engagement in other forms of employment, however, reduces the desire of youth to return to schooling.

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Youth in Northern Uganda not only have the lowest educational achievements, but also the lowest aspirations for returning to school, emphasising that a lack of educational and employment opportunities reduces aspirations for youth (Appendix A2.3). As young men in rural northern Uganda highlighted, “After finishing school, most of us stay at home and end up working on farms”. Controlling for rural-urban location and wealth quintile do not show any significant correlation with
educational aspirations, and young men and young women are equally likely to report a desire to further their education.

Youth in the youngest age category (15-17 years) are most likely to express their desire to return to education, and these aspirations are highest among students who have completed A-levels: such a difference is understandable given the major jump in expected returns to education after higher education. Having a child reduces expectations of returning to education, particularly for young women. Between two otherwise similar young women, one who has a child is 8.1 percentage points less likely to report hopes to return to education. For men, this difference drops to 2.3 percent. These findings highlight the need for well-targeted interventions for education and employment generation for different age groups and educational backgrounds. That older youth and those with children are less willing or able to further their education means that policy and programmes must address their need for skills development through alternative routes. Vocational training was commonly discussed as the most appropriate assistance in learning among these groups, as the following section discusses.

**Vocational Training and Skills Development**

"After we receive this training, we can meet our hopes of being vibrant businessmen"

Given the financial barriers to school completion, assistance with schooling costs via bursaries and scholarships was seen as the best form of assistance for recent dropouts and youth struggling to stay in school. Youth highlighted, however, that returning to school is not the best option for all youth, especially those who are older, married or supporting dependents. Such youth, focus groups emphasised, have to prioritise employment over education and need other forms of support to help them meet their goals. They saw vocational training as ideal for improving their employment outcomes.

Uganda’s revised National Youth Policy (2011-2016) outlines that vocational training will be central to improving employment opportunities for youth (MoGLDSD 2011), and the national average of 7.7 years of schooling offers a strong potential platform for additional training. Focus groups discussed the two broad advantages of vocational training, equipping youth with new and productive skills and the ability to create their own jobs. They emphasise that those with limited schooling must be job creators, not seekers. As young men in urban eastern Uganda explained, “There are some youth who have the goal to finish their studies and get a high-paying job. We don’t have these opportunities. For us, we need vocational training. After we receive this training, we can meet our hopes of being vibrant businessmen”. That youth currently engaged in non-farm business display the highest rates of skills utilisation is another illustration of the link between vocational training and self-employment. Motivations for self-employment are also grounded in concern with their peers, being viewed as a means through which youth can employ other youth in their communities.

Nearly one in every three youth in Uganda have received some form of vocational training, but this national average masks large regional variations both in training received and the utilisation of skills (Figure 7). Over half of all youth in Kampala and Western Uganda have received skills training. Youth in Western Uganda are also more likely to be able to use their skills productively after training, which is, by no means guaranteed. Of those youth receiving skills training, 27 percent are unable to use their skills for income-generation, ranging from 15 percent in Northern Uganda to 47 percent in Kampala.

Rural youth experience relative advantages in skills training and utilisation: with 30 percent having received training, rural youth are 9 percentage points more likely to have received skills training than the 41 percent of urban youth that have. This rural advantage is primarily because agriculture
is the most frequently received form of training and displays the highest rates of utilisation (Figure 8). Youth in Kampala may be significantly more likely to receive training, but are much less likely to be earning an income through their skills: nearly half of all youth in Kampala are not using their skills productively. For urban areas more generally, 41 percent of trained youth are not using their skills for income-generation, in comparison with 22 percent of rural youth. Alongside these rural advantages in skills training and utilisation, however, focus groups emphasised greater problems with distance to training facilities.

Agricultural training dominates the training received by youth, reaching over one-third of all youth trained (Figure 8). While agricultural training has the highest rate of skills utilisation, in discussions on different forms of training, this was rarely discussed as a preferred form of training. Only youth in Northern Uganda prioritise agricultural-based training in modern technologies and livestock-rearing. In other regions, focus groups revealed preferences for non-agricultural training, including carpentry, building, mechanics, masonry, welding, driving, business skills and tailoring. There is, therefore, an unmet demand for non-agricultural skills development in these areas. These courses are of longer duration than agricultural-based trainings – which comprise 37 days training (92 for livestock rearing) in comparison with 149 days of training for all types of training – and therefore more expensive. In addition, where skills can be utilised, given the predominance of subsistence agriculture among Ugandan farmers (youth included), other forms of training are also likely to have a higher financial returns.

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Figure 7.
Skills training and utilisation by region

Agricultural training dominates the training received by youth, reaching over one-third of all youth trained (Figure 8). While agricultural training has the highest rate of skills utilisation, in discussions on different forms of training, this was rarely discussed as a preferred form of training. Only youth in Northern Uganda prioritise agricultural-based training in modern technologies and livestock-rearing. In other regions, focus groups revealed preferences for non-agricultural training, including carpentry, building, mechanics, masonry, welding, driving, business skills and tailoring. There is, therefore, an unmet demand for non-agricultural skills development in these areas. These courses are of longer duration than agricultural-based trainings – which comprise 37 days training (92 for livestock rearing) in comparison with 149 days of training for all types of training – and therefore more expensive. In addition, where skills can be utilised, given the predominance of subsistence agriculture among Ugandan farmers (youth included), other forms of training are also likely to have a higher financial returns.

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9 This accounts for the high rates of skills utilisation in North Uganda, where training is concentrated in agriculture.
Young women are relatively disadvantaged in comparison with young men in accessing training and skills utilisation. While 37 percent of young men have received some form of vocational training across Uganda, only 29 percent of women have completed a training course. A clear gender divide is also evident in training courses undertaken, with young women, in addition to agriculture, most likely to receive training in tailoring, hairdressing, and weaving, all of which display amongst the lowest levels of skills utilisation (Figure 9).
While the likelihood of receiving vocational training increases with education, educated youth are no more likely to be using their skills for income-generation. The link between educational attainment and vocational training highlights the importance of financial capital: those completing education are more likely to be able to afford vocational training. Those completing lower and secondary schooling and higher education are, on average, 7, 9 and 26 percentage points more likely to have received vocational training respectively. Sixty percent of youth who have completed higher education have also completed some form of vocational training. That there are few significant differences in skills utilisation by education and wealth level is also indicative of the broader institutional constraints that prevent all youth from using their skills productively (Chapter 3), a deeper understanding of which will help to design more comprehensive systems of vocational training.

These findings highlight that vocational training is not, on its own, a ‘silver bullet’ to solve the youth unemployment problem in Uganda. Focus must shift away from a well-acknowledged emphasis of the importance of vocational training towards an understanding of how to package vocational training courses and complement them with post-training and other forms of support so that transferred skills are easier to utilise (Box 311). This requires not only aligning courses with labour market demand (Katz 2008; Soto Bermant 2008), but also focusing on the quality of training. As focus groups emphasised, vocational training is a productive investment only if it is for a long enough period to transfer the skills effectively and if it is relevant to available job opportunities. Over one in three urban youth (36 percent) and one in four rural youth that are unable to use their skills for income-generation said this was because the course was not long enough to equip them with enough skills.

Another important factor to address is the provision of different forms of post-training support. Over half of all youth not utilising their skills reports a lack of capital as their primary constraint. Access to finance and stronger focus on complementary forms of skills development may also improve outcomes. Financial literacy, customer relations, and other skills gained through work experience are also important for successful entrepreneurs.

Box 3
Responses from youth during video youth engagement with Youth Watch findings.

“Youth go for vocational training, but no one gives them a hand to know what to do with their skills”

“Some of the youth do not have enough theory, so they forget when they go a long time without using their skills and most lack the capital to invest in what they have studied. So they don’t have anywhere to use their skills”

Other sources of gaining skills is through apprenticeship and peer learning. Youth often teach each other simple tasks such as chapatti making, doing manicures and pedicures. Focus group discussions revealed that apprenticeships often do not provide skills, as employers are cautious

10 That youth in the top two wealth quartiles are nine and 12 percentage points more likely to have received vocational training confirms this linkage.

11 M.S.C a youth-based team of videographers trained in participatory monitoring and evaluation carried out a consultation exercise with youth in Mukono (Central Uganda) based on Youth Watch’s findings. In this instance, youth were told the finding, ‘Some youth who have received vocational training are unable to use their skills’ and asked their opinions on this.
of sharing information and skills. These forms of training also do not come with certificates, which restricts employment opportunities after training. 78 percent of vocational training graduates holding a certificate report using their skills for income-generation, in comparison with 71 percent of graduates not holding a certificate. In urban areas where skills-related under- and unemployment is much higher, the impact of certification is stronger. Linking informal training systems with formal institutions for testing and certification may improve skills utilisation for youth after training (Nubler et al 2009).

Health

"Without being healthy, one cannot attain anything in life"

Health is a major priority among Ugandan youth as it pertains to their ability to survive, work and succeed. Youth distinguish between two health ‘vulnerabilities’. Their first definition of ‘health’ views it as an ‘asset’. Youth explain the importance of good health, being free from illness and disease, and the challenges they face in this respect given their difficult living environments and limited access to medical services. Several groups emphasised that health is important not only as an investment for the future, but is as critical today as it is tomorrow: as young men in rural central Uganda highlight, “Health is vital to one’s current and future status of life”. In discussing their major health fears, however, youth moved away from these definitions of health to highlight the health risks emerging out of risky sexual behaviour, including sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), HIV/AIDS and early pregnancy. While Chapter 5 discusses these risks in greater detail, this section explores the role of health as an asset and perceptions of health among young Ugandans. During discussions on health, youth prioritised the prevention of illness and diseases through practices such as keeping living environments clean, eating well, boiling drinking water and being aware about personal hygiene, amongst others. Infrastructure and assets were also discussed for their preventive role, including toilets, mosquito nets and utensil mesh (for keeping cooking utensils clean). As Figure 10 illustrates, the concept of ‘health’ is clearly defined, and there are few differences across regions or gender. Sexually-transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS were rarely included in these definitions of health, which instead equated diseases with illnesses such as diarrhoea, malaria, ebola and cholera. Malaria was named as the biggest health risk for young women in Uganda, and the fourth biggest health risk for young men.

A greater emphasis was placed on sanitation and infrastructure in urban areas, particularly in Kampala where focus groups were conducted in four informal settlements. Participants here emphasised that poor living environments, flood-prone land and disease-carrying insects all contribute to major health concerns. While nearly 40 percent of Ugandan youth report living in polluted environments, there is stark urban and rural differences in this indicator. 68 percent of urban youth report polluted living environments, compared to 32 percent in rural areas.

Focus groups emphasised that existing health provisions – in the form of free drugs and mosquito nets, government health care services, immunisation, and health education campaigns – are not sufficient and expressed their major concerns over their access to health services, the poor state of hospitals, and a lack of drug availability. “Many people die prematurely because of a lack of resources”, explained young men in western urban Uganda, “The government needs to provide

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12 One regional difference was in northern Uganda. Young women there revealed their bad memories of living in refugee camps. They highlighted the poor conditions they had lived in, where women gave birth without medical attention, where there were insufficient drugs, poor shelter, where young boys and girls were raped, and ultimately, where many lost their lives.

13 31 percent of youth named malaria as the biggest health risk to young women, in contrast with only 13 percent for young men. The three major health risks to young men are alcohol, HIV/AIDS and drugs, as Chapter 5 explores in more detail.
health services to help people live to see their dreams come true”. 49 percent of youth expressed major concerns over the poor state of hospitals, a lack of drug availability, and distance to health facilities.

Figure 10.
Youth Perceptions of Health

Ugandan youth report feeling in relatively good health, with 44 percent reporting having visited a health facility for sickness in the past six months. Kampala youth are significantly less likely to have visited a health facility for sickness during this period than those in Central, Eastern, Northern, and Western Uganda (Figure 11). A self-reported health index was constructed based on responses to a question asking respondents to describe their health on a scale of 1 (‘very good’) to 5 (‘very poor’)14. Youth in western Uganda report the best health status (1.80), while youth in eastern Uganda report the worst (2.31) (Figure 12). As can be expected, the greater health a young person reports, the lower is their likelihood of having visited a health facility in the past six months. Young women report a significantly worse self-reported health status of 2.12, in contrast with the self-reported health status of young men of 2.06. Reflected in these gender differences is their belief that young women face greater health risks than young men (Chapter 5).

14 A score of ‘1’ represents all youth reporting that they are in ‘very good’ health, and a score of ‘5’ represents all youth reporting their health as ‘very poor’. The lower the score, the better the self-reported health status.
The survey also asked whether young people in general live ‘healthy’ lives. Although with considerable regional variation, nearly 60 percent of youth think that youth live healthy lives (Figure 13). Youth living in Central and Western Uganda are most likely to report their peers living healthily, reaching up to three-quarters of youth in Central Uganda.
Figure 13.
Health indicators by Region

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

2.2 FINANCIAL CAPITAL

“Even the jobs we have are not enough to be considered important, because they are seasonal and don’t give us stable incomes”

Employment is central to both the worries and concerns and the hopes and goals of Ugandan youth, with the concept of ‘work’ for youth being closely tied to its role in providing income and financial independence (Figure 14).

Ugandan youth face multiple barriers to securing regular employment, given limited job opportunities, limited skills and qualifications, and limited financial assets, whether for purchasing assets, providing start-up capital or a ‘bribe’ to secure a job, or investing in skills development. While nearly 60 percent of youth report a cash income, this masks both regional variations and the fact that much fewer youth have regular cash incomes (Figure 15). Regional variation in the prevalence of cash incomes is primarily due to the higher prevalence of youth engagement with subsistence farming. Kampala is the exception to this, with low cash incomes here a result of high unemployment and higher enrolment in education.
N.B: Focus groups were shown a flashcard with ‘work’ written on it (in their local language) and asked to say the first word they thought of. This word cloud shows both the variety and frequency of responses: the bigger the size of the word, the greater the number of responses.

In comparison with 53 percent of youth in urban areas, 60 percent of rural youth report cash incomes. Rural youth are also three percent less likely to be under- or unemployed and three and four percentage points more likely to have been engaged in an income-generating activity ever
and in the past week, respectively. 51 percent of women report a cash income in comparison with 67 percent of young men. Young women are seven percentage points less likely to have been engaged in any income-generating activity in the past week, as well as 20 percentage points less likely to be un(der)employed than young men.

The regularity of income is important for understanding the security of youth in meeting their basic needs. Only 12 percent of Ugandan youth receive stable monthly incomes, with the majority instead receiving daily or weekly incomes (Table 5). While focus groups recognise that work *should* provide youth with financial independence, they also emphasise that rarely can they access jobs that provide them with sufficient income to allow this. An inability to become financially independent has implications both on how youth are viewed and on their self-esteem. As young men in Kampala emphasised, “We are always seen in one place, staying with our parents, and putting on the same clothes. So in the end we are considered dependent even when we work, and people don’t respect us”.

Table 5.
Prevalence and frequency of cash incomes (% youth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Frequency of income*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*percentage of those receiving cash incomes
Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

The ability to save and accumulate assets is crucial as youth move towards adult responsibilities. The survey reveals relatively well-established savings behaviour among youth, with the exception of those in North Uganda. Forty-five percent of youth have savings, ranging from 29 percent in North Uganda to 60 percent in Central Uganda (Table 6). Savings are least prevalent amongst subsistence farmers and those in salaried employment. The majority of youth save primarily for meeting future expenses. Irregular incomes constrain their ability to save regularly, with 45 percent of youth saving only occasionally. Surprisingly, investment in business is only the fourth most important reason for saving, with prospects of small business motivating 17 percent of those youth saving. Amongst savers motivated primarily by other reasons, however, there is still a positive correlation with investment prospects, as youth who are saving are more likely to report small business as their preferred employment.

Sixty percent of youth are saving at home, and a further 16 percent are saving with family or friends, indicating a lack of access to financial services. As well as being the most regular savers, youth in Kampala have the greatest access to formal finance, with 35 percent of savers there saving in a bank account. Youth in Northern and Western Uganda are more likely to save through Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs) and Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs).
Table 6.  
Financial behaviour among youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kampala</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
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<td>Have savings (%)</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Amount of savings (mean)&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>172,305</td>
<td>245,225</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency of savings &lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>Daily</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> for those who save  
Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Figure 16.  
Summary of income, savings and loans among youth

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
The information on loans reconfirms the lack of access to financial services for the youth. Only nine percent of youth are in receipt of a loan, and even amongst older youth (26-30) the prevalence of loans is low at 17 percent. This is a major barrier to investment in small business and/or productive assets. Youth running small businesses are five percentage points more likely to have a loan: 14 percent of small business owners have a loan, in comparison with 9.4 percent of youth across the full sample.

Kampala youth are significantly more likely to have borrowed money as well as to save, and are also more likely to have borrowed from friends. Youth in Northern Uganda, although least likely to have taken a loan, are more likely to have borrowed from SACCOs. Young women are half as likely to have borrowed money as young men. Such limited access to finance across all groups highlights an important entry point for youth-focused programmes for employment generation.

2.3 PHYSICAL AND NATURAL ASSETS

"Even those who transport bananas to town have to hire the bicycles they use"

Access to different forms of physical and natural assets is important for youth both in terms of living standards and income-generation. Physical assets include housing, durable assets (such as televisions, radios, mobile phones, DVD players), and productive assets (such as tools and equipment, machinery, or motorcycles), while land, livestock and poultry constitute the main forms of natural assets. Irregular incomes and limited capacity to save provide a major barrier to asset accumulation among Ugandan youth, and they also face cultural barriers to greater asset ownership regarding their age and sex. Youth are asset-poor within the household, with the majority of productive and non-productive assets being owned by the household rather than by youth themselves (Figure 17). Land is a crucial part of a household’s asset portfolio in Uganda, and to the livelihoods of the majority of its population. A lack of land ownership, however, means that youth must be allocated land to cultivate by their parents or rent it themselves: while 81 percent of households own cultivable land, less than one in four youth (23 percent) do. High rental costs are a significant barrier to land rental, however. Focus groups highlighted that where youth have the capacity to save small amounts for rental funds, they are generally restricted to renting small plots of land for short periods, limiting their returns to labour. While the inheritance of land was seen by focus groups as the starting point of an adult’s life, many also emphasised that inheritance is no longer a guarantee of significant land ownership, highlighting that large family sizes have gradually reduced the size of inheritable land across generations.

Ownership of livestock and poultry for youth is relatively small, generally limited to smaller, less productive assets, namely chicken and goats rather than cattle. Other assets are also important to improving productivity of non-farm activities, but across the board, focus groups emphasised that their inability to invest in productive assets limits their profitability. As young men in rural western Uganda highlighted, “Even those who transport bananas to town have to hire the bicycles they use”.

One notable fact is the relatively good access to information that youth have. One in three youth own a mobile phone, and over 85 percent live in a household with a radio. This provides an important entry point for youth programmes. As Chapter 5 discusses, several youth-targeted radio programmes have had a positive impact on increasing awareness and contributing to behavioural change among youth through radio programmes, and UNICEF’s U-report initiative utilises mobile technologies to engage with youth on monitoring burning issues in their communities.15

15 See Chapters 2 and 4 for examples of how U-report helped the Youth Watch team to engage with youth on some of our research findings.
There are also great differences among youth in asset ownership by gender, with young men much more likely to own all categories of assets than young women (Figure 18). The gender disadvantage is especially evident in the highest value asset, land and the fact that they own llow-value assets such as chickens or tools. Gender differences in inheritance and land ownership create an additional barrier to asset ownership for young women (Tripp 2004; Deininger et al 2006), and focus groups spoke widely of the fact that young men are the recipients of the majority of inheritance and investment, especially in Northern Uganda. This was primarily seen as a result of social norms: bedo amamano, explained young women in rural northern Uganda, or, “That’s just the way things are”. Focus groups also elaborated, however, justifications for these norms of gender disadvantage. Traditionally, males who become household heads are financially responsible for the household. In addition, parents invest in sons because sons support them in old age while daughters leave the household after marriage. Several groups emphasised the impact of this inequality on the income-generating opportunities for young women, who also feel pressure from the household to become financially independent (Chapter 3). As young women in urban Western Uganda illustrate, “If a boy fails to get school fees he can be given some land and find something to do with that land. But girls don’t have the privilege of being given land. If girls drop out of school, their escape route is either marriage or prostitution”.

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
2.4 SOCIAL CAPITAL

“[Citizenship] is important because it means growing up as right young women that the community will depend on...”

The importance of citizenship is easily visible from discussions with youth. The relationship between youth as citizens and the community is mutually beneficial: the community is a crucial form of social support for youth, and where they are able to participate, youth make important contributions to community decision-making and development. While broad social connections are widely recognised as more effective for accessing support, finances, employment opportunities and acceptance as respected citizens, there are limited opportunities for Ugandan youth to expand their network of relationships outside the support of similarly resource-constrained fellow youth.16

As the following chapter discusses in greater detail, household support is key to the social and economic development of youth, as well as their psychosocial well-being. The foundations for community acceptance are built in the household, with difficult backgrounds impacting upon the ability of youth to learn appropriate behaviours and the rules of civic engagement. While youth emphasise their desire to participate in community activities and groups, their participation is limited due to time and resource constraints (as well as a lack of recognition by the community for youth, as Chapter 3 discusses).

Youth embark on the transition to citizenship from their home environment, which teaches them the skills and knowledge necessary for civic engagement, including the rules of communication,

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16 The previous sub-sections, for example, have demonstrated several examples of peer support being an important form of ‘bonding’ social capital, with youth providing emotional support, borrowing small amounts of money from each other, and transferring skills amongst themselves. That peers are equally resource-constrained, however, limits the level of support they can provide. This means that youth need broader social networks – known as ‘bridging’ social capital – to expand the sources and magnitude of support they can access.
behaviour and conduct that enable youth to be accepted within the community. As young women in urban central Uganda explained, “No one can succeed in life without a good background established from home”, using the metaphor, ‘like a cockerel and an egg’, to describe the centrality of family life to everything that a person does. Without this strong family foundation, these insights reveal, youth have difficulties accumulating social capital because they lack a platform for mutual understanding and the ability to interact with a broader spectrum of people in the community. A stable and supportive family background is also critical for reducing their likelihood of participating in risky behaviours and for providing youth with the ability to provide a similarly stable foundation to their own children when they become parents.

Many youth in Uganda grow up without this stable family background, with only two-thirds of youth being brought up by both parents until the age of 15 (Table 7). Four percent of youth lost both parents before the age of 15, and a further 18 percent have grown up without a father figure. While 87 percent of youth report their mother as still alive, only 74 percent report their father his still alive, a large discrepancy suggesting that a large number of men are not taking responsibility for unwanted pregnancies (Chapter 3). This is more apparent in urban areas, where youth are five percentage points more likely to have lost their father before the age of 15. Youth in Kampala are significantly more likely to have been brought up solely by their mother before the age of 15, as are youth in the poorest quintile. For young men, losing a father (or both parents) before the age of 15 means they have lacked a father figure to teach them their roles and responsibilities in the family. This results in significantly greater fears regarding child and family welfare. Young men losing their father before they turn 15 are eight percentage points more likely to worry about both their children’s and their family’s welfare.

Focus groups highlighted that while the difficulties facing orphans are the same in kind as those of their peers, they experience them to a greater magnitude: with nobody to provide for their needs, orphaned youth lack access to all forms of assets. Young men and young women who are orphaned before the age of 15, for example, lose 1.67 and 1.03 years of education respectively in comparison with non-orphaned youth. Foster care is a determinant of current poverty: foster care reduces with wealth quintile, and youth in the poorest quintile being six percent more likely than those in the second poorest quintile to have ever lived in foster care.17

Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household wellbeing indicators</th>
<th>Kampala</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both parents took care of till turned 15 (%)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orphaned before 15 (%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brought up by mother only before 15 (%)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever been in foster care (%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either parent have alcohol problem (%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Also notable are the high levels of parental alcohol abuse, particularly in northern and western Uganda, where 22 and 20 percent of youth report either of their parents as having an alcohol

---

17 27 percent of youth in the poorest wealth quintile have ever been in foster care, in contrast with 25, 21, 19, and 14 percent of the second, third, fourth and fifth (richest) quintiles.
problem. Illustrating the impact of learned behaviours in the households is the strong correlation between excessive alcohol consumption by parents and that of youth, especially for young men. Nearly 30 percent of young men (29 percent) whose parents have a drinking problem report drinking themselves, while only 14 percent of those whose parents do not have an alcohol problem report drinking. Likewise, 15 and 6 percent of young women whose parents do and do not have an alcohol problem report they consume alcohol respectively. Many youth across the country worry ‘a lot’ about taking drugs and alcohol, and these worries are significantly higher in urban than rural areas, as well as among young women. In urban areas, 41 and 50 percent of youth worry ‘a lot’ about taking alcohol and drugs respectively, in contrast with 32 and 38 percent in rural areas. This suggests greater exposure to these behaviours, as well as greater peer pressure to ‘fit in’. The latter is more likely to underlie the greater concerns of young women, of whom 39 and 44 percent worry about taking alcohol and drugs respectively, in comparison with 28 and 37 percent of young men. The survey reveals, however, that levels of alcohol consumption are lower than concerns about these behaviours, with only twelve percent of youth reporting that they drinking alcohol regularly or sometimes.

Community support is critical in the transition to citizenship, and youth display strong preferences for participating in and contributing to community decision-making and development. The priority they place on citizenship recognises that individuals are part of a greater whole from which they gain mutual support and development. As one young man in urban northern Uganda described citizenship, “It’s like a basket of mangoes. Each of us is a mango, and the basket represents Uganda”. Discussions of citizenship revealed the conditions necessary for youth to become citizens and to both gain and provide greater access to social resources within the community. As Figure 19 illustrates, these conditions include land ownership, registration with the Local Council 1 (LC1), living in your birthplace, displaying culturally-appropriate behaviour, and having identification documents. Among youth 18 and above, only 62 percent have a voting card, ranging from 51 percent in Kampala to 70 percent in Eastern Uganda.

Figure 19. Youth Perceptions of Citizenship

N.B. Focus groups were shown a flashcard with ‘citizenship’ written on it (in their local language) and asked to say the first word they thought of. This word cloud shows both the variety and frequency of responses: the bigger the size of the word, the greater the number of responses.
As well as through strong family foundations, youth can further accumulate social capital by participating more widely in social and political life: this represents the transition from being a citizen towards ‘active’ citizenship (World Bank 2006). Participation in community meetings and activities, religious ceremonies, events and ceremonies, voluntary work, and various groups or clubs can all assist in the accumulation of more diverse social capital, given the role this plays in securing respect and recognition from the community and society. As young women in rural western Uganda specified, “[Citizenship] is about doing things that not only help individuals, but society as a whole”. Focus groups discussed multiple forms of voluntary work, ranging from supporting the household, looking after the elderly, and doing various forms of community work, such as cleaning wells, digging roads, environmental conservation and communal farming. Some groups also discussed entertaining the community through music, dance and sports as a means through which youth can engage with the community and secure respect, approval and support.

Forty percent of youth participated in a voluntary activity in the past year (Table 8). Youth in Kampala are most active in voluntary activities, being between 14 and 18 percentage points more likely to have participated in voluntary activities than their peers in Uganda’s other four regions. Kampala aside, however, rural youth are more active, being six percentage points more likely than urban youth to have participated in voluntary work.¹⁸ Nearly half of young men (46 percent) have engaged in voluntary work in the past year, making them 13 percentage points more likely to engage in voluntary activities than young women, of whom one in three participated in a voluntary activity in the past year. This is, perhaps, due to the labour-intensive nature of many of the types of community work discussed frequently, such as digging roads, cleaning wells or drains, and environmental conservation.

Participation in voluntary work also increases with age. Nearly half of youth aged 26 to 30 (46 percent) participated in voluntary work in the year prior to the survey in comparison with 42, 38 and 30 percent of those aged 22-25, 18-21, and 15-17 years respectively. This means that these groups are 13, nine and six percentage points more likely to engage in voluntary work than the youngest category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Voluntary activity</th>
<th>Youth Centre</th>
<th>Scouts</th>
<th>Sports Club</th>
<th>Dance/ choir Group</th>
<th>Any religious Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Clubs and groups offer a number of benefits to youth. As well as assisting in the development of social competencies such as self-esteem (Scales et al 2001; Tanti et al 2011), they also provide a

¹⁸ In rural areas, 39 percent of youth participated in a voluntary activity in the past year, in comparison with 37 percent of youth in urban areas.
A forum through which young people can socialise and get emotional support, learn new skills, meet mentors and positive role models, and do physical exercise. Their impact on the social assets of youth occurs through expanding friends and social networks, engaging with youth from other backgrounds and communities, and promoting positive perceptions of youth in the community. Participating in any form of group is positively associated with the number of friends a youth has – particularly for young men – with regards to friends of both the same and the opposite sex (Table 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9. Group Membership and Friendship Patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend of the same sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No group membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group membership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Sports clubs, music and dance groups and religious groups are the main clubs youth participate in (Table 8). There are few significant differences in participation by rural and urban location, although youth in rural areas are four and 10 percentage points less likely to participate in Scouts and religious groups, respectively. There are greater differences by gender, with young women significantly less likely to participate in all but music and dance groups (Figure 20). Music and dance groups and religious groups are the only two groups more likely to be attended by youth from the poorest quintiles, and youth currently enrolled in school have a greater likelihood of participation in all of these clubs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 20. Group membership by gender (% youth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Graph showing group membership by gender" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
Over 95 percent of survey respondents considered themselves religious. 88 percent go to church/mosque or religious functions at least once a week. There is little significant difference in religious beliefs and practice by age. Almost 18 percent of young men identify religion as the most important part of their identity, compared to 12 percent for women. Religion as identity is the strongest in Kampala, with almost 30 percent regarding religion as the most important part of their identity, compared to 16 percent in Central and Eastern regions and 8 and 10 percent in Northern and Western regions.

One last major benefit of group and club participation that must not be overlooked is the role they play in providing a space through which youth can develop their talents and escape the responsibilities and pressures of everyday life. When young men in urban central Uganda were asked what form of support they would most like, for example, they highlighted, “Support from our parents to let us participate in games and sports”. Parents and partners, however, do not always allow youth to engage in group activities given their time commitments away from household duties and obligations. In urban central Uganda, for example, young women explained that after attending club meetings, some of their friends had been beaten and thrown out of their homes by their partners, who believed they would be badly influenced by other members. Likewise, parents were noted for getting angry when sons and daughters came home late or did not have enough time for chores. Pressures like these have an impact on emotional health, and youth strive for a broader recognition of their needs. “People think that we have no value if we are not earning an income”, explained young men in urban Northern Uganda, “To some extent, that is true. But youth can also be passionate about our own lifestyles and we should be able to do things that make us happy, even if they may not be of direct value to the community, like athletics, or playing games”. Similarly, another group of young men in rural Northern Uganda all agreed that recreation was an important part of growing up that adults overlook. As Figures 21 and 22 illustrate, young men and women allocate little time to social activities and entertainment. In the early stages of youth, young women spend up to 1.5 hours enjoying ‘entertainment’, but this falls to under one hour per day when they reach the age of 20. Young women also spend large and increasing amounts of time doing domestic chores, and start to spend a greater proportion of time working between the ages of 17 and 18, which peaks at around 6.5 hours per day in later stages of youth.

Figure 21. 
Time use allocations for female youth

![Figure 21](image-url)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
For young men, time allocations for work increase substantially from the age of 17, peaking at an average of eight hours per day in the later years of youth. While young men spend slightly more time each day in work at all ages, they spend substantially less time doing household chores. Although young men spend a little more time each day in ‘entertainment’, this remains low and decreases with age. Several groups of young men and women emphasised that they wanted an avenue through which their talents in sports and music can be promoted, which they are unable to reach given the current emphasis of education and vocational training.

**Figure 22.**
Time use allocations for male youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Chores</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

As young people embark upon the transition to adulthood, the opportunities they strive for are accompanied by multiple difficulties, challenges, and responsibilities that require their ability to draw upon a range of assets to manage and overcome them. Their capacity is constrained, however, by the narrow asset portfolios they have available to them. Human capital remains limited where youth drop out of school early, and many youth lack skills and qualifications that they can utilise in the labour market. Limited access to land (particularly for young women) and financial services reduces their chances of successfully engaging in income-generating activities. While social assets offer an important source of support and assistance, social networks of youth tend to be restricted to fellow peers, who are also asset-poor. Although youth recognise existing forms of support – such as parental provision of school fees, UPE and USE, and medical services – they also acknowledge that these are not enough to protect or promote the accumulation of assets they need for a successful transition to work and adulthood.

This situation is made more difficult by the fact that youth must make these transitions at the same time as they make the transition from dependence to financial independence. As the next chapter discusses, they experience a reduction in asset transfers after parents withdraw financial and material support from them when they need these assets the most. Understanding where youth
are placed in relation to the key institutions that assist in their social and economic development – including the household and community, the economy, and national political structures and processes – is important for a greater understanding of the limited access of youth to greater assets. As the next chapter discusses, various social, political, cultural and economic obstacles produce multiple and self-reinforcing barriers to greater asset accumulation for youth. As Chapters 4 and 5 then discuss, these two sets of constraints – a lack of assets and limited access to assets – limit the opportunities available to youth and shapes their aspirations and behaviours.
As the previous chapter illustrates, youth have few assets to draw upon in the transition to adulthood. While assets are key to the agency of youth in the transition to adulthood, they face... They face multiple structural obstacles from some of the key institutions that shape their lives, including the social, political and economic environment. These environmental influences impact directly on the decisions made and actions taken by youth by presenting young people with choices, opportunities and constraints. That in each of these institutions – the household, the community, the national political system and economy – youth are rarely supported, recognised, or empowered, restricts their access to greater assets and in some cases prevents them from utilising their existing assets. The social, economic and political participation of youth is greatly dependent on how youth are viewed within these institutions (Mabala 2011). While Ugandan youth strive to participate in community and national activities, decision-making and development, limited opportunities for youth to participate in social and economic realms has led to widespread negative stereotypes of youth that act as a further constraint to citizenship.

Box 4.

Key findings for Chapter 3

- Ugandan youth feel that their families do not support or encourage them to make a successful transition to adulthood. Young men are under pressure from an early age to be financially independent and are viewed as liabilities if they do not find work.

- Widespread negative perceptions of youth as poorly-behaved, irresponsible, and criminals prevent their recognition by and respect from the community. This limits their ability to participate in community events, meetings and activities which they strongly desire, emphasising their potential contributions to the community's social and economic development.

- Although aware of the systems and structures in place to ensure political participation of young people, high levels of corruption mean the youth do not have access to local or national government bodies. There is also scope for greater awareness of the National Youth Council.

- Only around half of youth voted in the 2011 national elections. Young women and youth in Kampala and Northern Uganda display the lowest voting behaviours. High levels of public corruption negatively influence voting behaviour.

- Insufficient job creation has contributed to high under- and unemployment rates amongst youth. Negative stereotypes associated with youth, coupled with tribal and political connections governing access to jobs are common obstructions to finding jobs. Youth also report their exploitation by prospective employers who take advantage of their desperation.
3.1 YOUTH IN THE HOUSEHOLD

“Morning comes and you have no work, but you have to eat...That is why our parents see us as a liability”

The transfer of assets to youth primarily takes place within the family (Quisumbing 2007), where, as Chapter 2 highlights, youth are taught appropriate behaviours in line with traditional norms and values that equip them with the social competencies they require in the transition to adulthood. Household poverty has negative repercussions on the transfer of financial, material, and social resources to young members, as shortages and constraints are also imported on them. While better-off households can prepare youth for the transition to adulthood by investing in their education, health and nutrition, poor households are unable to transfer sufficient assets to their young members, including education, land and non-land assets, nutrition, educational attainment, and social connections and competencies (Moore 2001; Verna and Alda 2004; Quisumbing 2007; Soto Bermant 2008).

The survey findings indicate a relatively recent shift in the way youth are viewed and treated in the household, with perceptions of youth having shifted away from viewing them as a resource towards seeing them as a liability. This shift is evident in a number of indicators, including increasing early engagement in the labour force and an increasing number of youth starting work to support themselves (rather than the wider household). As focus groups discussed widely, today’s youth must support their own costs from an early age because their parents are unable or unwilling to do so.

Youth labour force participation rates of 73 percent – ranging from 49 percent of youth in Kampala to 87 percent in Western Uganda – illustrate the pressures facing youth to work. Focus groups highlighted the pressures youth face – particularly young men – to be financially independent from an early age, indicating that due to household poverty, youth have to work to support their costs and/or contribute to household costs. Some even emphasised that where parents are alive but unable to support their young members, they face similar financial pressures and vulnerabilities to those of orphans.

The data reveals that these changes are relatively new trend, or one that has recently accelerated. As one young man in urban western Uganda emphasised, “A youth used to be considered a rule-breaker if he worked, but this is so normal nowadays”. An increasing trend in early labour force engagement (those aged 15 or below and working) is strikingly evident amongst respondents, and although this is experienced both by young men and young women, it has been markedly sharper for young men, as Figure 23 illustrates. These findings are corroborated by other national data. The 2010 Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) reports that labour force participation for youth aged 15 to 24 increased from 44 percent in 2005/06 to 60 percent in 2009/10, while that of youth aged between 18 to 30 similarly experienced a dramatic increase from 77 percent to 86 percent over the same period (UBOS 2010).

Large numbers of Ugandan youth begin working while still enrolled in school, a trend that has also been increasing. Around 40 percent of Ugandan youth have worked and studied simultaneously, but this decreases with age. Youth in the oldest age category (26-30) are 12 percent less likely than those in the youngest age category (15-17) to have ever worked and studied simultaneously. Nearly half of all youth in Eastern Uganda have done this, while those in central and western Uganda are less likely, where only 32 percent and 36 percent have worked while at school. Only 28 percent of urban youth have studied and worked simultaneously, making them eight percentage points less likely than rural youth to have to combine work and study: in rural areas 40 percent of all youth must do this. Young men experience greater pressure to start work still at school, a phenomenon experienced by nearly half of all young men. Only 28 percent of young women work and study simultaneously.
Focus groups highlighted school drop out as the point when youth are no longer considered dependents by parents, and also, therefore, when youth must start work to cover their living costs. “If your parents fail to pay your school fees”, asked young men in urban central Uganda, “How can you expect them to cater for your basic needs?”. The need to cover one’s own expenses leads one in every three Ugandan youth to start work, ranging from 24 percent in eastern and northern Uganda to 39 percent in Kampala. Young men are seven percentage points more likely to start work for this reason: one-third of young men start work to cover their own costs, in comparison with 26 percent of young women. Receipt of parental support is geared towards education – with those currently enrolled being 34 percent more likely to receive parental support – and decreases with age (Figures 24 and 25). Financial support decreases at a relatively faster rate for young women, corresponding with gender differences in school dropouts, namely the earlier school drop out of young women.
With an increasing early labour force engagement and larger numbers of youth working and studying simultaneously, we also see an increasing trend in the number of youth dropping out of school and starting work in the same year (Figure 26). Young men, as well as starting work at an earlier age and while still at school, face greater pressure to make a quick transition from school to work (Table 10).
Table 10.
Length of transition from education to work*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Youth (% respondents)</th>
<th>Female Youth (% respondents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled and working simultaneously</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dropped out and started work in same year</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started work after dropout</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time between dropout and work</td>
<td>2.8 years</td>
<td>3.3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Of those youth who have both dropped out and started working

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

The gender differences were explained by cultural attitudes regarding the roles that young men and women take up after school: while young men are expected to work and sustain themselves after school dropout, young women are expected to marry. “Culturally, girls must receive assistance from boys, so we have less pressures of working for money since we receive it from our husbands and boyfriends”, explained one group of young women. Prior to the transition to marriage, focus groups also argued that where possible, parents provide more material support to their daughters as a preventive strategy to stop them from engaging in sexual exchange to meet basic needs (Chapter 5).

A lack of household support and pressures to be financially independent have repercussions on the emotional well-being of youth, especially given the difficulties they face securing employment. While youth are expected, but unable, to fend for themselves, they are often viewed negatively as dependents and liabilities, particularly young men. In some cases, youth even spoke of as being despised by their parents, having a negative impact on their social competencies such as confidence and self-esteem, as Box 5 details.

Box 5.  
Engaging with youth: Deteriorating financial and material support

In light of the strong shift away from familial support, we wanted to get a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of this process by engaging with youth. Through Unicef’s Ureport initiative, we asked 35,000 young people across the country their perceptions on this finding: Research finds that youth today receive less financial and emotional support than 10-20 years ago. Do you agree?

Our finding generated 6,216 responses, with nearly 70 percent (69.1 percent) agreeing with our findings. These responses give a detailed insight into youth perceptions of the emotional and financial support they receive and of their position in the household and community, and in doing so, provide depth to our findings from the survey and focus groups. The responses highlight several drivers behind this shift, namely large family sizes, poverty (alongside increasing needs and costs), a lack of love and care, youth behaviours, and that youth are wrongly viewed as ‘adults’. In many cases, more than one of these dimensions was emphasised, highlighting the multiple drivers underlying decreasing support for youth.

Large families

That parents must support large numbers of children was frequently mentioned as the reason underlying a lack of financial support to youth. Exacerbated by household poverty (especially
in single-parent households), this means that households have few resources with which to provide sufficient resources to each child. As the following quotes suggest;

“This is true in my village and in my household in particular. I am the 2nd last born of seven. Unlike my elder bro, have 2 struggle my way 2 study without much of my parents help”

“Its yes b’se the parents are producing at a high rate”

“Yes but depending on the level of income of each parent and de number of children”.

“There’s high fertility rate of Ugandan women who produce 6 chdn... this resulted in a big family 2 be facilitated by one person”.

Map of Uganda representing positive responses to our finding

![Map of Uganda](image)

**Poverty**

Closely linked with the issue of large family sizes, household poverty also impacts on the ability of parents to provide financial and emotional support to youth. Scarce resources allocated across multiple children limits the resources available for each child. Discussions on this focused primarily on education, with school fees being limited or withdrawn to ensure that similar opportunities are accessed by other children in the household. Responses also acknowledge the time constraints faced by their parents, with the necessity to work all hours of the week restricting time with children.

“Yes, this is due to current financial hardship that have caused parents stress, hence abandoning their responsibilities”

“Yes with d poverty rate d leave them 2 fend 4 themselves 2 gv support 2 d younger ones”.
“Yes, due to equality both parents work for long hours and 7 days so no time”

“Yes bse 20 years back some necesseties like s/fees, clothes were not expensive compared to today so parents ended up leaving de youth 2 look after themselves”.

A lack of love and care

That parents spend limited time with their parents due to work pressures is also accompanied by youth perceptions that parents do not give enough love, care, and support to youth. The distance between youth and their parents was frequently highlighted, with youth stating that parents do not listen to or guide youth. Although in part this is due to the pressures parents face to work or that many are unprepared when they have children, responses also emphasised that parents are ‘less responsible’, both in their beliefs that the needs of youth are fully met within their limited years of schooling and in their unwillingness to allocate time for talking to and listening to youth;

“Yes. It is true because most parents have abandoned their youth”.

“Yes, today most parents spend more time on work and leave their children to be cared for by house helps and youth have to find their way in life and look for support in other things like drugs, getting sugar dads n mums etc. None of my parents bother to know how I feel”

“Parents are so busy they have no time 2 listen 2 their own chn and they lack skills 4 guiding youth”.

“Yes bcuz parents don’t give time 2 their children 2 know how they feel en what concerns them”

“Yes...anything that the youth do now days is totally despised and yet they need to be encouraged and supported”.

Yes its true and not b’se of lack of funds but negligence & being unprepared to have children

Youth are viewed as ‘adults’ earlier

Many responses centred on the fact that parents view youth as ‘grown ups’ who are able to look after their own needs and livelihoods at an early age: like other research findings, these answers highlighted that the end of schooling marks the end of parental obligations towards young members of the household. Some responses also highlight the pressures such high expectations of youth to look after themselves have on their well-being, especially for young men;

Today’s parents see education as the only thing to be given to youth so any delay or disturbances s/he is isolated and end up getting nothing from parents.

“Yes, wen parents pay fees dey think its all done but we suffer”

“Yes b’se 2day, once youth complete school, parents stop support’g them financially expect 2stand on their own n b self-reliant”.

“YES! But most especially boys because they seem to see that they are now able to look for some little money themselves”.

“Yes!!! Because they think we are grown ups now since we can differentiate between good and bad and find sources of money (especially us male youths)
Youth behaviours

Some respondents supplemented these drivers with the fact that changing youth behaviours has contributed to the unwillingness of parents to provide financial and/or emotional support. A lack of respect for parents and elders by youth was one contributing factor, and several responses highlighted that parents are unwilling to provide financial support to youth in case they spend it on drugs, alcohol, and entertainment.

“Yes b’se of little respect given 2 parents and decayed morals among the youth”

“No because of poverty and indiscipline of youth”

“YES. youth used 2 give respect 2 their parents which made the parents happy & thus supporting them in everything they were doing.”

“Yes. Problem is youth do not sit home and hardly listen. Peer influence has distorted everyone.”

For nearly 20 percent of youth (ranging from 11 percent in western Uganda to 29 percent in the North), providing financial support to the household is the major driver of youth entering the labour market. However, this has been decreasing over time in line with increased pressures on youth to become financially independent (Fig 27).

Figure 27.
Household support as a driver of youth labour market entry

The majority of youth provide some portion of their income to their households, with regional and gender differences in the extent of their contribution. Regions were assigned scores on the basis of the proportion of income youth provided to the household vis-a-vis personal expenditure. A
score of ‘1’ represents youth keeping their income entirely to themselves, while ‘4’ indicates youth providing their full income to the household. Young women, as a proportion of their income, always support the household more than young men. Regional scores ranged from 1.82 in Kampala to 2.6 in northern Uganda (Figure 28). Higher household contributions in eastern, northern and western Uganda suggest that youth in these regions are less financially independent, and this is backed up by the fact that fewer youth in these regions start work to cover their own expenses. Youth in western, northern and eastern Uganda are seven, 13 and 14 percentage points less likely to have started work to cover their own expenses, and those in northern and eastern Uganda are also 13 and nine percentage points more likely to have started work to support the family.

Figure 28.
Youth income allocation by region and gender (the higher the score, the more income they provide to the household)*

Young women and married youth make significantly larger contributions relative to their incomes to the household in comparison with young men and unmarried youth, displaying higher income allocation scores by 0.16 and 0.27 points than that of young men or single youth, respectively. Although both young men and women contribute a greater share of their income to the household when married, this increase is much higher for young men (A2.4), and this increased financial responsibility feeds into greater anxieties regarding marriage among them (Chapter 4). As household heads, the provision of core financial support to the household comes primarily from young men. Young women are more likely to report their contributions to specific expenditures, primarily food and clothing (Figure 29).

*of youth reporting a cash income
Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Young women and married youth make significantly larger contributions relative to their incomes to the household in comparison with young men and unmarried youth, displaying higher income allocation scores by 0.16 and 0.27 points than that of young men or single youth, respectively. Although both young men and women contribute a greater share of their income to the household when married, this increase is much higher for young men (A2.4), and this increased financial responsibility feeds into greater anxieties regarding marriage among them (Chapter 4). As household heads, the provision of core financial support to the household comes primarily from young men. Young women are more likely to report their contributions to specific expenditures, primarily food and clothing (Figure 29).

19 For eastern and northern Uganda, this is significant at the 1 percent level, but for western Uganda, this is significant only at the 10 percent level. 30, 24 and 24 percent of youth in western, northern and eastern Uganda reported starting work to cover their own expenses, in comparison with 39 and 35 percent of youth in Kampala and central Uganda. 29 and 24 percent of youth in northern and eastern Uganda started work to support the household, in comparison with 11, 12, and 20 percent of youth in western Uganda, Kampala, and eastern Uganda.
A reduction in financial and material allocations from the household, we have seen, has been accompanied by a reduction in respect, support and encouragement from the household, which plays a central role in the development of positive characteristics and predispositions among youth. Focus groups confirmed that many youth cannot or do not want to discuss their worries and concerns with their parents. While youth recognise the important role parents should play in supporting and motivating youth – giving advice on education, career paths, jobs, and relationships, amongst others – youth emphasised that instead, ‘tough’ or busy parents are often unable or unwilling to play this role. As one young woman in rural western Uganda emphasised, “I keep my worries to myself – there is no one to help me since my parents and relatives are very tough”. Likewise, one young man in urban northern Uganda described how, “I will try to talk to [my father] about work, but he will chase me and beat me before I can ask him for help”. While they find time to condemn youth, they do not find time to praise them: as young men in urban central Uganda explained, “We are despised by our parents who never appreciate us if we do something good. Instead they wait to condemn us if we do anything wrong”.

Many youth vocalise their desire not to lead their own or future children into similar circumstances, and subsequently want to have fewer children than their parents had. “My goal is to have two babies”, explained one woman in eastern urban Uganda, “My father has eight boys and five girls, but none of us have been able to complete our studies because he does not have enough income for us all”. There are no significant regional differences with regards to the number of children youth want to have, with Ugandan youth reporting their desire for 4.6 children, significantly less than the national fertility rate which has remained at around 6.7 children per woman over the past three decades (UBOS 2006; RoU 2010). Young women want, on average, 0.67 fewer children than young men, and education also reduces the desired number of children among youth: those completing Senior 5 and above want, on average, one child less.

Given the role of the household in providing support, supervision and behavioural control, focus groups also emphasised that orphans miss out on support and discipline, negatively impacting their transition to citizenship. With no one to guide them or shape their behaviour, orphans face greater difficulties in becoming respected community members. As young women in Kampala explained, “There are many orphans who have missed out on acquiring education, parental love, care and guidance, which could have groomed them into responsible citizens”. For young men, losing a father (or both parents) before the age of 15 means they have lacked a father figure to teach them their roles and responsibilities in the family. This results in significantly greater fears
regarding child and family welfare, with young men losing their father before the age of 15 being eight percentage points more likely to worry about both their children’s and their family’s welfare. Orphans or those who have lost one parent before the age of 15 are significantly less likely to participate in some social programmes than those living with one or both parents before the age of 15. Regarding participation in any social programme, there is no difference between youth who did or did not lose their parents before the age of 15. There is variation, however, in the type of programmes participated in. Orphans, for example, are between three and four percentage points less likely to participate in NAADs than non-orphans (Annex 2.5). Interestingly, however, in communities where orphans are receiving NGO assistance, several groups expressed their envy at this. “NGOs mostly help orphans”, argued young men in urban eastern Uganda, “They leave out all those with parents, even though our parents cannot afford our education”.

Orphaned youth constitute 7.5 percent of the youth population, with four percent of youth having lost both parents before the age of 15. Orphaned youth are, unsurprisingly, more likely to have lived in foster care. Forty-five percent of orphaned youth have lived in foster care, in comparison with 21 percent of all youth. Orphan hood is not the primary driver of foster care, however, since only eight percent of youth who have ever lived in foster care lost both parents before turning 15. There is significant regional variation in the number of youth who have lived in foster care, ranging from nine percent in Kampala to 51 percent in northern Uganda. There are no gender differences with regards to foster care.

Youth from the poorest quintile are six percentage points more likely than those in the second poorest quintile to have ever lived in foster care. They are also five percentage points more likely than those in the second poorest quintile to have been brought up by only their mother until the age of 15. Nearly 90 percent of youth in the survey report that their mother is alive. In contrast, only around three-quarters report their fathers still being alive (Table 11). This large difference may indicate that the lack of presence of fathers is not due only to death, but also a result of men not taking responsibility for unwanted pregnancies (Chapter 5). This is more apparent in urban areas, where youth are five percentage points more likely than those in rural areas to have lost their father before the age of 15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Both parents took care of until 15 (%)</th>
<th>Ever been in foster care (%)</th>
<th>Lost both parents before 15 (%)</th>
<th>Only mother took care of until 15 (%)</th>
<th>Mother ‘alive’ (%)</th>
<th>Father ‘alive’ (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

### 3.2 YOUTH IN THE COMMUNITY

“*Youth are thought of as useless people who can’t do anything important for the community*”

In addition to households, communities are also key institutions in the social development of young people. As the previous chapter discussed, youth are passionate about their role and
potential contributions to the community, and their ability to participate in community activities and decision-making shapes whether or not youth feel recognised and valued in the community. The role of the community in shaping the development of youth is multi-faceted. Supportive communities allow for meaningful involvement of youth in decision-making, regularly seek and act upon the ideas of their young members, make resources available to young people, offer opportunities for employment, provide youth with regular positive contact with adults who perceive them as valuable citizens, and impose boundaries on their behaviours to help them make the ‘right’ decisions (Chigunta 2002; Reininger et al 2003; MacDonald and Valdivieso 2009). The research reveals, however, that Ugandan youth do not experience supportive environments and that there exists a great discrepancy between the role youth envision for themselves in the community and the extent of their involvement.

Youth frequently spoke of their desire to be more involved in decision-making, including not only formal participation in community or clan meetings, but also at the most basic level, being asked their opinions and listened to by elders and adults. As young men in urban western Uganda explained, for example, “We are not respected because elders don’t listen to our ideas, even when they are constructive”. One group of young women in rural western Uganda argued that, “Our contributions aren’t recognised enough”, reflecting broader sentiments that youth are not given the opportunity to fulfil their potential in the development of their communities and country. Their contributions were recognised to go beyond the community to the national level, with one group of young men arguing that, “You should not refer to our importance in the community, we are important to the whole country”.

Participation in community events, such as weddings and burials, was also highlighted in definitions of citizenship (Chapter 2). Youth are generally excluded from such events because of their age and status. This is a source of frustration for many youth. While youth from wealthy families were seen to have the advantage of securing community respect, and therefore participation in these events, the majority of youth face exclusion from them (Box 620). As young women in urban eastern Uganda specified, “Adults are expected to contribute to the needs of the communities, like attending ceremonies and other traditional functions, yet young people are not expected to”.

Box 6
Responses from youth during youth engagement with Youth Watch findings

“If you are coming from a bad family, you are not accepted in the community and no one believes in what you say. And also, if your age is not reasonable, people still do not listen to you”.

“We grow up being despised that we came from poor families and that we never went to school, so we are weakened”

According to youth, adults perceive youth as being irresponsible and poorly behaved, which affects the support they are willing to provide to youth. Youth feel that adults stereotype them as criminals, especially in urban areas, which experience higher levels of un(der)employment and less social cohesion. In rural areas, stereotypes are more likely to be narrow and limited to youth

20 M.S.C a youth-based team of videographers trained in participatory monitoring and evaluation carried out a consultation exercise with youth in Mukono (Central Uganda) based on Youth Watch’s findings. In this instance, youth were told the finding, ‘Youth want to participate more in community activities but feel excluded because of age, economic background, and negative views about them’ and asked their opinions on this.
inside the community. In contrast, larger populations and looser social and community ties in urban areas were evident from focus groups, where discussions of youth in crime always named the perpetrators as those youth from outside the community.21

Young men and women are commonly referred to as bayaye (‘thieves’, primarily for boys) and bamalaya (‘prostitutes’, primarily for girls). As young men in Kampala argue, “Youth are stereotyped to be thieves, rapists, drug addicts, idlers, and all sorts of bad characters”. Kilelesi, or ‘idlers’ is another term commonly associated with youth, based on community perceptions that youth cannot do anything constructive. As young women in Kampala argued, “Youth are thought of as useless people who can’t do anything important for the community”.

These negative stereotypes are closely tied with the difficulties young people face accessing employment, a task that is dependent on securing respect from the community. If a young man or woman does not work and is not supported by family, it is assumed that they must resort to crime to meet their basic needs. “Youth who aren’t working are perceived as thieves”, explained young men in urban western Uganda, “If people see them moving at night they fear them, and if anything goes missing, they are the first suspects. By the time people realise that they are not guilty, they will already have been beaten”.

How youth describe adult perceptions, however, is not very different from their own perceptions. Youth themselves estimate that 53 and 52 percent of young men and women are engaged in theft and prostitution respectively, and report similarly high participation in other forms of crime (Table 12). These perceptions do not reflect, however, the vehement denial of youth as criminals in focus groups, where youth strongly refute these accusations, arguing that the whole youth population should not be tarnished with the same brush as the minority of youth who are involved in crime. “Although only a few youth conduct themselves in this manner”, young women in rural central Uganda argued, “society uses this as a basis to think that it applies to all youth”. They also express their hurt and frustration at these stereotypes of youth being lazy and unwilling to work, which do not take into account the multiple barriers they face to productive employment. As young women in rural central Uganda argue, “Society judges us before understanding the situations that we are facing”, and likewise, young women in urban eastern Uganda explain that “Some youth are out of school because their parents cannot afford their fees. Others are not working because jobs are scarce, not because they don’t want to work”.

Table 12.
Perceptions of criminal activities among young men and women at the community and national level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Young men in your community (%)</th>
<th>Young men in Uganda (%)</th>
<th>Young women in your community (%)</th>
<th>Young women in Uganda (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Abuse</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Fighting</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prostitution</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugging</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal arms</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

21 This finding is reinforced by the importance placed on living in your own birthplace, having lived in an area for many years and being registered with the local council as not only being critical to being accepted as a citizen (Chapter 2), but also to ensure that you are not wrongly accused of crime.
Given the barriers that young people face to achieving support and recognition from their households and communities, the transition to ‘active’ citizenship – in which youth exercise their citizenship by, for example, holding public officials to account or becoming actively involved in community decision-making – is even more difficult. As the following section discusses, the unsupportive environment facing youth also extends to their perceptions of local and national political structures.

3.3 YOUTH AND POLITICS

“Politicians do not care about youth”

Youth highlight the importance of political institutions in representing their needs and opinions to the Government, and in doing so, securing resources for youth. Focus groups acknowledged the existing systems and structures of political representation, with government representatives seen to provide – in theory – two main benefits to youth. At the local level, they play a role in offering support and guidance to youth constituents, and at the national level, they can advocate and lobby for youth. “They are the voice to higher authorities”, explained young men in urban central Uganda, “And can speak more for us than parents, relatives or NGOs”. In practice, local representatives were not trusted in either of these two roles, however, given corruption, a lack of accountability and a lack of interest in youth problems and issues.

In reality, the main interaction youth have with the state is through the payment of taxes and licence fees rather than through the advice and representation they desire. While they appreciate the existence of the structures in place – namely Local Councils and youth representatives in the National Youth Council – they also emphasise that these structures do not effectively represent the views of youth. With one exception,22 local representatives were not associated with assisting youth constituents in either role. In Kampala, young men said they had been abandoned by their representatives who had not responded to their problems. When youth approach their LC1 Chairmen with requests and are not heeded, this fuels beliefs that they are not listened to. Young men in urban western Uganda, for example, detailed that they had written their LC1 Chairman regarding their concerns about the prohibitively expensive annual license fee of 200,000 shillings. They received no response, however, leaving them in the continued struggle to remain successful self-employed as welders and mechanics amidst these costs. In rural central Uganda, young men highlighted the inaccessibility of their local representative with the vivid description that, “We are never handled properly by the people we approach for help. Especially the local council chairmen who beats us instead”. They explained this as embera ya bisolo, or ‘treated like animals’.

These factors contribute to the belief that politicians see the importance of youth only in the votes they provide. “Politicians do not care about youth”, one group of young men in rural western Uganda argued, “They only see us as people that can give politicians votes, after which they forget about us”. Young women in rural central Uganda blamed the fact that youth are not recognised as a resource on weak local leaders who, “...do not know their roles, they can be considered only to feed their stomachs”. The general perception of youth is that political representatives are in their position for self-gain rather than representation of their constituents. Young men in urban central Uganda used the slogan, “My coat and my family” to highlight that local leaders first allocate resources to themselves and their family before the community. Likewise, young men in rural western Uganda explained that, “They only want to fill their stomachs and pockets with whatever support might be available for youths”. This means that although youth believe

22 Only in one focus group did participants say that their local representative fulfilled this role. Young women in urban central Uganda praised the lady in charge of women’s affairs in their constituency for providing young women in the area moral support and counselling.
the Government has allocated some resources to meet youth needs, these do not reach them because of corruption. They see, however, little means through which they can hold representatives to account. “How can we report this behaviour to the people in power, when the people responsible are those who we are meant to report it to?”, asked young men in urban western Uganda. Perceptions of corruption in public institutions are widespread, with 70 percent of youth believing that corruption in public institutions is ‘very common’ (Table 13). Kampala ranks most poorly in this indicator, with 91 percent of youth reporting high corruption there.

Table 13.
Political participation of youth, by region (% Youth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Voted in 2011 national election</th>
<th>Discusses politics with friends sometimes or often</th>
<th>Corruption is ‘very common’</th>
<th>Knows about youth council</th>
<th>Voted in 2011 youth election</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table includes 18+ years old youth
Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

These experiences with and perceptions of political institutions influence the voting behaviours of youth. While three-quarters of Ugandan youth voted in the 2011 national election, youth in regions that display the most widespread perceptions of corruption display lower voting rates. Kampala youth were least likely to have voted, and the most extreme anti-government views were displayed in focus groups there: three groups said that youth are angry with the government and can be tempted to join rebel groups out of desperation. Young women are less likely to participate in political activities than young men: of eligible voters, 78 and 72 percent of young men and women voted in the 2011 national election, respectively.

The size of the youth population relative to the adult population is another factor that limits the political participation of youth, particularly given the distance between youth and the older generation and their limited ability to participate in community meetings and events. Since knowledge, attitudes and behaviours are shaped by interactions with others, youth growing up in ‘youth bulges’ display lower levels of civic knowledge as a result of their greater interaction with peers than adults (Hart et al 2004). Less than half of Ugandan youth discuss politics ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’ amongst their friends, and this is particularly low among youth in Kampala, Central and Northern Uganda.

Uganda’s National Youth Council was established in 1993 to encourage youth participation in national development. Through this body, youth receive democratically-elected local and national representation across all of Uganda’s Local Council units. While focus groups appreciate the recognition youth receive through having representation from youth councillors, they also recognise that these are not functioning to their benefit. Young men in rural central Uganda, for example,
asked how they could be represented by “So-called youth leaders that happen to be as old as 40 who cannot be considered to be a youth anymore!”

There is also significant scope for raising awareness of the National Youth Council (NYC), particularly among disadvantaged youth. Less than 70 percent of youth are aware of the NYC, with awareness particularly low in Kampala and in the North (Table 13). Low levels of awareness have also fed into low electoral participation: just over half of youth voted in the last youth council elections, ranging from 25 percent in Northern Uganda to 67 percent in Eastern Uganda. Young women are 13 percentage points less likely to have heard of the youth council. Poorer youth are between four and five percentage points less likely to have heard of the NYC than youth from the wealthiest quintile. Although recognising largely that the political systems and structures are in place for youth representation, youth are overwhelmingly disappointed by the role they play in representing their interests. Some youth explained that they wanted to become leaders themselves, so they can act as a voice for the disadvantaged. As young women in urban eastern Uganda emphasised, “Thinking of us as future leaders is absolutely true, because we all intend to take over rigorous responsibilities after the retirement of our parents and guardians”.

3.4 YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL PROGRAMMES

Another additional form of institutional support is from a variety of social programmes, such as NGO programmes, Government programmes or benefits, and informal or semi-formal community-based programmes such as SACCOs and ROSCAs. Around one in three youth report their participation in such programmes, with differences by age, gender, and political affiliation (Appendix A2.5). Age is one of the major determinants of participation in social programmes, which is concentrated amongst older youth (Figure 30), and young women are between 3 to 5 percentage points less likely to have accessed any form of programme. Politically-affiliated youth are twice as likely to report having tried to access programmes (49 percent of politically-affiliated youth vs. 25 percent of non-politically affiliated youth).

It is evident that none of these programmes are targeted at youth, since their participation is greatly determined by whether or not they have tried to access it themselves. Youth who do not try to join any programme are 63 percentage points less likely to be in one than those who try to access them, an indicator that also suggests limited information about existing programmes. Youth from wealthier households are less likely to participate in programmes.

While NGO interventions are relatively more equitable in targeting youth of different age groups, their scale of operations is limited (Figure 30). The National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) has the highest outreach of any programme among youth, but its services too are primarily accessed by older youth. Focus groups used NAADS as a model through which to provide youth with training and/or assets, emphasising that its benefits are limited to adults.24 These findings have important implications for programmes targeting youth to recognise their heterogeneity across gender and age group and target their different needs.

23 Prior to the recent youth election held in 2011, the last elections were held in 1991. This meant that the last youth representatives had been in their position for 10 years, and many had exceeded the youth age bracket. National youth elections in 2011, however, brought younger representatives back into these positions.

24 As well as being targeted only at adults, focus groups also emphasised that only those adults politically-affiliated with NRM are given assistance.
3.5 YOUTH AND THE ECONOMY

“Hardly anyone can respect a young person that is not economically productive”

Across Uganda, the struggle youth face to find work – or enough work – is a huge obstacle to their well-being. Youth under- and unemployment is not a problem unique to Uganda: indeed, young people across the world are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults (ILO 2010). Several limitations in the economy, however, limit the potential for a youth-driven push towards development in Uganda, including a lack of jobs, discrimination in job allocation and the exploitation of youth workers.

A Lack of Jobs

“Even those with degrees have to do jobs like brick-laying!”

With the labor force growing at a rate of 4.7 percent per year (UBOS 2010) and high under and unemployment rates, it is evident that there is insufficient job creation in Uganda. All focus groups emphasised their fear of unemployment, regardless of their educational or economic background. Young men in urban western Uganda, for example, estimated that there are only enough jobs for 16 percent of the country’s youth, and one young man in rural central Uganda highlighted the difficulties youth face finding jobs in the labour market with the illustration that, “There could be 100 students pursuing a career in piloting, yet there are only two planes in the whole country”.

Although high across the whole country, there are large differences in under- and unemployment rates by region, gender, and rural-urban location. Un(der)employment rates25 are highest in North

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25 Un(der)employment rate refers to the combined rates of under- and unemployment. These are further broken down in Chapter 4.
Uganda, where nearly half of all youth report their inability to find sufficient work. Kampala and Eastern Uganda have similarly high rates of youth underemployment of around 40 percent (Figure 31). While underemployment rates for youth are relatively similar across rural and urban areas at 32 percent and 33 percent respectively, underemployment is relatively exacerbated for urban youth, who are three percentage points more likely to be underemployed. The fact that urban youth are also less likely to utilise skills learnt through vocational training reflects the fact that skills-related inadequate employment is particularly pronounced in urban areas (UBOS 2010). Young men, 43 percent of whom are under- or unemployed, are 20 percentage points more likely to be underemployed than young women. Underemployment also increases with age (Figure 32).

Figure 31.
Youth underemployment by region (% youth)

![Figure 31](image_url)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Figure 32.
Youth underemployment by age group

![Figure 32](image_url)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
With limited available jobs, qualified youth take low skill jobs, leaving the low skilled and uneducated youth unemployed. As one young man in rural central Uganda joked, for example, “Even those with degrees have to do jobs like brick-laying, and this is supposed to be done by the uneducated!”. Young women in rural western Uganda completing their secondary education highlighted their fears of not finding jobs after university, given that there are so many graduates “on the street”. Likewise, female university students in Kampala stated their major worry as not finding jobs after completing their degrees. Insufficient numbers of skilled jobs is strikingly evident in underemployment rates by education level, with rates increasing by educational status (Figure 33). Young people with higher education are 15 percentage points more likely to be underemployed than those with no education.

Figure 33.
Youth un(der)employment by educational attainment (% youth)

[Diagram showing un(der)employment by educational attainment (% youth)]

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Youth who were unemployed in the week prior to the survey earned 550,000 shillings less in the last 12 months than those fully employed. While the financial cost of underemployment is lower – underemployed youth earn around 100,000 shillings less than fully employed youth – the prevalence of underemployment is almost 6 times higher than unemployment for youth aged 22 and above. The economic cost of unemployment and underemployment to youth and the Ugandan economy, therefore, is almost equal in size. With youth between the ages of 18-30 constituting 21.3 percent of Uganda’s population of 30.7 million people (UBOS 2010), this equates to an annual loss of 356.4 billion Uganda Shillings ($142.6 million) in national GDP as a result of youth under- and unemployment, highlighting the underutilised productive potential of youth in the economy. Uganda’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2009 was US$16.0 billion (World Bank 2011).

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26 In line with ILO definitions, ‘fully-employed’ means employed in the past week and not looking for more work in that period.

27 This figure comprises the annual cost of unemployment (five percent of youth) (179,825,250,000 shillings) and the cost of underemployment (27 percent of youth) (176,555,700,000 shillings) among youth. Exchange rate used is 1US$=2500 UgSh.
Discrimination in job allocation

“Who knows who rules everything”

The distribution of jobs on the basis of social, tribal or political connections or through bribes, rather than merit makes it more difficult for youth to access available jobs. Focus groups highlighted that job shortages have led to the need for bribery in securing jobs, meaning that only the financially and socially well-off can afford to work. “Who knows who rules everything”, explained university students in Kampala, “Youth who know or who are related to people in big posts face much fewer struggles”. As young women in rural eastern Uganda explained, “Youth are discriminated against on different accounts, like coming from an inferior family and having no one to represent their views”. Likewise, young men in urban western Uganda emphasised that, “The youth whose parents are well-known can easily ask for jobs and be given them, but the majority of us youth do not belong to this social status”.

Fewer than half of Ugandan youth (46 percent) believe that skills are the most important asset in accessing employment and one-third consider social connections to play the most important role. The perceived significance of social connections in securing employment declines with education (Figure 34), and youth currently enrolled in education also judge social connections to be less important. Respondents from wealthier households also place less emphasis on social connections: 17 percent of youth from the richest quintile reported connections as the key factor in securing employment, versus 40 percent from the poorest quintile. Age is not associated with perceptions on this phenomenon, indicating that youth form their perceptions on their individual realities – based on their education and wealth level – from an early age. There are also no significant differences by gender or rural-urban location.

The types of skills prioritised by youth in improving access to employment are professional skills, followed by work experience and higher education (Figure 35). There is significant variation in this by education level. Youth with no formal education are three times more likely to emphasise the importance of language, while the perceived importance of higher education and computer skills increase with education level.

Figure 34.
Which is most important asset for accessing employment? (% youth)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
Figure 35. Which skills are most important in securing employment*

![Bar chart showing the percentage of youth who reported skills being more or equally important for getting a job.](chart.png)

*Of those reporting that skills or both skills and social connections are the most important factor in accessing employment. Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Tribal discrimination in job allocation was discussed frequently, particularly in urban areas, in which migration results in towns and cities becoming a melting pot of people from different backgrounds. “If an employer is of a particular tribe”, explained young women in urban eastern Uganda, “He will prefer employing people from that tribe, whether or not he has the competency”. One participant in urban western Uganda amused the rest of the group when he suggested that, “Mothers should pull the nose of their babies while they are young so that they get pointed, because jobs are mainly awarded to a particular tribe with pointed noses!” Young men in Kampala complained that “Jobs are impossible to find for minority groups – even those who are qualified are not considered, instead their applications are being thrown into dustbins”. The youth hope for jobs to be allocated on the basis of merit and in a more transparent manner.

Young people also perceive that they are discriminated against by their age, with nearly half of youth (46 percent) thinking it becomes easier to secure employment as one gets older. In their perceptions of unemployment rates across adults and youth too, youth perceive higher rates for young people, particularly young men. While they perceive high unemployment rates for adult men in their community of 49 percent, this increases to 56 percent for young men (Table 14). In part, they think this is because of negative perceptions of youth. Ugandan employers perceive youth not only to be unprepared to work in terms of skills, qualifications, and experience, but also as impatient, demanding, unreliable, and driven by the desire for quick money (IYF 2011).
Table 14.
Perceived unemployment rates by age group and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49 percent</td>
<td>56 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50 percent</td>
<td>53 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Youth exploitation

“*Youth are seen as desperate people*”

The wage rate for casual work is driven down by a lack of jobs and the large unemployed population. Many focus groups highlighted the exploitation of youth by employers, who take advantage of the large volume of surplus labour among youth. As young men in Kampala argued, “Youth are seen as desperate people”, given the multiple barriers they face to accessing employment. One young woman, for example, emphasised the problems facing youth arguing that, “I would rather stay without doing anything than be asked to cultivate land for only 1,000 shillings (less than half US$1) a week”. One young man in urban central Uganda illustrated that he, “was once asked to construct a 5ft by 10ft room for only 5,000 shillings, which is far too little compared with the effort I would have to put in”. Youth also reported other bad practices among employers. Several groups engaged in wage employment complained of being paid less than was agreed prior to starting a job, and others complained that the practice of paying in instalments makes it difficult to manage living costs. As one young man explained, “I cleared somebody’s land for 10,000 shillings. But he wouldn’t give me the money all at once. He gave me 1,000 shillings, then 1,500 the next time, and so on. But then that money is useless, because it is all gone by the end of the day”.

Young women were also identified as vulnerable to sexual harassment by employers, who ask for sex in exchange for jobs. According to young women in urban western Uganda, for example, “When girls search for jobs, the boss promises to call after looking at our papers. But they call back after 5.00pm and ask us to meet them at a hotel. Why would they want to give us a job at a hotel rather than the office?” The vulnerability of young women was emphasised even by young men, who expressed their sympathy for their ‘sisters’ who had to experience sexual harassment by male employers.

While Chapter 2 highlighted the need for an asset-building approach to youth development, this chapter highlights that maximising the asset-building potential for youth requires an improvement in the institutional environment in which youth are situated, to help overcome the multiple barriers youth face to accessing assets and opportunities. Above all, the current institutional environment limits the social, political and economic participation of youth. A lack of support from both household and community is strikingly evident. Employment difficulties mean that youth are labelled as criminals, ‘idlers’, and dependents and feel disrespected and unvalued – in some cases claiming that they are “considered to be of no value to the community”. This means that the crucial role of the household and the community in developing the self-confidence of youth and providing them with the foundations for becoming respected and valued citizens is not fulfilled. That an unsupportive environment extends to local and national political and economic structures and institutions creates additional barriers to their participation. Changing perceptions of youth will be central to improving youth outcomes. While youth strive to do this as individuals through their attitudes and behaviours, their efforts can be magnified by finding greater space for youth participation at all levels, as Chapter 6 discusses in greater detail.
Opportunities and aspirations are both integral to positive development outcomes among youth. Aspirations assist youth in envisioning and striving towards opportunities (Smith and Moore 2006) and are regularly reassessed depending on the opportunities they have available to them (Woolcock 2008). This chapter explores the actual and perceived opportunities available to youth in the transitions to work, family and citizenship and how these feed into their hopes and aspirations.

Box 7.
Key Findings for Chapter 4

- A large proportion of Ugandan youth are economically active, but struggle to find secure, regular or well-paid work.
- A lack of opportunities force the majority of youth to engage in subsistence farming, small business or casual labour, rather than the preferred non-farm business or salaried employment.
- Even though most youth would prefer to live in urban areas, a lack of jobs, social insecurity, exploitation by employers and the high cost of living in urban areas discourage young migrants.
- Getting married and starting a family is seen as an important part of adulthood. Young men associate starting a family with increased financial responsibilities. For young women, domestic violence and unfaithful partners are the main risks of marriage.
- Difficulties securing employment create obstacles to youth gaining acceptance as adults and citizens. While facing adult responsibilities from an early age, adulthood and citizenship remain a distant prospect, particularly for young men, given that these two stages are closely aligned with employment and marriage.
- Limited assets, institutional constraints and a lack of role models limit the aspirations of youth as well as the opportunities available to them. Youth aspirations for the future are relatively simple, centring around their ability to gain further skills and education, find employment and provide for their families.
- One in four Ugandan youth have low self-esteem, reporting their lives as ‘worse than expected’. Early parenthood, a lack of family support, limited education and limited economic opportunities all transcend to the welfare of youth.
4.1 OPPORTUNITIES

The transition to work and financial independence

“People don’t respect us because we are doing jobs that are taken as meaningless and for uneducated people”

Ugandan youth display high rates of economic participation, with 85 percent of youth having ever participated in an income-generating activity (Figure 36).28 Securing regular work, however, remains a serious problem. Only five percent of Ugandan youth are, by ILO definitions, unemployed and nearly half of all youth are in full employment, having done some form of employment in the past week and not having looked for more work in that period (Table 15). Nearly 30 percent of youth, however, report being under-employed: although having found some form of employment in the past week, this has not been sufficient to meet their requirements.

Figure 36.
Youth un(der)employment and economic participation (% Youth)

![Graph showing youth un(der)employment and economic participation](source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011)

It is important to recognise large regional variations in economic participation and labour market outcomes. Youth in Central and Western Uganda display the highest levels of labour force participation, particularly in Western Uganda, where only 11 percent of youth are not engaged in the labour market. Youth in Central Uganda experience the best economic opportunities: only 16 percent of youth there report an inability to find sufficient work, and over three-quarters participated in an income-generating activity in the past week (Table 15). In contrast, over a quarter of youth in Western Uganda report being under- or unemployed, and this increases dramatically in Kampala, Eastern and Northern regions, reaching just under half of all youth in northern Uganda. The high youth un(der)employment rate in Kampala (Figure 36) is accompanied by low levels of economic participation in the past week, highlighting the increased vulnerability youth face here to unemployment: nearly one in five youth in Kampala are looking for, but unable to find any work at all. In contrast, while youth in Eastern and Northern Uganda display similarly high un(der)

28 In order to capture youth participation in subsistence agriculture the survey defines ‘income-generating activity’ as any form of productive work, whether resulting in a cash income or not.
employment rates, many more youth in these regions had participated in some form of income-
generating activity in the past week. These regions, therefore, experience much lower levels of 
unemployment and higher levels of underemployment.

Table 15.  
Economic Participation of Youth  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kampala</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not in labour market</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-employed</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-employment</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions: Not in labour market=1 did not work last week and did not look for work, unemployed= did not work but 
looked for work, underemployment = worked and looked for more work, full-emp=worked and did not look for more.  

Subsistence farming and non-farm business are the major income-generating activities available 
to Ugandan youth. Nearly one in three Ugandan youth are primarily engaged in subsistence 
agriculture, but the national average is reduced by different employment structures across rural 
and urban areas. In rural areas, 40 percent of youth are engaged in subsistence agriculture. There 
is no significant difference, however, in the prevalence of non-farm business among urban and 
rural youth, with one in five youth depending on this for their income across the country. Kampala 
has a notably different labour market structure given its lack of agricultural opportunities and 
greater opportunities for formal jobs and casual day labour. Eastern and Western Uganda display 
much lower participation rates in wage employment as a primary income-generating activity. In 
Western Uganda, this is likely due to the fact that nearly half of all youth are engaged in subsistence 
agriculture. Central Uganda, which displays the most positive indicators for youth employment, 
has one of the highest rates of youth engagement in non-farm business and salaried employment.

Figure 37.  
Primary income-generating activity of youth in Uganda (% Youth)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
Table 16.
Primary income-generating activity of youth, by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Subsistence farming</th>
<th>Commercial farming</th>
<th>Wage employment</th>
<th>Non-farm business</th>
<th>Salaried</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Youth aspirations regarding their future employment were captured by asking respondents the job they would most like to do in the future, as well as that which they think themselves most likely to do. The large gap between preferred and anticipated jobs (Figure 38) illustrates the low confidence youth have in their ability to secure their preferred forms of future employment, namely small business and formal sector employment. Instead, they express their belief that they will have to fall back on less preferable employment options, subsistence agriculture and wage employment. Young women are more likely to report subsistence farming as their likely future employment, while young men envision their future participation in wage labour.

Figure 38.
Preferred and anticipated jobs among youth

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
Education is the major determinant in the match or mismatch between preferred and anticipated future employment (Annex 2.1). Educated youth are more likely to see themselves meeting their hopes of future salaried employment, while the least educated youth see their future limited to subsistence agriculture. Household economic status is the second major determinant of future anticipated jobs. With greater household wealth, youth expect themselves to move out of subsistence and commercial farming into non-farm business and salaried employment. Vocational training increases the perceived likelihood of being engaged in commercial farming and non-farm business, and family support is important in creating greater opportunities for youth in commercial farming, non-farm business and salaried employment. This effect is strongest for increasing prospects of salaried employment, given the link between family support and education (Chapter 3).

While many youth are engaged in subsistence farming and wage employment – the two jobs with fewest barriers to entry – few want to be engaged in these opportunities in the future, expressing a desire to move into non-farm business, salaried employment and commercial farming (Figure 39). Not surprisingly, only 55 percent of youth report being happy with their current job. Those in small business, the most preferable income-generating activity, display the highest level of job satisfaction (67 percent), followed closely by salaried employment (63 percent), the second preferred option. Wage employment, the least desirable job opportunity provides the lowest level of job satisfaction (49 percent). The following sections look in greater detail at the opportunities these different sectors provide to youth and how these feed into job desirability and satisfaction.

**Figure 39.**
**Current employment and future job aspirations**

![Bar chart showing current employment and future job aspirations](image)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

**Agriculture**

“*There’s not a lot of financial benefit to us, so agriculture is a matter of survival rather than a job*”

Agriculture constitutes the core livelihood for the majority of Ugandan households. While the population depending on agriculture for their main income-generating activity (IGA) has decreased
from 72 percent in 2005/06, it remains high at 66 percent in 2009/10 (UBOS 2010). Our survey reveals that one in every three young people in Uganda find employment in subsistence agriculture. This increases to 40 percent in rural areas, and in Western Uganda nearly half of all youth find employment in this sector. Subsistence agriculture is easily combined with education, which explains its high prevalence. Around 27 percent of youth currently enrolled in school are also engaged in subsistence farming.

Figure 40.
Subsistence agriculture as primary IGA (% Youth)

![Subsistence agriculture as primary IGA (% Youth)](image)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Although subsistence agriculture is the largest sector in which youth engage in, it constitutes the preferred future employment for only nine percent of youth and has amongst the lowest rates of job satisfaction: only half of those engaged in subsistence farming report being happy with their job. Nevertheless, one in four youth still anticipate future employment in subsistence agriculture. 28 and 18 percent of youth with lower and higher secondary education (S1-S4 and S5-S6) are seeking their livelihoods in subsistence agriculture, highlighting the lack of access to alternative opportunities. Most young people (80 percent) report that they prefer to live in urban, rather than rural areas. This suggests that few Ugandan youth desire an agricultural-based livelihood in their future and view it as an entry point into more preferable forms of employment.

Although agriculture is not the first choice for youth, it was generally viewed favourably, particularly in Northern Uganda. Young men in rural central Uganda, for example, highlighted the benefits of food security that agriculture provides. Difficulties associated with agriculture were also emphasised, such as unpredictable weather and rainfall, the amount of energy and labour involved, the stigma attached (See Box 8), and the pressure that youth feel until they can produce a good quantity and quality of output. Hard work is not enough to guarantee success in agriculture, youth emphasised, and this is exacerbated by a lack of capital to make efforts productive.

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29 Youth in Northern Uganda are 11 percentage points more likely to name agriculture as their preferred future employment. In this region, 30 percent of youth name it as their preferred IGA, in comparison with two, eight, 13 and 15 percent of youth in Kampala, Central, Eastern and Western Uganda, respectively.

30 M.S.C a youth-based team of videographers trained in participatory monitoring and evaluation carried out a consultation exercise with youth in Mukono (Central Uganda) based on Youth Watch’s findings. In this instance, youth were told the finding, ‘Youth are not interested in agriculture as their livelihood’ and asked their opinions on this.
The biggest disadvantage to agriculture discussed by youth, however, is the lack of cash income. Since many see agriculture as an entry point into business through savings and capital accumulation, this is critical for them. Youth emphasised that to earn an income, this requires operating at a greater scale or using modern technologies and engaging in more productive activities such as livestock and poultry-rearing. The current difficulties youth face earning a cash income mean that many are sceptical to call agriculture a ‘job’. Young women in rural northern Uganda, for example, explained that since there is little economic benefit to them, agriculture is a means of survival rather than a livelihood. Helping youth to move away from subsistence farming to higher-return agricultural activities will play an important role in improving youth perceptions of agriculture. Another recent study on youth in Uganda, for example, finds considerable interest in agriculture among youth, but limited to higher-returns sectors, such as agro-processing, animal rearing and high value crops (IYF 2011).

Box 8.
Responses from young men during video youth engagement with Youth Watch findings.

“For me, as a youth, I feel shy to dig, because girls will laugh at me”
“Digging is good, but now the modern way of life makes us ashamed of touching the soil”

The shift from subsistence to commercial farming is unattainable for most youth due to the lack of natural and financial assets. In reality, there is little opportunity to move into commercial farming, which offers greater financial returns. While subsistence farmers report an average annual income of 283,418 UgSh, the three percent of youth engaged in commercial farming, in contrast, earn, on average, 805,349 UgSh, the second highest average annual income after salaried employment. Commercial farming also offers a much higher rate of job satisfaction of over 60 percent. However, due to the lack of assets, only 6 and 7 percent of youth report commercial farming as their preferred and anticipated future employment, respectively. As Chapter 2 discussed, few youth own land, and cannot afford the high rental payments necessary for operating on a commercial scale, and where youth own livestock and poultry, ownership is concentrated in lower value assets such as chicken and goats rather than in cattle.

Box 9.
Engaging with youth: Future employment in agriculture sector

Given that agriculture is such a crucial backbone to the Ugandan economy, findings that youth saw the main benefits of agriculture as an entry form into more preferable forms of employment have serious implications for the future economy. Through UNICEF’s report initiative,31 we asked 55,000 youth across the country their perceptions on this finding: Research shows that 1 in 4 Ugandan youth are farmers. Do you want to be a farmer in the future?

31 The outreach of U-report is rapidly expanding as the profile of the programme increases and more young people register to become U-reporters. In the two months between our first and second research findings being sent, membership had increased to 55,000 registered U-reporters. The sample represented here in the map is not nationally-representative, instead decided by those who register for the U-report and respond to our query.
The response rate for the question was phenomenal, doubling the previous most responded poll with 15,148 responses to become the highest response rate ever. Young Ugandans have proven themselves to be vocal and highly opinionated on the subject of agriculture, in both positive and negative ways. Over half of all responses (53.5%) responded that they did want to be farmers in the future, while nearly one in three Ugandan youth (31.4%) said that they did not. Some of the more detailed answers give further insight into the motivations of youth to engage in or move away from agriculture, as the following sections discuss.

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

Source: Unicef U-report

Future aspirations for engagement in agriculture

The majority of positive responses for future engagement in agriculture came with a caveat: young people do want to be involved in farming, but only if it is on a commercial scale and/or as supplementary to their main source of income. Other reasons for which youth expressed their enthusiasm for farming included the importance of agriculture to Uganda’s economy and people and the returns that can be received from it.

Farming is good when it is productive or as a secondary income-generating activity

The variety in responses makes it clear that youth distinguish between different forms of farming, namely subsistence, or ‘peasant’ farming, and farming utilising modern technologies and working at a commercial scale. Most positive responses came with the caveat that young people only want to be farmers when they can work at a large-scale, with modern technologies, in cash crops or animal-rearing, and can earn a good source
of income. In addition, many youth also see farming as a good supplement to other income-generating activities, providing food security and reducing household costs while earning an income elsewhere.

“It depends on the type of farming. If peasantry, a big no!”

“Yes but with a much bigger dream of being an entrepreneur in the agricultural sector”

“Unless commercial farming with modern techniques I won’t be interested”.

“Yes, because being a farmer doesn’t mean only going 2 da graden with hoes”

“If it was going to be mechanised “yes” I would; minus that I can’t “No” because you would be wasting time with rudimentary tools”

“Yes. On top of my career, I have to be a farmer because only hard work pays. We shouldn’t only depend on our low salaries to survive”

Agriculture is important to Uganda

In many responses, farming was highlighted as crucial to the Ugandan economy, the ‘back-bone’ to its economic success, poverty reduction and food security:

“Farming is da back of our home land and am already doing it but on a small scale”

“Yes coz farming is the life line of our economy meaning we can’t live without it”

“Yes...Uganda depend on agric to provide food for increasing pop’n in Ug, & overcome malnutrition”.

“Yes because farming is the only way of overcoming the great poverty in Uganda today”

Returns to agriculture

The potential of agriculture in offering young people with an income and food security was seen as a major benefit of farming among respondents. Farming can also be a means through which to keep living costs down and to accumulate money for school fees or business. This, responses highlighted, was in contradiction to popular perceptions that agriculture is done only by poor people:

“Yes. Certainly I need 2 grow what I eat like rearing hens and grow some vegetable”

“Yes, I am already farmer. I pay my school fees after selling agricultural produce like cassava, maize and vegetable”

“Yes I luv farming too, its where I use to raise ma fees from & money 4 ma basic need. pliz don’t give up lets go farming ma dear fellow youth”

“To be a farmer does not mean that u r poor but the important thing is 4 us 2 plant an income”

“YES. Many p’ple think that farming is done by poor p’ple but they are wrong coz farmers are rich in their way. They can get food, money, use land to grow crop & rear animals & they overcome challenges”
Agriculture as a ‘last resort’
Youth responding both ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to our research finding on one instance gave a similar justification: some said they would be farmers because they couldn’t find any other work, while others that they did not want to be farmers in the future, but may have to fall back on this given difficulties finding alternative opportunities:

“Yes i want 2 be a farmer b’se there isn’t jobs left 4 youth”

“With Uganda’s high level of unemployment, modern agriculture remains d only option!”

“It is not easy to say no unless ur family is well off”

“No, only if i have failed completely in life”

“No i don’t feel like but in certain circumstance i may dig 4 sometimes 4 survival”

Preferences to work outside the agricultural sector
Nearly one third of youth stated their preference not to work in agriculture in the future. In many cases, this was because of their hopes to work in a separate sector, and sometimes these choices were based on the negative image of farming and/or the modernisation of the Ugandan economy. Many responses, too, however, were also down to the difficulties associated in working in agriculture, such as climatic conditions, prices, a lack of land and capital, and limited government support to agriculture.

Youth are over-qualified for agriculture and prefer more ‘modern’ jobs
Young people sent in their preferences to be lawyers, civil servants, doctors, nurses, businessmen and engineers, amongst others, in some cases specifying explicitly that they wanted jobs that they could qualify for. Other responses said that their desire to do other jobs was not due to their preference for a particular job, but attached to their desire not to be engaged in agriculture, given its low status and reputation in comparison with other sectors, and their desire to be doing more ‘modern’ jobs:

“NO, if 1 in 4 are farmers, I’ll take part in other activities like Indutralisation etc”

“NO, I think it’s time for us youth to embrace science and technology in order to transform our country”

“Not at all. my dream z [to be] more than just a farmer”

“Most youths in my village see farming as a dirty occupation hence run to town centers in search for cleaner jobs”

“I’ve completed ordinary level so i don’t want 2 be a farmer”

Working in agriculture is accompanied by a number of pitfalls
Many responses detailed the difficulties youth face working in agriculture. In some cases these challenges meant they did not want to be engaged in agriculture, in others, youth were already working as farmers but were struggling as a result of them. These difficulties, include; a lack of land and financial capital that limit youth to small-scale agriculture, limited incomes, the length of time it takes to see returns, climatic conditions and limited support from the government and other sources:
“NO, being farmer in future is not good because you will not earn a lot of money to help you paying school fees and some crops take long to be ready for consumption or for sale so farming will not help you very fast”

“No, coz gov’t doesn’t put more emphasis on farming+their policy towards agric is fake! youth are only farming for survival”

“No, I am a peasant and to be a farmer u need land, capital and equipment”

“If u don’t have garden how can u be a farmer?”

“No, there r no incentives from gov’t 4 the youth 2 practise farming. We have no land, no inputs en no access 2 markets”

“No coz farming depends too much climate & climatic change is hitting u seriously”

Wage employment

“Youth doing odd jobs aren’t only undermined by society, their village mates don’t respect them either”

Different forms of casual labour provide the core livelihoods support for 13 percent of youth, predominantly in urban areas, where nearly 20 percent of youth secure their livelihoods in this sector. There is significant regional variation in wage employment, which employs a greater proportion of youth in Kampala (22 percent), Northern (18 percent), and Central Uganda (15 percent) (Figure 41) than in other regions. Young men are much more likely to be engaged in casual labour, which provides employment to 17 percent of young men and only 6 percent of young women. It offers, however, the lowest levels of job satisfaction across all sectors, with fewer than half of wage labourers happy with their job. Only five percent of youth report wage employment as their preferred future employment.

Focus groups referred to wage employment as ‘odd jobs’ and gave illustrations of a multitude of activities, such as day labour, fetching water, loading and unloading trucks, domestic work, garbage collections, transporting goods on bicycles, or working on other peoples’ farms. Characterising all of these different types of work are their dependence on physical labour, their low pay and their irregular work. Youth engaged in agricultural day labour, non-agricultural day labour and skilled labour, for example, reported securing only 110, 150, and 200 days of work in the year prior to the survey respectively. Low pay and work irregularity also mean that youth doing these jobs find it difficult to attain respect, with adults assuming that they supplement their meagre incomes through criminal activity. Wage labourers in Kampala, for example, explained that, “No respect at all is given to us because of the work we do. This work is considered for people who are criminals that steal or seduce other people’s wives”.

Interestingly, the average annual income of youth engaged in wage employment is only slightly smaller than those engaged in small business (710,000 UgSh in comparison with 726,000 UgSh). This is predominantly down to gender differences, however, with greater female participation in small business bringing down the average annual income in this sector. On average, women earn less than men and engaged less in wage employment and more in small business.
Figure 41.
Wage employment as primary IGA (% Youth)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Other contributors to low levels of job satisfaction can also be explained by the fact that employers treat youth poorly, and that it is seen as “doing the work of the wealthy”. As young men in urban eastern Uganda illustrate, youth do not like to do ‘odd jobs’ because, “Those involved are not only undermined by society, their village mates don’t respect them either”. Youth engaged in wage employment, therefore, are often characterised as ‘desperate’, including those from very poor backgrounds, single mothers, orphans, young mothers, young men who had become fathers unexpectedly, or migrants.

Youth discussed only one advantage of wage employment, highlighting that it provides cash income through which youth can save and accumulate capital for self-employment. Like subsistence agriculture, wage employment is not perceived to be a bad option, rather it is seen as a pathway to more preferable forms of employment. “Given the poverty we face”, young women in rural central Uganda highlighted, “All youth are capable of taking on these sorts of jobs”. Focus groups emphasised that youth able to ‘overlook’ these jobs because of the attached stigma are those who receive enough financial and material support to have the luxury of ‘choosing’ whether or not to work in such jobs. In contrast to this, the majority of youth must do any jobs they can find in their quest for survival.

Non-farm business and self-employment

“After we receive training we can meet our hopes of being vibrant businessmen”

The entrepreneurial spirit that has led to Uganda being called one of the most entrepreneurial countries in the developing world (Bewayo 2000; Acs et al 2004; Rooks et al 2009) extends to its youth. Nearly half of all youth have been involved in running a business, whether their own, their families’, or another employer’s. Most of them, however, report self-employment as their main engagement with business (27%), even though 14 percent have experience working for a family business, and a further six have been involved in another person’s business. Our survey findings disprove common beliefs that youth are motivated by self-employment only until a ‘better’
job comes around. Almost half of all youth report non-farm business as their preferred future employment, and only five percent see it as a ‘fall-back’ option i.e. reporting business as their anticipated future employment even though it is not their first choice.

Figure 42.
Small business as primary income-generating activity (% Youth)

Small business employs one in five Ugandan youth (Figure 43), with differences by gender, age, and enrolment status. Men are slightly more likely to be engaged in small business, which provides the primary income-generating activity for 22 percent of them, in comparison with 19 percent for women. Engagement in small business also increases sharply with age, reflecting the time it takes to accumulate the capital necessary for self-employment (Figure 44).
Non-farm business as primary income-generating activity, by age (% youth)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Non-farm business is not only the most preferred future employment opportunity for youth, it is also, in many cases, perceived as attainable. While 30 percent of youth reporting business as their preferred future employment do not envision meeting these goals, highlighting the barriers to entry into this sector for youth, over two-thirds of prospective entrepreneurs think that they will succeed with their goals of entrepreneurship. Indeed, as previous sections have discussed, the ability to accumulate capital is seen as the main advantage of subsistence agriculture and wage employment. Youth who save regularly are more likely to report non-farm business as their anticipated future employment. Vocational training is also seen as a facilitator of self-employment, with 57 percent of youth who have received skills training reporting non-farm business as their preferred future employment, in comparison with only 42 percent of those without training. Those completing vocational training courses are also four percentage points more likely to have ever operated their own business.

Working in family businesses starts at school: youth currently enrolled are seven percentage points more likely to have worked in a family business and six percentage points less likely to have started their own. Young women are ten percentage points less likely to have owned a small business and four percentage points more likely to have participated in a family business, and the likelihood of participating in one’s own or family’s business increases and decreases with age, respectively. Kampala youth are between 10 and 15 percentage points more likely than youth in other regions to have worked for another person’s business, representing both the greater number of small and medium-sized businesses that act as potential employers in Uganda’s capital city, as well as the

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33 Perceptions about social norms and the level of criminal activity in the community influence youth employment choices. A higher level of worries about crime and insecurity and lower levels of honesty in the community reduces anticipated non-farm business opportunities among youth.

34 32 percent of vocational training graduates have ever operated their own business, in comparison with 22 percent of youth who have not received vocational training.

35 19 percent of currently enrolled students report working in a family business, in comparison with 12 percent of those not enrolled, and only nine percent of enrolled youth have started their own businesses, in comparison with 33 percent of those who have graduated or dropped out.
higher financial barriers to entry there. Northern youth have significantly less exposure to working in other businesses, which has implications on their experience of running successful businesses.\textsuperscript{36}

Financial constraints make expanding non-farm businesses difficult. One young man in urban Eastern Uganda, for example, said that he did not earn enough income in his business – buying milk in the village and selling it in town – to survive, let alone to expand the business. “We have such small amounts invested in [our businesses] so we can’t be independent”, he explained. This is particularly evident among young women, who operate much smaller and less profitable businesses. The average annual income of young women is 23 percent lower than that of young men, equal to 190,000 UgSh in real terms. As one young woman in urban western Uganda explained as she showed her hands that were grey with charcoal, “Some youth don’t like to do this job selling charcoal, but even if it makes my hands dirty, I do it so I can survive”.

Although across all youth future preferences for salaried employment increase with education level, we see a trend towards opportunity-based entrepreneurship emerging amongst educated youth. Younger university graduates (22-25 years) specify their preference for business over salaried employment in the future, especially in comparison with youth who have only completed A-level (Figure 45)\textsuperscript{37}. This shift is evident when compared with the older cohort of educated youth (26-30 years) who display a higher preference for salaried employment over non-farm business. The government can play a strong role in facilitating this emerging trend by effective service provision, streamlining registration requirements and processes, and increasing access to credit. Figure 45 also highlights that youth with A-level qualifications display greater aspirations to salaried employment, but with time revise their aspirations and expectations to working in non-farm business.

![Figure 45. Preferred employment by age and education level (% youth)](image)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

\textsuperscript{36} In North Uganda, the proportion of youth working in family or other people’s businesses greatly reduces the national average. Only nine and one percent of youth there have participated in family businesses and other people’s businesses respectively. In Kampala, Central, Eastern and Western Uganda, by contrast, 16, 11, 18 and 16 percent of youth have worked in a family business, and 19, 8, 4, and 4 percent have worked for another person’s business, respectively.

\textsuperscript{37} The same patterns are also displayed with anticipated future employment.
Barriers to entry into non-farm business, particularly at a profitable scale, remain high, as evidenced by the 14 percent of youth reporting their desire to be businessmen and women in the future, but not anticipating that they will meet these goals. Over three-quarters of youth (76 percent) have wanted to start a business but been unable to do so, ranging from 67 percent of youth in Kampala and Central Uganda to 91 percent in the North. There was no significant difference in this across rural and urban areas, but young men, 85 percent of whom report their inability to start a business, are 15 percentage points more likely to have been unable to start a business as desired. This likely represents the different types of business commonly started by young men and women, with young men often starting businesses that require a significantly higher amount of capital. Nearly 80 percent of vocational training graduates also report their inability to start businesses, making them four percentage points more likely to be in this position, finding that they have the skills, but not the capital they need to become self-employed in that field (Chapter 2). This is particularly the case in urban areas where youth highlighted the prohibitively expensive license fees necessary for operating small businesses. Young men in urban western Uganda, for example, explained that license fees for a retail shop and garage cost 300,000 and 200,000 shillings respectively, making it impossible for them to start their own ventures. Across the sample, urban youth are three percentage points more likely to report their inability, as desired, to have started a business.

Young men in rural central Uganda distinguished between two ‘forms’ of self-employment, okweyiyza and okwepangila, explaining that, “Okweyiyza is one’s initiative with help from someone else, while okwepangila is one’s initiative without any help”. Given a lack of household support and limited access to finance, they argued, okwepangila is the only option available to most youth. Where possible, parents make contributions to business capital when they can no longer pay school fees. Focus groups emphasised, however, that the extent of this support is limited by their parents’ financial constraints. Young women in urban eastern Uganda explained, for example, that their parents had given them some start-up capital to roast maize and sell vegetables by the roadside when they left school. The amount they could provide, however, was not sufficient to run profitable businesses, they emphasised, since they could only operate at a small scale.

With only nine percent of youth having accessed a loan (Chapter 2), it is unsurprising that access to affordable finance was discussed almost universally as the support youth need most in the transition to adulthood. Without greater access to finance it is unlikely that young people can make the transition from running necessity- to opportunity-based business. Limited access to finance and strong preferences among youth for non-farm business provide a strong argument for expanding possibilities for businesses beyond capital-constrained survival activities to bigger businesses that offer higher profits, greater sustainability, and scope for future expansion.

Capital is not the only necessary ingredient for running a successful business. Where youth lack adequate knowledge of business and financial management skills they may struggle to run successful businesses. Alongside access to finance, youth also expressed their desire for greater knowledge of business management skills, including financial literacy and book-keeping, business skills and marketing, and understanding loans and the terms of loan repayment.

**Salaried Employment**

“Society gives names like ‘munene munene’ to people in these jobs to prove to them they are superior”

Salaried employment is the second most preferred employment opportunity among youth.

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38 In contrast, only 68 percent of young women report that they have, in the past, been unable to start a business.

39 69 percent of urban youth and 78 percent of rural youth report having wanted to but been unable to start a business.
and offers the highest job satisfaction. Nearly one in three youth (31 percent) specify their desire to work in this sector, and 63 percent of those currently engaged in the formal sector report being happy with their job. Focus groups revealed that these jobs are popular given the good salaries they offer, the respect and status that they accord to youth, and the fact that they are not dependent on physical labour. As young men in urban western Uganda illustrate, youth prefer office jobs where they can “...wear ties and be smart, rather than do strenuous jobs like welding”. As young women in rural central Uganda explained, “Society gives names like munene munene to people in these jobs to prove to them that they are superior”. In contrast, those without stable employment are rarely respected or given a place in the community.

Salaried jobs, however, are few relative to the number of job-seekers and difficult to secure. This means that only five percent of youth are currently employed in these jobs, restricted primarily to youth in urban areas and those with higher education. Urban youth are more than three times as likely to get salaried employment as those in rural areas, and salaried employment jumps fourfold, from 7 to 28 percent, if youth move from Higher Secondary (S5-S6) to higher education. That Uganda is producing more graduates than the formal labour market can absorb is creating a sharp divide between those completing Senior 6 and those with higher education in their likelihood of attaining salaried employment. This has led to a large discrepancy between future aspirations of salaried employment and the current employment structure. While 31 and 24 percent of youth report salaried employment as their preferred and anticipated future employment respectively, this far exceeds labour market capacity, given that only five percent of youth currently find employment in this sector.

As these sections illustrate, given the limited asset bases and limited employment opportunities for youth, the transition to work is a long and arduous route. Many youth have hopes to move into better forms of employment in the future, but many too, given these obstacles, see little means through which they can reach these goals. Migration is viewed as one process through which youth can improve their employment prospects. It also, however, exposes young migrants to a number of social and economic vulnerabilities.

Migration

“They leave with a good pair of trousers, but come back with them ripped”

Migration generated much discussion when prompted in focus groups. Employment was universally identified as the underlying motivation of migration, which is largely an internal phenomenon of young people moving from rural to urban areas, or from a small town or city to a bigger one. Despite the fact that 80 percent of all youth report a preference to live in urban areas (Figure 46), only just under one-quarter of Ugandan youth report not living in their home district. Kampala has the highest proportion of youth who have moved to the city from another place (61 percent).

The survey reveals that perceptions of available job opportunities – which differ markedly across rural and urban areas – are a major “pull” driver of migration. In urban areas, over 80 percent of youth anticipate future employment in the two most preferred jobs, namely non-farm business and salaried employment (Figure 47). In contrast, only around half of rural youth envision employment in these sectors, instead predicting a future supported by subsistence farming and day labour, the two least preferable jobs. Education also increases the desire for migration. Those youth currently enrolled in school are four percentage points more likely to express a desire to live in cities, and youth with any education are significantly more likely

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40 Only in North Uganda did youth discuss international migration, highlighting that some youth migrated to the neighbouring South Sudan.
to report this preference by between 16 and 22 percentage points than uneducated youth. These groups are likely to be envisioning better opportunities for salaried employment.

Figure 46.
Preference for living in urban areas (% Youth)

![Preference for living in urban areas (% Youth)](image)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Figure 47.
Anticipated employment opportunities by rural and urban areas

![Anticipated employment opportunities by rural and urban areas](image)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

88 percent of current students would prefer to live in urban areas, while only 76 percent of those not in school would. In addition, only 56 percent of uneducated youth report a preference for living in urban areas, in comparison with 76, 87, 89 and 86 percent of those reaching P1-P7, S1-S4, S5-S6 and higher education, respectively.
“Push” factors are an additional motivating factor for youth migration given the pressures they face to be financially independent and the limited employment opportunities available in villages. Focus groups explained that sometimes they feel that they have no option but to migrate. As young women in urban western Uganda explained, “Many youth migrate because they feel old, so it’s embarrassing for them to ask their parents for things like knickers, clothes, and other basic needs”. Both young men and women emphasised that push factors are stronger among young women, given the more limited employment opportunities they can access in the village.

Given the high preference for living in urban areas, it is surprising that more youth do not migrate. This is mainly due to the social and economic vulnerabilities they face at the destination. Focus groups emphasised that the hopes and goals of migrants are rarely met and that many return home with less than when they left. Kampala’s acute underemployment rate of 40 percent illustrates the difficulties young people face in accessing stable employment in Uganda’s capital city, where although greater economic opportunities prevail, they are subject to much greater competition.

Usually youth migrate with no prearranged job and the anticipation of finding employment on arrival. Focus groups with men emphasised, however, that most fail to find jobs, and where they can, they are limited to irregular and low-paid casual labour or ‘undesirable’ jobs, such as unloading trucks, making chapattis, or brick-making. Limited social connections are a barrier to securing employment in the city. As young men in Kampala explained, “Many youth fail to find work [when they migrate] because they cannot be trusted by employers when they are strangers”. Forging relationships through which to find work, shelter, friendship and support is, therefore, a major priority for young migrants.

Youth also face difficult work conditions on migration, such as heavy workloads and exploitation by employers, including sexual harassment and non-payment. Young men in Kampala spoke of their negative experiences, highlighting that, “We are used. In most cases, young men are asked to perform some work and then don’t get paid. This worries us a lot because we put in too much and end up with nothing”. Likewise, young women in rural western Uganda elaborated that, “Some youth work hard [when they migrate], but their bosses refuse to pay them. They end up stranded with nowhere to stay and with nothing to eat, so they have to sell everything they brought with them to town”.

Social problems are also more pronounced in big cities. Shelter was widely discussed as a big problem, with “the high rent in cities mak[ing] many sleep on the streets”. Other costs of living, particularly food prices and transport, are also a major concern of young migrants given their low incomes. “You may earn 10,000 UgSh for a day”, explained young men in urban western Uganda, “but you have to spend 3,000 UgSh for lunch, 4,000 UgSh for your family costs, and the remainder on transport”. Poor living conditions mean that youth fall ill regularly, and young people face greater peer pressure when they are away from the home environment, increasing their exposure to drug and alcohol abuse, diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and early pregnancy, amongst others. Migrants are also more vulnerable to crime as well as false imprisonment for ‘being idle’. Some groups highlighted the role of language barriers as another obstacle for successful migration.

Vulnerabilities tend to be more pronounced for young women. Young men experience no difficulties renting a room, while female youth – who normally stay with their parents – face greater insecurity on migration. Urban areas may offer them the ability to do jobs they cannot do at home without stigmatisation (such as working in bars) but this also leaves them vulnerable to sexual harassment. Stereotypes of female migrants also create obstacles to them returning home, with many believing that those migrating to find work as housemaids or waitresses instead end up engaged in prostitution or stealing. Focus groups emphasised that while parents are happy to embrace sons when they return from work in the city, they feel that their daughters are ‘tarnished’ by their time in the city.
Very often migrants are unable succeed in finding jobs and earn sufficient income. As young men in urban western Uganda illustrated, “Many return but more miserable than when they left. They will leave with a good pair of trousers, but come back with them ripped”. Furthermore, many, when reality does not live up to expectations, are reluctant to return home. “Youth who have migrated fear to come home and visit their friends or relatives” explained young men in urban central Uganda, “because they are scared of meeting the people they left behind to be healthier than them, when they migrated to attain a better life”.

### Starting families

*“With all of these responsibilities, you can’t have peace of mind, even if you have a job”*

The concept of family is well defined by youth, referring both to the family unit of a mother, father and children, as well as to the house, highlighting the centrality of a house to starting a family (Figure 48). Marriage and children are both central to identity in adulthood and to being valued as community members.

![Youth perceptions of family](image)

N.B: this word cloud is based on the responses of focus group participants who were shown a flashcard with ‘work’ written on it, and asked to say the first words they thought of. The size of the words here represents the number of responses.

One in three Ugandan youth are married, and one in five head their own households. Forty-four percent have children. There are, however, significant regional variation in these indicators, revealing important information on timings and trends in household formation and marriage (Table 17).
Table 17.
Profile of household formation among Uganda youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kampala</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>Northern</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household head (%)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently married (%)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children (%)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average no. children</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. desired children</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is little variation in the proportion of youth that are household-heads, which is a strongly gender-specific phenomenon: 40 percent of young men are household-heads, in comparison with only five percent of young women. Unsurprisingly the proportion of youth that are married and have children increases with age, and married youth are significantly more likely by 37 percentage points to have children: 90 percent of married youth have at least one child, in comparison with 23 percent of unmarried youth. The number of children young people hope to have, at 4.63, is significantly lower than the national fertility rate.

Table 18.
Perceptions of ‘right age’ at marriage and children for young men and women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Right age at marriage (average years)</th>
<th>Right age for children (average years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young men</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young women</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education increases the perceived best age for marriage and having children for both young men and women, and there are interesting gender differences in these perceptions. The survey reveals that youth believe young women should have children and marry at an earlier age than young men. Interestingly, youth believe that the right age for young men and women to have children is before the right age of marriage, and the qualitative research sheds further light on this finding, revealing significant fears among youth with regards to marriage. The ‘right’ age for young women to have children (22.2 years) is also significantly higher than the average age at which young women have their first child, at 18.8 years.

Family formation is associated with a fear of financial responsibility, particularly among young men. Young men in urban central Uganda used words such as Bizibu and Kibinyo to describe the transition to family (problematic, very bad), with one participant referring to ‘family’ as the, “Creation of One’s Nation” to express the gravity of the word. When another group of young men in urban central Uganda were asked about the issues they worried about, they quickly highlighted ‘starting families’, stating that they wished this was not a part of life. Young men in rural central Uganda, too, argued that, “The mind gets tortured the most during this stage”.

Young men recognise that they have limited resources to face the financial responsibilities of a family given their difficulties in reaching financial independence and the recent rate of inflation. “I cannot even buy salt now – how can I provide everything for a family, including salt?”, asked
one group of young men. Young women also recognise the additional pressures faced by young men in this transition. “Young men have more responsibilities than us”, explained one group of young women in Kampala, “They have to worry about food for the family, education for the kids, maintenance of the wife, and about the general welfare of the family”. These fears are also more pronounced in urban areas, where youth face higher un(der)employment rates and costs of living. Thirty percent of urban youth ‘worry a lot’ about the prospect of marriage, in comparison with 19 percent in rural areas. Nearly half of all youth in Kampala (49 percent) worry ‘a lot’ about marriage, more than double the number of youth who express these fears in any other region. Financial insecurity also breeds concerns about finding a wife among young men, given their inability to afford bride price and their worries that young women would not be attracted to them because of their poverty.

School dropout, marking the end of their dependency on the household, instigates marriage for young women, similar to its influence on instigating young men to make the transition to work and financial independence. Since marriage is accompanied by the expectation that young women will be supported by their husband they face fewer financial concerns about marriage. In contrast, young men are expected to have made a successful transition to work prior to marriage so that they have a house and enough income to support a household.

While marriage affords young women with some level of stability and security, deeper discussions revealed that this is not always the case in reality, with these norms changing due to hard times and the attitudes of young men. Many young women worry about their equal role and responsibility in providing for their households. Indeed, as Chapter 2 revealed, whether married or not, young women always provide a greater share of their income to the household. Young women in urban northern Uganda, for example, highlighted that, “These worries [poverty, hunger, poor health and a lack of skills] are faced by both men and women, since they are being looked at as heads of families and at the end of the day should provide food on the table”.

Young women also face non-financial concerns surrounding marriage, including the prospect of early marriage, domestic violence and cheating husbands. One group said that some of their friends were already experiencing domestic violence: although too scared to share this information, their bruises told the story. Young women in rural western Uganda, for example, revealed their worries about finding ‘good husbands’ to treat them well. That only 46 percent of youth – including 48 percent of young women – display positive gender attitudes the insecurity of young women and their lack of power in marital and romantic relationships. Over half of Ugandan youth believe that a man has a good reason to hit his wife if she refuses to have sexual intercourse with him, if she asks him to use a condom and if he finds out she has been unfaithful and/or if she disagrees with him in public. Young women also report the pressures they face to have multiple children, impacting upon their health, looks, and ability to work. Women were keen on learning about family planning, but admitted that their partners are not as willing and open to these methods.

Becoming Adults and Citizens

“We can be called upon to kill snakes, but not to engage in serious talks because we lack jobs”

The difficulties youth experience in accessing employment mean that they face a multitude of barriers to being recognised as adults and citizens, with the transition to adulthood attained only after finding regular work and getting married.

42 Just over half of youth (53 percent) also displayed positive gender attitudes, with this gender awareness slightly higher among young women than young men. The prevalence of positive attitudes amongst females and males was 57 percent versus 49 percent for gender, and 48 percent and 44 percent regarding domestic violence.
Like many African countries, Uganda’s definition of ‘youth’ – those aged between 18 to 30 years – extends beyond the UN definition of youth of 15 to 24 years. While the end of formal education commonly marks the transition to adulthood in developed countries, higher education remains uncommon in Sub-Saharan Africa and the extended duration of youth reflects the length of time youth require to attain the assets they need to function as an adult (Blum 2007; Mabala 2011). Limited assets and unsupportive institutional environments (Chapters 2 and 3) extend their transition periods for work and citizenship, given the subsequent difficulties they face in finding employment and preparing for marriage.

Ugandan youth, therefore, face opposing forces in the transition to adulthood. On one hand, household poverty results in youth being pushed towards the responsibilities of adulthood from an early age. On the other hand, adulthood and citizenship are a distant prospect for the majority of youth, given a lack of jobs and supportive institutions. Without securing employment and being recognised as adults by the wider community, youth’s ability to participate in community activities and decision-making is limited. As one young man in rural central Uganda illustrated, “Hardly anyone can respect a person who is not economically productive. We can be called upon to kill snakes, but not to engage in serious talks because we lack jobs”. Given these opposing pressures, focus groups explained that adulthood cannot be defined by age. Instead, youth define ‘adulthood’ by a series of changes, characteristics and responsibilities that they undergo before becoming adults.

Physical changes associated with adulthood - including menstruation, the development of breasts, the growth of pubic hair, voices breaking, becoming muscular, and growing beards and moustaches – were discussed amongst these changes, but a greater emphasis was placed on issues of personal development, particularly regarding maturity and responsibility. All focus groups discussed changes in behaviour and conduct as youth become adults, including becoming mature in thoughts and reasoning, being able to distinguish between right and wrong, and planning for the future. These different ‘ways of thinking’ were the main distinction drawn between a youth and an adult, with recognition that, “Many people may have their ages change, but they still think like children”.

The transition to family, living independently of parents and accumulating assets such as land are all processes leading to adulthood. Other processes and events marking the transition to family include courtship and marriage, having children, and providing for one’s self and one’s family. Some groups differentiated between having children and being responsible enough to look after them. Young women in rural eastern Uganda, for example, emphasised that it is not having a child that makes one an adult, but the ability and willingness to take care of it. They distinguished between young men and young women, highlighting that, “A female youth of 17 years can produce a baby and take on responsibilities, while a 17 year old man might get a girl pregnant, but is unlikely to be able to take care of it”. The transition to family also means shifting priorities in income allocation as an individual faces new and increasing costs such as school fees, medical bills, taxes and license fees. As young men in rural western Uganda highlighted, “Adults consider many people while planning, while youths can simply plan for themselves”.

Other responsibilities associated with adulthood represent the transition to citizenship. In several cases this was associated with the ability to vote, but more central is the process of becoming involved in decision-making, participating in meetings and events, and providing support and guidance to friends and peers. “It is when you have developmental ideas”, explained young men in urban

43 The African Youth Charter defines a ‘youth’ as someone between the ages of 15 to 35 years (African Union 2006).

44 In further illustration of this point, some groups of young women illustrated that while many young men can and do escape responsibility for unplanned pregnancies, in contrast, young women that become single mothers face the social and economic responsibilities of supporting her child with little support and with few opportunities for income-generation given the additional barriers young women face to employment.
northern Uganda. Likewise, young women in urban western Uganda emphasised that adulthood is “when you can help in solving problems”. The ability to participate meaningfully in decision-making was the key factor named in increased community participation. “People of 18 are only matured physically”, explained young men in urban eastern Uganda, “But they can hardly reason out issues in a mature manner in the same way [as adults], who can take on any serious responsibilities and make viable decisions”. Of the five key transitions, work was rarely included in definitions of adulthood, perhaps unsurprising given that the pressure to work starts early, particularly for young men.

With adulthood, therefore, comes experience and responsibility, including working hard and behaving well, planning for the future in one’s family and employment, taking good decisions in the household and community, and providing guidance and counselling to others. We can see given youth’s definition of citizenship (Chapter 3), that being an adult and a citizen are almost synonymous. These changes take place at different ages depending on gender and socioeconomic status. Focus groups emphasised that youth from privileged backgrounds are insulated from the worries and responsibilities that draw youth towards adulthood at an early age. Given their greater asset bases and supportive environments, they have a greater likelihood of becoming adults through the ‘desirable’ route – through finishing formal education, moving into employment, and starting families. Wealthy youth also do not face the barriers to community acceptance preventing most youth from becoming recognised as adults, being able to earn respect by name alone. As young men in rural western Uganda explained, youth from wealthy families can “earn respect from the community even when they own nothing but their simple family image”.

The survey suggests that difficulties achieving citizenship have an adverse impact on the formation of national pride and identity: young Ugandans do not prioritise “being Ugandan” across a number of different aspects of self-identity. Youth were asked to rank different aspects of their identity, including their religion, their tribe, being ‘Ugandan’ and ‘oneself’. Only one in five youth relate their identity primarily to being Ugandan (21 percent), with the vast majority of youth (59 percent) selecting their own identity as most important to them. One in four Ugandan youth identify being Ugandan as the least important facet of their identity.

National identity is correlated with civic participation. When youth come from poor backgrounds, have limited economic and social participation, and perceive Uganda as backwards or ‘behind’, this feeds into their sense of pride and national citizenship (Box 1045) Youth who participate in voluntary activities, pays alms money to the poor, try to access any social service and perception of corruption in the government are more likely to name ‘being Ugandan’ as their most important identity (Figure 49). Given the size of Uganda’s youth population, its national identity and unity will be greatly determined by them, and the creation of a greater sense of identity among youth will require the provision of a supportive institutional environment that allows meaningful participation of youth at the household, community, and national levels.

Box 10.
Response from young woman during video youth engagement with Youth Watch findings

“I think what has caused that is people being in poor conditions of living, having no jobs and also being behind...We are so behind; they favour those of their tribes, religion and clan rather than others for job opportunities”

45 M.S.C a youth-based team of videographers trained in participatory monitoring and evaluation carried out a consultation exercise with youth in Mukono (Central Uganda) based on Youth Watch’s findings. In this instance, youth were told the finding, ‘Religion and tribe are more important to youth in Uganda than their identity as Ugandans’ and asked their opinions on this.
4.2 FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND UNCERTAINTY

The building blocks for aspirations

“There are so many who have missed out on parental love, care and guidance, which could have groomed them into responsible citizens”

The findings presented so far highlight the challenging situation in which youth negotiate the transition to adulthood. Self-esteem, future certainty and happiness of the youth are adversely affected by the social exclusion they experience as a result of limited opportunities, resources and support. As Chapter 3 discussed, the household and community play a central role in developing social competencies necessary for preparing individuals for future success and playing a ‘protective’ role that gives them greater ability to withstand peer pressure. One indicator of self-esteem is the difference between the real and ‘ideal’ self. While nearly 60 percent of Ugandan youth (57 percent) report their lives are ‘as good as expected’, over a quarter display low self-esteem, reporting their lives as ‘worse than expected’.

Early parenthood, a lack of family support and limited economic opportunities all transcend to various welfare dimensions of youth. Being engaged in subsistence farming and having a child are both determinants of low self-esteem, while school enrolment and financial support from the household are positively associated with higher self-esteem. Young women report a slightly higher self-esteem than young men.

Low self-esteem has multiple adverse impacts. Not only are youth with low self-esteem unhappy with their lives, they are also more likely to perceive the future as highly uncertain, and this uncertainty can reduce their sense of control over their own lives as well as their aspirations (Table 19). Youth with low self-esteem are less likely to display progressive attitudes towards gender.

There are various definitions and terms being used in this literature, e.g. self, self-image, self-concept, self-efficacy etc. The indicator used here is by no means a rigorous assessment of any of these aspects of self-esteem.
and domestic violence, and self-esteem is also associated with the perceptions of youth towards society. High self-esteem is associated with positive perceptions about their communities in terms of responsibility, hard working values, punctuality and honesty.

Table 19.
Determinants ad impact of self-esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compared to expectations, life currently is …</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Same</th>
<th>Worse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness with life [scale 1-10]</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceive future as highly uncertain (%)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive attitudes towards gender (%)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive attitudes towards violence (%)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of existence of values in society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of responsibility [scale 1-10]</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values for hard work [scale 1-10]</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuality [scale 1-10]</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty [scale 1-10]</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently enrolled (%)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (%)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset score [normalised]</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have child (%)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early parenthood (%)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive financial support from family (%)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged in subsistence farming (%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* early parenthood is defined as having the first child before the age of 20

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Over half of youth (53 percent) report high or moderate uncertainty about their future, ranging from 43 percent of youth in Kampala to 62 percent in Eastern Uganda (Figure 50). Young men are nearly ten percentage points more likely to face future uncertainty, reflecting the broader difficulties they face in securing employment and consolidating the assets necessary to prepare for adulthood.

Figure 50.
Youth reporting moderate to high future uncertainty (% Youth)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
Education does not facilitate greater future certainty given the difficult labour market situation facing youth. Youth reaching secondary school are between nine and 13 percentage points more likely to report high or moderate future uncertainty than those with no education, and those completing higher education are also no more likely to report future certainty. Wealth is the only factor with a positive impact on future certainty, with youth from the richest quintile being seven percentage points less likely to report future uncertainty.

Youth were also asked how happy they are on a scale of 1 to 10, where a score of 1 illustrates complete unhappiness, and a score of 10 means complete happiness. The national ‘happiness’ rating of youth is low at only 5.66 (Figure 51), with significant differences by region, urban-rural location, gender, and educational status.

Kampala youth report the highest self-reported happiness status of 6.2. Youth in Western Uganda follow closely behind in terms of happiness, but those in central and northern Uganda are significantly less happy, reporting lower happiness scores by 0.32 and 1.23 points respectively. The Northern region greatly reduces the national average. Rural youth report higher happiness scores by 0.25 points, and young men report a lower happiness score by 0.18 points.

Education, skills, and employment all have significant impacts on happiness. Currently enrolled students report higher scores by 0.25 points (score = 5.9), while those who have received vocational training report scores higher by 0.23 points (score = 6.1). Youth engaged in non-farm business report the highest happiness scores by employment sector (score = 6.0), while those doing subsistence farming report the lowest (score = 5.4). Youth in the wealthiest quintile are the ‘happiest’ cohort, reporting a score 0.22 points higher than those in the bottom quintile (score = 6.1). It is not the poorest youth who are least happy, however. Those in the middle quintile report a significantly lower happiness score than those from the poorest quintile by 0.30 points (score = 5.5). A greater understanding of youth aspirations helps to understand these differences. Where youth are equipped with assets and have some capacity to aspire for a better future, they are more likely to experience disappointment or disillusionment when they cannot envision how they can meet these aspirations.

47 For those in lower secondary (S1-S4) and higher secondary (S5-S6) respectively.
Future aspirations

“Is there anyone in life that does not want to be successful?”

Common to the hopes and goals of Ugandan youth are simple notions of ‘success’, a ‘good life’, and a ‘happy life’. As young women in urban central Uganda asked, “Is there anyone in life that does not want to be successful?” Perceptions of success are not, among most, associated with large houses, fast cars or fame and fortune, but are limited to the tangible requirements of a simple but secure livelihood. Young men in rural central Uganda, for example, explained their vision of a “good life”, which consisted of, “Completing education and working, so we can meet all of our basic needs”.

Determinants of ‘success’ are strikingly similar to the changes necessary to become an adult, highlighting the close linkage between ‘success’ and attaining adulthood. Future goals of ‘personal development’, for example, include work-related development (improving skills, working hard, and finding employment), financial independence, being able to marry and look after one’s children, acquiring assets, owning a house, and good health. Being respected by the community is also central to perceptions of ‘success’. As young men in urban central Uganda explain, “Money that doesn’t lead to success is worth nothing”.

The survey reveals that education and employment are the two most important indicators of success. Youth in Northern Uganda put more weight on the importance of education (40 percent) and less weight on having a job (11 percent), while youth in central Uganda emphasise having a good job (41 percent). As can be expected, as they get older, youth place less emphasis on education and more on employment. Other common indicators of success relate to family, namely having a house and the ability to support parents. Given that the provision of housing is a responsibility that falls upon young men prior to marriage, young women place less importance on having a property than young men (23 percent vs 31 percent, respectively).

Figure 52. Important indicators of success

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
There are also differences in definitions of success across rural and urban areas. Having a good job is emphasised more strongly in urban areas (36 percent vs. 25 percent), while rural youth place a stronger emphasis on having friends and family (10 percent vs. five percent). There are no significant differences in success indicators by wealth quintiles, matching focus group findings that indicate aspirations are broadly similar across all youth. It is the ability to achieve aspiration, which is closely tied to wealth, which differs between groups.

Youth describe role models as those who have acquired the aspirations that they themselves aspire to. In rural northern Uganda, for example, role models were those that “have achieved a higher level of success than the average person”, and young women in rural eastern Uganda illustrated that they respect their role models because of their “position in society”. They used examples of people who have set up businesses that generate good income, who own productive assets such as buildings, bicycles or vehicles, or who have salaried employment. These role models, however, are also viewed as far removed from the majority of youth, particularly in terms of socioeconomic status. Many groups stated that there are no role models in their communities, because they are all in the same disadvantaged position. Having no positive examples restricts aspirations for youth.

4.3 LINKING OPPORTUNITIES AND ASPIRATIONS

“There is no support to make us think we will meet our goals: success is simply a dream we aren't sure whether we'll see or not”.

Not all youth have the same capacity to aspire, with this being strongly influenced by an individual’s assets, resources, and previous experiences in fulfilling aspirations. Poverty and future uncertainty limits the ability of individuals to aspire for a better future. The research reveals three broad categories of youth with regards to aspirations and anticipation of whether or not they can be achieved. The level of support youth receive or can envision in the future is the main feature differentiating between these three groups.

At one extreme are those youth who experience a poverty of aspirations and who envision no better opportunities for themselves in the future. In this category, youth explained that given their circumstances they did not even have aspirations for the future, let alone hopes that they would meet them. With so few assets and no support with which to change their situation, they saw little point in hoping or trying for better outcomes in the future. “Given our circumstances”, young men in northern Uganda emphasised, “Unless something of a miracle happens, it is very unlikely that we will be able to make a living outside what we already know”. An inability to aspire is one risk factor that precedes risky behaviour among youth, making it difficult for youth to generate the qualities they need to achieve opportunities, such as confidence and hard work (Dukes and Stein 2001; Reininger et al 2003; Jessur et al 1995; Oman et al 2005).

At the other end of the spectrum, are youth who have aspirations and are confident of their fulfilment. As well as the capacity to aspire, these youth also believe they have the capacity to achieve their aspirations, they believe. “Of course I will make it!” emphasised one young woman in rural western Uganda, “Every time I go to sleep I see myself achieving my goals, and if I continue to study hard I can make it”. This optimism is generally limited to youth who receive or envision financial or material support to assist them, as well as those who are partway to their goals, having completed schooling or higher education or having received skills training, for example.
Most youth discussing aspirations fell into the third ‘category’, those who report similar aspirations but are unsure of whether they have the capacity to achieve them. As young women in rural eastern Uganda explained, for example, “We do have dreams, but achieving these dreams given our circumstances is not easy”. These youth recognise that meeting their future hopes and goals is conditional on things outside their control, primarily the ability to access greater support and opportunities, such as school fees or vocational training, a more favourable labour market, greater access to finance, and greater support and guidance from their households and communities. Most forms of support highlighted were work-related, such as financial or in-kind input support for self-employment, training, and access to information and career guidance. As young men in urban western Uganda emphasised, “We are already hard-working, we just need a little extra support before we can meet our goals”. One young man in rural western Uganda explained the importance of support in achieving success as, Omusingi gwe gugumiza enyumba, or, ‘Every house needs a strong foundation’.

As this chapter illustrates, youth have strong and adult expectations placed on them without access to the opportunities they rely upon to fulfil them. Many youth are not well equipped to withstand the pressure of making the transition to adulthood without social pressure from peers and adults, low self-esteem and lack of emotional support. The following chapter explores how these factors influence youth participation in risky behaviours. Chapter 6 then concludes by looking at forms of support that can assist a greater number of youth to meet their goals for the future, and in the process, negotiate the transition to adulthood as productive, healthy, empowered and valued citizens.
Chapter 5

YOUTH PROBLEM
Negative Sexual and Reproductive Health Outcomes Among Youth

Issues of sexual and reproductive health greatly affect the growth and development of youth in the transition to adulthood. The previous chapters have contextualised the drivers which contribute to these negative outcomes, which this chapter now explores in greater detail. The absence of economic and social opportunities has a strong influence on youth participation in risky behaviours. As Chapter 4 detailed, Ugandan youth must forge their way in an environment in which it is extremely difficult for them to meet the traditional rites of passage associated with adulthood. This leaves youth to find alternative means through which to redefine adulthood and regain their identities. That in Uganda’s youth bulge youth have more interaction with their peers than with adults, has led to changing norms and behaviours that have contributed and reinforced society’s negative perceptions of youth.

Box 11.
Key findings for Chapter 5

- Youth are aware and concerned of their sexual health risks as a result of risky sexual behaviour, including HIV/AIDS, sexually-transmitted diseases and early pregnancy. Risk perceptions are impacted negatively by socio-economic vulnerability, with the immediacy of unemployment, poverty, a lack of financial independence and the pressure of ‘being a man’ taking precedent over the avoidance of risky sexual behaviours.

- Both young men and women face peer pressure to have sex and experience coercive sex. Young men face greater peer pressure than women, while young women are coerced into sexual relationships more frequently than men.

- While transactional sex – the transfer of money or ‘gifts’ in a sexual relationship – is a routinised practice in Uganda, that this is driven by vulnerability amongst the poorest young women creates significant vulnerability. Their economic vulnerability reduces their powers to negotiate the ‘terms’ of the sexual exchange with regards to condom usage.

- For young women, the risk of early pregnancy overshadows other sexual health vulnerabilities, including HIV/AIDS, and they report facing greater health risks than young men, particularly in urban areas. Youth in the middle-income quintile are more likely to have multiple partners.

- Parents play an important role in delaying sexual intercourse and provide the foundations for more informed decision-making regarding sexual health. Young women living with both parents are more likely to resist peer pressure and delay sexual intercourse.

- Less than a quarter of youth access health services for SRH issues. There is need for more targeted youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services.
5.1 SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: RISK FACTORS AND MOTIVATIONS

“It is very hard for youth to reach their goals these days because of HIV/AIDS. One can easily catch it and die before reaching their goals”.

Health burdens fall disproportionately on youth in Uganda, particularly young women. Discussions surrounding youth in Uganda often centre around their participation in risky sexual behaviours, such as multiple sexual relationships, ‘Something-for-Something Love’, limited condom usage and family planning methods. The repercussions of this are also well-acknowledged, including a high rate of adolescent pregnancy of 25 percent (UBOS 2006) and the heavy burden imposed by HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases. HIV infection rates begin to grow among the 15 to 19 year age group and peaks in the 20-24 year age group. Young women in the latter age category are between three and six times more likely to get infected than young men in this age group (MoH 2006). Discrepancies between sexual and reproductive knowledge among youth and their sexual behaviours highlights the need for a greater understanding of the drivers of risky sexual behaviours.

While in their definitions of health, youth focus broadly on general health and freedom from sickness, in discussions of health concerns, a much greater emphasis is placed on sexual and reproductive health risks that are seen to create additional barriers for youth in meeting their goals. As illustrated by young men in urban western Uganda, “It is very hard for youth to reach their goals these days because of HIV/AIDS. One can easily catch it and die before reaching their goals”. Early pregnancy was named by 30 percent of youth as one of the two biggest health risks to young women, second only to malaria: for urban areas in particular, early pregnancy is by far the biggest health risk (Table 20). For young men, HIV/AIDS is seen as the biggest health risk alongside alcohol abuse. There is notably less urban-rural disparity in sexual health risks for young men, and malaria is feared significantly less than their participation in drug or alcohol abuse in urban and rural areas.

Table 20.  
Biggest risks to health, by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The biggest risk to women’s health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaria (%)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early pregnancy (%)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS (%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The biggest risk to men’s health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaria (%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug (%)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol (%)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS (%)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

A large range of factors influence sexual decision-making among youth, including sexual and reproductive health (SRH) knowledge, the perceived risks of infection or pregnancy, and the opportunity costs placed on health and employment. Our findings reveal that while there is scope
for improving SRH knowledge among youth, young people are generally aware of risks and repercussions. To better understand why youth are not putting into practice their SRH knowledge, we need to pay greater attention to other drivers of SRH risks, including the interplay between poverty and limited financial independence and a lack of educational and economic opportunities. As interviews with two key stakeholders in North Uganda highlighted, while Ugandan youth are scared of sexually-transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, they are more scared of other social and economic problems. As one emphasised, “There is a mindset here that HIV/AIDS takes time to kill me, but if I cannot eat, I will die today”, illustrating that economic improvements in the lives of youth will have broader positive impact on risk-taking behaviour.48

Poverty is a great driver of risky sexual behaviour amongst both young women and young men, but the different pathways through which this occurs is underlined by different and gendered motivations. Sexual relationships are accompanied by money or gifts, which encourage poor young women to enter into these relationships for economic benefit or to meet their basic needs, risking exposure to early pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases. For young men, focus groups clearly illustrated how their time preferences influence risk-taking behaviour, with poverty and a lack of future opportunities and aspirations making many youth feel they have nothing to live for. As young men in urban western Uganda stated, “People were so scared of catching AIDS in the past, but now they want to catch it and die earlier, rather than to be stressed because of poverty”. Likewise, young men in rural central Uganda identified that, “Such diseases [as HIV/AIDS] are basically a result of a lack of jobs. This leads some youth to have sex to forget their problems”. When poverty and pressures facing youth now are so high, the long-term threat of sexual and reproductive health risks is overshadowed. In addition, given the difficulties attaining adulthood through employment and marriage, young men are also motivated strongly by peer pressure to redefine ‘manhood’ through their sexual relationships.

Poverty, peer pressure and multiple sexual relationships

“*Youth are easily influenced by peers and have a desire to discover many things*”

Both male and female groups identified peer pressure as a driver of risky sexual behaviour. Young women in urban western Uganda, for example, highlighted that “Youth are easily influenced by peers and have a desire to discover many things”. Peer relationships become increasingly important for youth as they start to refine both their personal and group identities, and these are particularly magnified when fellow youth are the main form of support available to youth. For young men in particular, youth is a period of exploration and of learning what it takes to be a ‘man’ (Plan International 2011), and, subsequently, peer pressure has been identified to play a strong role in the practice of having multiple sexual partners among Ugandan youth (Unicef 2004).

More than one in five Ugandan youth report feeling peer pressure to have sex, and one in four have felt pressurised to have sexual intercourse in the past (Figure 53). Peer pressure is particularly high in Eastern and Western Uganda, and much lower in Central Uganda, which displays the best employment outcomes among youth. The effects of peer pressure also increase with secondary education. Over one quarter of youth completing lower and higher secondary school (26 percent of youth in each category) report feeling peer pressure to have sex, in comparison with only 13 and 19 percent of uneducated youth and those receiving only primary education.49

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48 These stakeholders were interviewed in light of the two case studies for health-based interventions for youth, as discussed later in this chapter. These findings also match other impact evaluations for health programming for youth. One impact of evaluation of several health programmes in Uganda, for example, finds that HIV/AIDS prevention programmes must be reframed to place more emphasis on risk perceptions of youth (HCP 2008).

49 For youth reaching higher education, the prevalence of peer pressure falls slightly to 22 percent.
There are distinct gender differences in perceptions of peer pressure, and peer pressure and sexual coercion are closely interlinked. 27 percent of young men report feeling peer pressure to have sex, making them eight percentage points more likely to be exposed to this than young women (of whom only 17 percent report this phenomenon). However young women are more likely to report ever having been pressurised into having sex. This suggests that while for young men this concept is linked more strongly to the traditional definition of peer pressure of ‘trying to fit in’, for young women the choice is not in their hands. Male domination in sexual decision-making, persistent verbal coercion and economic offerings may underlie this. Household wealth is an important determinant for young women of feeling pressure to have sexual intercourse. This reiterates the important influence poverty has on young women’s sexual decision-making. Young women from poorer households feel greater peer pressure to have sex, but this effect is also concentrated in poorer villages. This means that young women in poor villages feel more pressure to have sex regardless of wealth status, and poorer girls in relatively better-off villages do not feel the same extent of pressure (A2.6).

The correlation between feeling peer pressure to have sex and being coerced into sex is not only limited to young women. Across all youth, only 17 percent of those who do not feel peer pressure to have sex have been coerced into having sex, but this rises to 54 percent of youth that do feel peer pressure. This correlation is much stronger for young men than young women (Figure 54), suggesting an interesting interpretation of coercive sex. For young men too, these findings suggest that peer pressure can be coercive rather than simply a matter of trying to ‘fit in’. This is a finding that merits further exploration, but suggests that large numbers of young men also feel unable to withstand the pressure they feel from their peers relating to sexual activities. It also highlights that programmes working with young men to change social norms and attitudes could have a real impact on changing behaviours of young men, which in turn will have a positive

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Figure 53.
Youth experiences of peer pressure in sexual relationships (% Youth)

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

The correlation between feeling peer pressure to have sex and being coerced into sex is not only limited to young women. Across all youth, only 17 percent of those who do not feel peer pressure to have sex have been coerced into having sex, but this rises to 54 percent of youth that do feel peer pressure. This correlation is much stronger for young men than young women (Figure 54), suggesting an interesting interpretation of coercive sex. For young men too, these findings suggest that peer pressure can be coercive rather than simply a matter of trying to ‘fit in’. This is a finding that merits further exploration, but suggests that large numbers of young men also feel unable to withstand the pressure they feel from their peers relating to sexual activities. It also highlights that programmes working with young men to change social norms and attitudes could have a real impact on changing behaviours of young men, which in turn will have a positive

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50 27 percent of young women report having been pressurised into having sex, making them five percent more likely to experience this than the 24 percent of young men that report this.
outcome on young women by reducing the pressures they face (See Case Study 1). That young men play a leading role in peer pressure on others is evident with both young men and women more likely to feel peer pressure if they have more male friends.

Under- and unemployment is another major determinant of peer pressure to have sexual intercourse (A2.6), and this effect is stronger for young men. Un(der)employed youth are around 10 percentage points more likely to experience peer pressure to have sex. These effects are also evident at the community-level, with a greater proportion of youth feeling peer pressure to have sexual intercourse in communities with higher rates of youth un(der)employment.

Peer pressure among young men is closely linked with social norms of what it takes to “be a man”. These pressures become particularly strong when young men find themselves having to redefine traditional forms of masculinity. Given their inability to follow traditional paths to adulthood marked out by work and marriage, it is hard for them to challenge these attitudes among their friends and peers when facing such challenges to their masculinity (Plan International 2011). The status of young women is not shaped by employment in the same way, so they do not face the same challenges as young men in this domain. Where young men engage in these risky behaviours and women have little negotiation power in sexual relationships, however, their vulnerability to health risks is high.

Figure 54. Peer pressure and coercive sexual relations by gender

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Eight percent of youth in Uganda report being in multiple relationships, ranging from 6 percent in Kampala to 10 percent in the West (Figure 55). Young men are 4 percentage points more likely to have multiple sexual relationships, with 10 and 6 percent of young men and women reporting these behaviours, respectively. Rural youth are three percentage points less likely to be engaged in multiple relationships. Wealth status is a determinant of multiple sexual relationships, with youth in the middle income quartile significantly more likely to be engaged in multiple relationships.

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Communities defined by enumeration area
10 percent of youth in this category report being in multiple relationships. There are no other significant differences in this indicator by wealth status, an unsurprising finding given the financial costs of transactional sexual relationships. Poverty, therefore, means that young men from poorer backgrounds are unlikely to afford the costs of multiple relationships, while wealthier youth do not need to redefine ‘manhood’ through this route. There are no significant differences in the likelihood of being in multiple relationships by age, education or marital status.

An individual’s perceptions of their partner’s faithfulness also influences engagement in multiple sexual relationships. Young men and women are both more likely to have multiple partners if they are unsure about their partner’s faithfulness or if their partner is also engaged in multiple relationships. Only 3 percent of youth who believe their partner is not in multiple relationships are in multiple relationships themselves, but this increases to nearly one-third of youth whose partners’ are in multiple relationships and to 12 percent of youth who are unsure of their partners’ faithfulness.

Behavioural change will be integral to improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes among youth, and campaigns for behavioural change have had significant success in Uganda, as the Case Study in Box 11 illustrates. This requires, however, that campaigns identify and tackle the underlying drivers of risky sexual behaviours and even where programmes aim to reduce the vulnerability of young women, must focus equally on young men, given their role in driving peer pressure and vulnerability.

Figure 55. Youth engaged in multiple relationships (% Youth)

![Bar chart showing youth engaged in multiple relationships by region in Uganda.]

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Programmes aimed at behavioural change were also named as integral to the decline of HIV/AIDS in Uganda, which was earlier considered to be one of the world’s earliest and best success stories in overcoming HIV/AIDS given its substantial declines in prevalence and incidence during the 1990s (USAID 2002)
The Youth Empowered and Healthy (Y.E.A.H) campaign was established in 2004 to improve health outcomes and empower Ugandan youth through a variety of mass media campaigns. Designing their campaigns based on in-depth research findings mean they have successfully addressed some of the main drivers of negative health outcomes among youth. Research commissioned by Y.E.A.H prior to campaign design highlighted the centrality of young men to improving sexual and reproductive health outcomes among both young men and women. These findings were used to develop two major campaigns, *True Manhood* and *Be a Man* to facilitate behavioural change among men to encourage respect, faithfulness and safe sex, reducing the number of men with multiple sexual partners, improving communication and respect between partners, and encouraging mutual disclosure of HIV status.

These messages are disseminated through multiple channels. A weekly national radio programme, *Rock Point 256*, incorporates these lessons in stories based around the major social issues facing Ugandan youth. Translated into eight local languages, the programme reaches up to 50 percent of youth across the country. Poster and billboard campaigns highlighting these messages also bring these lessons to a large number of young and adult men. Y.E.A.H also encourages behavioural change through community outreach sessions run by trained Youth Advisory Groups, or ‘YAGs’. Taking these sessions to the youth is critical for improving the outreach and exposure of more vulnerable groups, including youth from poor households, uneducated youth, and those living in remote rural areas. Using posters and trigger videos, these sessions help youth of similar ages and backgrounds to discuss what they would do in real life situations to be safe and responsible.

That activities are participatory and ‘youth-friendly’ is key to their success. As one YAG in Gulu explained, youth like “Edu-tainment” that provides messages that are educative but also entertaining and interactive. Y.E.A.H have also learned through these experiences that these messages must be brought to them by other youth. Where sessions are led by adults, young people may be happy to listen, but are less interactive and take less away from the session. Impact evaluations of Y.E.A.H’s campaigns have highlighted the campaign’s outreach and revealed improvements in sexual and reproductive health knowledge, attitudes, and decision-making among youth exposed to the campaigns, particularly among young men (HCP 2008). One YAG discussed with pride the change he has seen in his community since activities began, saying that, “Some youth have gone back to school, and many have been helped to make the right decisions for a productive and healthy lifestyle, and these changes have also changed the perception of young people in the community”.

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**Case Study 1:**
Enhancing Programme Efficacy Through Research: Educational Campaigns for Improved Health Outcomes among Youth, Y.E.A.H’s “Be A Man!” Campaign
Economic vulnerability and transactional sex

“What would you do if your only form of support was men, who may act as a source of finance but only in return for giving them your body?”

As the previous section touched upon, poverty and economic vulnerability are a major driver of risky sexual behaviour among young women. Increased vulnerability to negative health outcomes arises from a lack of bargaining power in transactional sexual relationships, a practice through which men offer financial or material gifts in exchange for sex. Transactional relationships have become a social norm in many Sub-Saharan African countries, with transactions considered to be a sign of respect and appreciation from a man to a woman (Gillespie et al 2007; Samara 2010; Joshi 2011; Nobelius et al 2011).

While the practice is common across all wealth categories, for poor young women, resorting to sexual exchange is one way in which they can support their livelihoods amidst difficult conditions that include limited economic opportunities and early motherhood. Young women in rural central Uganda, for example, illustrated that, “Girls have basic needs too, but have no way to meet them, so they have to engage in [these behaviours]”. Another group of young women in rural central Uganda gave a vivid description of the pressures driving young women to this behaviour. “Young people don’t have school fees and they lack jobs, so their poor economic background forces them to act in this way that is bad. It is poverty at home that forces one to give in to the demands of the opposite sex”. Another girl highlighted the gravity of this vulnerability when she emphasised that, “Once a girl has dropped out of school she will be tempted by all avenues to survive. A girl may decide to have sex with a man just to earn 5,000 shillings to buy essentials”. Lacking support from their parents and unable to meet their basic needs on their own, young women find it difficult to avoid these advances. Young women in urban western Uganda emphasised this lack of support, when they asked angrily, “What would you do if your only form of support was men, who may act as a source of finance but only in return for giving them your body?”.

Understanding the different motivations for entering transactional relationships is necessary for designing targeted interventions for reducing the vulnerabilities that arise from them. For those entering into relationships for love or luxury gifts it may be better to emphasise health education and family planning. For those entering relationships for survival needs, however, economic empowerment will be more effective for reducing their dependence on transactional relationships. Given the context, it is unsurprising that young women are aware of their increased vulnerability in sexual health, particularly in terms of early pregnancy, which is viewed as one of the biggest health risks facing them. Nearly half of young women (47 percent) believe they face aggravated health risks in comparison with young men. Likewise, more than one-third of young men (35 percent) also share these beliefs.

“As much as boys too can be worried of HIV/AIDS”, argued young women in urban western Uganda, “they do not have to worry about getting pregnant”. Concerns of early pregnancy are exacerbated by the fact that fathers of unplanned children rarely take responsibility. Young women report that often they are left to drop out of school and fend for themselves after being ‘abandoned’ by the fathers of their children, and in some cases, their own parents. Young men, too, highlighted this behaviour, with those in urban western Uganda explaining that, “They [young women] can easily get pregnant, but the burden of looking after their babies is left to them, and this is very difficult because it is so hard for them to get jobs”.

Focus groups discussed several strategies for preventing early pregnancy outside marriage, emphasising the importance of helping school dropouts to work, given that financial independence makes it easier for young women to avoid advances from men. The role of parental support
was also highlighted. Young men and women both explained that parents tend to provide more resources to daughters in order to help them meet their basic needs, given their susceptibility to resorting to transactional sexual relationships.

Parental support also influences participation in risky sexual behaviours and plays a strong role in delaying sexual intercourse. Controlling for age (the major determinant of living with parents) we looked at the likelihood of 18 year olds having made their sexual debut by different household structures (Figure 50). An 18 year old young woman living without parents has a 70 percent likelihood of having ever had sex, while an 18-year old woman living with both of her parents has only a 46 percent likelihood of having had sex. Interestingly, there is no additional interaction effect for an 18-year old living with both parents. In addition, young women who feel comfortable talking to their parents about friends are also six percentage points less likely to feel peer pressure to have sexual intercourse, highlighting that an open relationship with parents or guardians can play an important role in helping youth to cope with peer pressure and delaying sexual intercourse.

Figure 56.
Likelihood of 18-year old youths ever having had sexual intercourse, by household structure

Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011

Youth-friendly information and health services

“We are encouraged to use family planning, but this has led to complications such as tumours and deformed babies”

The survey reveals significant scope for improving sexual and reproductive health (SRH) knowledge and access to youth-friendly health services. Less than 40 percent of Ugandan youth feel confident about their SRH knowledge, feeding into low self-reported health statuses (Chapter 2). The vast majority (94 percent) of youth report their desire to know more about SRH. Confidence in SRH knowledge is correlated with age and higher levels of education (Figures 57 and 58).
Those reaching secondary and higher education are dramatically more likely to be confident about their knowledge on sexual and reproductive health, being between 14 and 19 percentage points more likely to display confidence in these issues than uneducated youth. Likewise, young people between the ages of 18-21, 22-25 and 26-30 years are 10, 14 and 20 percentage points more likely to feel confident about their knowledge of sexual and reproductive health than those in the lower age category (15-17). Even where youth feel confident about their SRH knowledge – primarily in Kampala, where nearly three-quarters of youth are confident in these issues – many (92 percent) still express similarly high desires to further this knowledge. Some grave misconceptions about family planning also highlight the need for greater SRH knowledge. Young women in Kampala, for example, stated that, “Although we are advised to use family planning methods, this has led to complications such as developing tumours and deformed babies”.

Figures 57 and 58.
Confidence with sexual and reproductive health knowledge by age and education

Most youth – between 62 percent in Northern Uganda to 84 percent in Central Uganda – report their preference for getting SRH information from health professionals. While most young women (52 percent) prefer to receive this information from their parents, only one-quarter of young men do. Younger cohorts also prefer to receive sex education from their parents, falling from 54 percent of youth aged 15 to 17 to only 29 percent in the oldest age group.53

Around 45 percent of Ugandan youth have visited health facilities for sickness over the past six months (Figure 59), with less than 20 percent having visited in the same period for SRH services. One-third had visited a health facility for an HIV/AIDS test. There is significant regional variation in these indicators, with youth in Northern Uganda being 16 percentage points more likely to have visited health facilities and 21 percentage points more likely to have visited for HIV testing than those in Kampala.

53 Forty, 34 and 29 percent of youth aged 18-21, 22-25, and 26-30 report their desire to source SRH knowledge from their parents. This means that youth aged 15-17 are nine, 13 and 16 percentage points more likely to prefer parents as a source of knowledge than the three older age categories.
Figure 59.
Health service utilisation in past six months (% Youth)

There are no significant differences in health service utilisation across rural and urban areas, with differences in utilisation being primarily due to differences in household wealth. The wealthiest 50 percent of youth in each region are more likely to utilise services (Figure 60). While the Northern region displays the highest utilisation rates, inequalities in utilisation for all three services are most dramatic here, highlighting the importance of providing well-targeted and youth-friendly health services in this region (See Case Study 2).

Young women are significantly more likely to visit health facilities. Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) and one-third of young women have visited a health facility for family planning and HIV testing in comparison with 16 and 31 percent of young men for these services, respectively. Visiting health services for family planning services increases with age, while secondary education and above also increases the likelihood of visiting a clinic for an HIV/AIDS test.54 Married youth are significantly more likely to utilise both family planning and HIV/AIDS testing services by 11 and 7 percentage points.55

54 Educational attainment does not influence utilisation of sexual health services, but secondary education and higher is positively associated with having had a recent HIV/AIDS test. One third, 45, and 52 percent of youth attaining lower secondary, higher secondary, and higher education have utilised these services, in comparison with only 34 and 25 percent of uneducated and primary-educated youth.

55 One-third and 43 percent of married youth have utilised family planning and HIV/AIDS testing services in the past six months, in comparison with only 13 and 27 percent of unmarried youth.
Figure 60.
Health service utilisation by household wealth level (% youth)

Box 13.
Case Study 2:
Expanding access to youth-friendly health services: Straight Talk Foundation Youth Centres

Straight Talk Foundation (STF) youth centres were established in five districts of Northern Uganda to supplement its media campaigns. Together these programmes seek to improve sexual and reproductive health knowledge, behaviours, and outcomes and to improve access and utilisation of SRH services among youth. Northern Uganda was selected for these centres given the large regional inequalities it displays in health indicators and to offer a place to help young people traumatised by the war.

Gulu’s youth centre was established in 2004 when tens of thousands of children and youth were fleeing their villages to stay in safe places like the town centre because of LRA abductions. After the conflict ended, the youth centre moved away from the provision of shelter and psychosocial support towards HIV/AIDS programmes and health service delivery given the major health vulnerabilities the conflict’s legacy left behind and high demand for these services in the area. Total peace still does not prevail in the region, explains Dennis, the centre’s manager, given that the 20-year conflict was fought on the backs of many child soldiers, interfered with the upbringing of children and broke cultural traditions of family and community. Youth in the region, therefore, are particularly vulnerable.
The clinic offers a variety of health services for youth, including HIV/AIDS testing, counselling and referrals, psychosocial support and counselling, STD screening and treatment, and family planning services. Recognising the differences between youth and adults in service delivery is key to its ability to attract youth. The clinic feels much more like a youth centre than a health facility, with paintings on the wall, a football pitch in the front, and a tent set up so young people can sit in the shade for recreation or outreach sessions. A television set screens movies while young people wait for their appointment.

Since youth have less patience and don’t like to queue, these features act as both a ‘bait’ to attract youth to the centre and an incentive to stay and wait for services. Youth can play indoor and outdoor sports and games such as football, volleyball, netball, badminton, chess, drafts, ludo and snakes and ladders, and when they visit for these activities youth are exposed to the health services and campaigns that are highly visible throughout the centre. A great deal of effort has been made to create a sense of membership and belonging to the club rather than a place for accessing services, so to prevent the stigma attached to going to the centre and encourage young people to keep coming back. Likewise, the staff go to great lengths to join in these activities and offer services without judgement.

Given the limited outreach of the centre, staff have also organised a system of outreach in rural schools and communities so they can access similar messages and campaigns. This is especially important in the region, Dennis explains, because people are now moving back to their lands after the conflict. While HIV/AIDS awareness has increased throughout Uganda, people in the North have been cut off from campaigns and awareness of the illness and how it spreads is lower. A high incidence of rape during the war also contributes to the higher rates of HIV/AIDS the region displays. With the population returning to their villages to start families, he says, this is the time for even stronger interventions in these areas to stop further spread of the disease.

As this chapter has illustrated, risky sexual behaviours commonly associated with youth are outcomes of a much broader set of constraints and challenges facing youth in all aspects of their lives. The social and economic pressures driving youth participation in risky sexual behaviours – which play a strong influence at both the individual and the community-level – highlight that preventive health measures must not only treat the outcomes of these behaviours, but also engage with and address their root causes. It is clear that the burden of poverty, limited opportunities, and the responsibilities youth face in meeting basic needs provide great emotional and physical pressures on both sexes, which are magnified by the strong sense of peer pressure evidenced across young Ugandans. These pressures are particularly strong for young men, whose two traditional routes to adulthood are difficult to attain given limited economic and social opportunities. The “Be a Man” campaign is one example of how a well-designed programme can address gender-specific drivers and motivations of youth to engage in risky behaviours. Young women from poor backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to becoming engaged in transactional sexual relationships out of necessity, and programmes aimed at their economic empowerment will play an important role in reducing these motivations and allowing them to make more informed decisions with greater negotiating power.
As Chapters 1 to 5 have illustrated, youth are trapped in a transitional limbo on the path to adulthood, burdened with the responsibilities of adulthood without being equipped with the resources or support they need to confront the challenges they meet along the way. The limited assets and the minimal support they receive from their households and communities mean that youth are exposed to limited opportunities and multiple obstacles in their attempts to find employment, get married, start a family, and become respected citizens. The transition to adulthood is a complex and difficult pathway, which as the Harnessing Youth Potential framework illustrates, is a dynamic process that can lead to two outcomes, either as a vicious cycle to ‘Youth Problem’ or a virtuous cycle towards ‘Youth Promise’. The challenge for policy and programmes will be to ensure that this vast youth potential is harnessed through effectively addressing the multiple challenges youth face. These challenges are not only daunting for youth themselves, but also for Uganda, since the outcomes for youth will be central to shaping its socioeconomic development for better or for worse.

Realising this potential, however, will require more comprehensive packages of support and a shift towards greater respect, recognition and support of youth. Helping youth in these challenges is not about ‘solving’ the problems people associate with youth, but about more effectively identifying the resources and support they need throughout the course of youth and improving their access to them. So far, emphasis has been placed on negative outcomes of youth development. As Chapter 5 revealed, however, it is the broader constraints facing youth in every aspect of their lives that are the main drivers of these behaviours. The Harnessing Youth Potential gives a framework for understanding the types of intervention that will promote a greater number of positive youth outcomes.

The two main themes that emerge from these findings that must influence policy and programmes for youth are ‘employment’ and ‘support’. Policy and programmes for youth, therefore, must focus on a two-pronged approach to youth development, increasing their access to the different forms of assets and resources they need as well as improving the institutional environment in which youth are situated. Only through real structural change and the creation of a more supportive environment for youth – reaching from the household and community, to national policy – will it be possible to see positive youth development on a scale commensurate with Uganda’s large youth cohort.

While these themes crosscut across the whole youth population, our research also highlights the many faces of youth poverty. There is incredible heterogeneity in opportunities and constraints among youth by gender, region, rural-urban location, educational status and employment category, calling for well-targeted interventions across different categories of youth. The following sections look in turn at the two main thematic areas, before Section 6.3 discusses the heterogeneity among youth.
6.1 EMPLOYMENT

Support for self employment

Improving employment outcomes among youth is critical to the Ugandan economy as well as to its broader socioeconomic development. Costing $142.6 million a year to the Ugandan economy, large youth under- and unemployment rates limit the country’s growth potential. Without improvements in these spheres, another generation of productive potential will remain underutilised and youth will continue to be seen as a problem rather than for their promise.

Employment is central to all aspects of youth’s lives and development. It is critical to their ability to meet their current and future needs, to save and invest for the future, and in doing so, to open up greater economic and social opportunities for themselves and their households. Furthermore, it is a prerequisite to meeting the major milestones associated with adulthood, including the ability to get married and start a family and to be recognised as respected members of the community. Difficulties securing adequate work place particular pressure on young men, whose traditional identities and roles are closely tied to these achievements and their responsibilities as household heads and ‘providers’ for the household.

The majority of youth work to survive rather than to strive, given the multiple difficulties they face arising from vastly limited employment opportunities, limited assets and resources, and the minimal financial, material and emotional support they receive. Youth do, however have strong desires and plans to access better opportunities in the future (Box 13), particularly in moving into small business and self-employment. This sector has, for youth, significant potential if comprehensive support packages can be designed and implemented.

Box 14.
Setting the context: Youth employment

The majority of youth want to be employed in:

- Small businesses and self-employment (48 percent)
- Salaried employment (31 percent)

BUT, the majority are engaged in:

- Subsistence farming (31 percent)
- Small business (20 percent)
- Wage employment (13 percent)

And many fail to find regular work:

- 27 percent of youth are underemployed
- 5 percent are unemployed

There is no ‘silver bullet’ for assisting youth in meeting their preferences for small business and self-employment. Many do not have the necessary resources for starting businesses – including capital and skills, amongst others – and many other youth start small businesses that fail. The challenges in terms of employment outcomes will, therefore, be both to help more young people to start businesses, and to equip them with the ability run them successfully. This requires a more comprehensive package of support than current programmes for youth employment provide.
Vocational training is the main form of support associated with improving prospects for self-employment. Respondents reported their strong beliefs that vocational training would improve their chances of self-employment, and the survey confirms a positive correlation between the receipt of vocational training and self-employment. Nearly one in three Ugandan youth receiving skills training, however, are unable to utilise their skills learnt in income-generation, highlighting the importance of combining vocational training with complementary forms of support. Identifying the additional supports necessary requires looking at the needs of potential businessmen and women both in terms of increasing the assets they need and in creating an enabling institutional environment.

One of the most easily visible barriers to entry into this sector is access to finance. Many youth lack capital and/or the ability to access lump sums of capital for investment. While having a loan increases the likelihood of a young person being engaged with small business, only nine percent of youth have a loan from any source, illustrating the limited sources of finance Ugandan youth have, even among older age groups. Access to affordable finance will, therefore, be a critical component of youth employment programmes, as focus groups specified unanimously. The need for accessible finance extends to savings. While a savings culture is evident among youth, their limited cash incomes and access to formal savings options means that few youth save regularly and most save at home where funds are easily spent or stolen. Unable to save or borrow larger sums means that for those running small businesses, most are so small they cannot provide enough profit both to meet household costs and offer prospects for expansion. This is particularly the case for young women. That they run predominantly ‘survival’ businesses is evident in their average earnings, which are significantly lower than those of young men in self-employment.

Given the multiplicity of barriers to small business and self-employment, however, improving access to finance is no guarantee of improved outcomes in small business. This calls for integrated youth employment programmes that go beyond vocational training and/or access to finance to recognise the broader constraints to starting and running successful businesses (Box 14). As young men in rural western Uganda explained, highlighting the multi-dimensional obstacles they face to self-employment, “We have tried so many times and we have failed to be successful. We don’t know how to make proper use of the resources we have available, we lack finance, and we don’t have anywhere to operate from on a large scale”. Financial literacy, marketing skills, customer service and other business skills will also impact upon the profitability and sustainability of small businesses. The benefits of such programmes will be maximised where they are implemented alongside structural changes in the economy. Small businesses need space in which to operate, access to services and infrastructure, affordable license fees, and streamlined regulations and registration processes. Improving service provision and the regulatory environment is important to improving the productivity of non-farm business. Given the increasing importance of this sector, this should be an important policy priority.

Box 15.
What will effective programmes for youth employment look like?

Programmes need to be multi-pronged to tackle the multi-dimensional constraints youth face to enhancing their skills and putting them into practice through productive self-employment. Alongside vocational training, these should consider:

Skills Certification: Vocational training graduates with formal certification of their skills have more successful labour market outcomes. Making linkages with formal certification processes could play a major role in increasing skills utilisation.
Access to Finance: Unable to access lump sums of investment capital, youth face significant barriers to running profitable enterprises. Increasing access to formal savings and loan products will give youth the ability to choose options best-suited to their needs.

Work experience: Youth may also benefit from on-the-job work experience prior to embarking on self-employment in a particular field or sector, putting into practice and improving the practical skills learnt at the same time as expanding on wider business skills. Linking young people with potential employers will assist a greater number of youth to gain practical experience.

Business Acumen: Successful businesses cannot be built on practical skills alone. Entrepreneurs also need to know a broader range of skills: how to balance books, how to market products and services, and how to give good customer service, amongst others.

Mentorship: Formal training is not the only source of these skills. Self-confidence will also be developed through shared learning of successes and failures. The two case studies in this chapter illustrate how groups give opportunities for youth to gain strength and self-confidence through sharing their experiences.

Improvements in service provision and the regulatory environment: Where small businesses operate in the informal economy they are accompanied by significant risk. Potential entrepreneurs will be offered greater security and lower costs if there are improvements in services and infrastructure. Affordable license fees and a streamlined regulatory environment would allow a greater number of youth entrepreneurs to move away from the informal sector.

One successful youth programme highlights the importance of incorporating these multiple components within an integrated programme. BRAC’s Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents (ELA) programme takes an integrated approach to enhancing the social and economic development of adolescent girls and young women in Uganda, providing skills and financial literacy training alongside access to credit. The social components of the programme – including the provision of a safe space for socialising and learning, life skills training and mentoring – play an equally important role in both social and economic objectives, as the case study of Judith Mugula illustrates.

Box 16. Judith Mugula: Social and economic empowerment through BRAC’s integrated approach to youth development

At six in the morning, shortly before the sun rises, 21-year-old Judith is rising early to get “her babies” up, fed, and ready for school before she goes to work. She lives with her two sisters, her twin brothers (still at school), her son, and nieces and nephews in Iganga, East Uganda. As the main income-earner for the household, alongside food and other living costs, her income also supports school fees for her son, nephew, and twin brothers. Since we last visited Judith she has a new ‘daughter’ to support: after her brother recently died, his nine-year-old daughter was sent to live with her. This has
increased her costs substantially, as in addition to her niece’s living costs and school fees she has also had to take on a full-time helper in the household, who she pays 15,000 shillings a month on top of her food costs.

After sending the children to school, Judith begins the long walk across town to her grocery shop. Her shop is on the other side of town, a good half an hour’s walk away from her house, but here the rent is cheaper and there is a good customer base. On days when she has a little extra money she takes a boda boda (motorcycle taxi), but on other days she leaves early to walk, arriving at her shop at 9am sharp, where she stays until closing time at 10pm. Although the shop opens at 6am, her mother, who sleeps there overnight to protect against thieves, looks after it before she arrives. The shop is open seven days a week from 6 am until 10 pm, an exhausting schedule, but one which is imperative in running a successful business, Judith explains, because if you are shut one day, customers will not come back the next.

Having had an initial meeting with Judith several months prior, I was aware that her main business was a grocery shop selling a range of foodstuffs. On arrival at the shop, however, I was overwhelmed by its size, having envisioned something much smaller. The variety of goods on sale is considerable, ranging from staples such as rice, beans, wheat, flour, sugar, maize, peanuts, potatoes, fresh vegetables, eggs, and cooking oil, to cold drinks, cigarettes, sweets, snacks, toiletries and cleaning products, socks and underwear, and household goods such as pots, pans and padlocks. The most popular item in the shop is a small bag of cold borehole water, selling at 100 UgSh a piece. Although her predominantly poor customers are purchasing small quantities of low value items – many, for example, come to select only one or two tomatoes – the regularity of her customers throughout the day means that by the end of the day, the shop has brought in a high turnover. The only surprise I feel when she tells me she has 3.5 million UgSh invested in the shop, therefore, is how a young woman of Judith’s age, from a poor background, and with a large number of dependents to look after has accumulated enough capital for a business this size. The story of her success requires going back several years.
When she was just 16, Judith invested 70,000 UgSh in her first business, selling second-hand clothes door-to-door around her community. At the time, she was living with her uncle, and when he gave her money for household expenditures she would save some when possible, and added to this the money she sometimes received as support from her boyfriend. Through this, she accumulated 70,000 UgSh in capital and chose to start a clothing business, since it required a relatively small amount of capital to start. A year later, in 2007, one of her neighbours told Judith about a club starting near her house, called Empowerment and Livelihoods for Adolescents (ELA), and registered her as a member. Through the club, Judith received financial literacy training that gave her the skills and knowledge to keep accounts and run her business more smoothly. She was also trained in hair plaiting, which enabled her to earn some extra income. She cannot give this a lot of time because she has to concentrate on her other businesses, but can earn around 9,000 UgSh a month plaiting the hair of three children she knows, contributing this money to school fees.

After some time as an ELA member, she received a loan for 150,000 UgSh from the club which she invested in expanding her clothes business. In 2008, she decided to start her grocery shop. She was tired of moving around in the sun and wanted to start a shop so she could be stationed in one place. Given the high rent for the shop, of 700,000 UgSh per year, and the capital she needed to stock the shop, she first used savings from her clothing business to buy some baby goats. After rearing the goats she later sold them, along with one of her mother’s cows, to pay the shop rent. The shop was already operating when she took her second loan from BRAC, but after her first loan was repaid successfully, and staff visited and saw the shop was running well, they gave her a second loan of 400,000 UgSh, which Judith has also recently finished repaying.

Her shop has expanded vastly since opening. From her initial starting capital of one million UgSh she has continued to increase her assets and stock by reinvesting all of the shop’s income – which now reaches 150,000 UgSh per day – back into the business. She keeps 10,000 UgSh each day for her household expenses, diligently reinvesting the rest in new stock. When she first opened the shop, she didn’t have a fridge in the shop. After four months of running the shop she started renting a fridge for 30,000 UgSh a month, and then after eight months, she bought it at a cost of 1.3 million UgSh, using money from her savings and selling the last of her goats.

The shop is in a constant state of hustle and bustle. When we ask one or two customers the reason they come to Judith’s store, they smile, and praise her good customer care. Customer comings and goings aside, there are also frequent visits by delivery men or the arrival of Robert, her trusted boda driver, to collect or deliver items and run errands when she does not have time to go to the market herself. One minute he was taking a large bag of peanuts to the mill for grinding, the next he was going to restock her milk. Other sellers come frequently to offer her goods for sale, which she carefully inspects before choosing. One man brings some fried maize snacks and soon after another arrives with a bicycle stocked with brushes for sweeping, offloading around 10 for her shop. Judith, too, is on the constant move, moving from serving customers and measuring out flour to receiving deliveries. Even in quiet moments when customers are few, there is little time to sit down, with errands such as packing bags of borehole water or measuring out small quantities of flour, sugar or peanuts ready for sale. It is no wonder that she says on most days, she is barely able to find time to take lunch.

She still sees scope for expansion, hoping in the future to sell bigger items that her customers have asked for, such as jerry cans, saucepans, and big cartons of juice, but this requires larger amounts of capital that she does not currently have. There is also space at the front of her shop that she would like to use for a display of clothes for sale.
Recent price increases have caused problems for her business, however. Now prices are higher in the market she has had to increase her selling prices. She has not been able to increase them enough to maintain her profit margins, however, otherwise her products would no longer be affordable to customers. While customers are still coming to her shop, they are buying in reduced quantities. “People still have to eat to live”, Judith explains, “They’re just having to eat less”.

As a young woman running a business Judith experiences a few extra difficulties. Sometimes it is harder to get people to pay back credit, although this is infrequent. In addition, the hard labour in the shop, such as lifting heavy sacks of rice, beans, flour, is difficult for her and her mother. When sacks of goods are delivered, they are left on the pavement outside for her and her mother to lug into the shop. I get to experience this first-hand myself when a man delivers a new sack of rice. I try lifting the near-empty one away so it can be placed on top, but even though only a quarter full I can barely lift it more than an inch off the ground. The workload is heavy, so by the end of the day, she is exhausted and often suffers from chest pain. The cost on her time is also high. Her mother explains that given the sacrifices you have to make in all aspects of your life, “You have to be poor to do this job”. The shop always has to be open, which means Judith cannot enjoy spare time and entertainment, and she rarely attends burials, gatherings, or other community events.

Throughout the day, I try to get a better impression from Judith and her mother the reasons behind her success. As Judith recognises, she doesn’t know any other 21 year olds that are running such large and profitable businesses. They outline a number of keys to her success, both placing different emphasis on the most important form of support:

**Access to finance**

Judith’s mother attributes her success first and fore mostly to her ability to borrow money through BRAC’s ELA club. While it is her personal characteristics and motivations that have helped her succeed, she could not have reached this scale of success without accessing the larger sums of capital she has needed to draw upon to diversify and expand her businesses. Judith has taken and repaid two loans from BRAC, of 150,000 and 400,000 UgSh, and plans to take another loan in the near future to add additional stock to her shop. In neither of her loans did she have problems paying instalments, given she invested her funds productively. In fact, she says, sometimes she actually helped her friends to meet their instalments if they were unable to make a payment one week. These small amounts of money are always repaid, however, and the sums she lends aren’t large because most of her group members contribute for this purpose. She is happy with the group-based structure of lending, preferring that to the idea of individual loans. She likes the security that the group offers, as well as the ability to make close friends.

**Learning from others**

Judith attributes her success primarily to having the support and guidance from the ELA group and its members. Through club membership she has learnt what it is like to be part of other people, rather than having to ‘go it alone’. This, she says, has been even more critical to her than the finance. She recognises that not all members have joined for the same reason – some want to play games, others want to focus on business – but for those with a business mindset and who are forced to support themselves and their families, they learn hugely important things from each other. They discuss with each other how best someone can survive and support their families, how best they can sustain their businesses, and how to live well with others without conflict. As well as drawing on her fellow ELA members for social and emotional support, their friendship has also been crucial in her economic success. “The worst thing you can do is think that you know
best and just start a business”, she explains emphatically, “It’s vital that you share your idea with other people before you start”. Group membership has given her a platform to discuss these issues and learn from her peers who have had similar experiences. She has also drawn upon support and guidance from her mother, who used to run a food business. When she fell ill, Judith looked after it for her, giving her experience in running a business. Her mother describes Judith as “obedient”, because she listens to advice rather than trying to go things alone.

Planning how her money is spent

Both Judith and her mother attribute her success to her diligence in spending money. She has learned how to prioritise spending so to meet her goals, and is willing to forego luxuries. She knows that money is tight and lives within her limits, knowing that her money is better reinvested in her business than spent on material goods. “You have to be prepared to make sacrifices”, Judith argues, “You need not worry about clothing, making yourself look nice, and getting expensive hair plaighting done”. She says that many girls will spend up to 50,000 UgSh getting their hair done, but she spends only 7,000 UgSh on this because she knows that, “The rest of that money is much better spent in my business so that it can continue growing”. She recounts how useful the financial literacy training she received as part of ELA activities has been, saying that when she first started her clothes business, she used to just sell her clothes without paying attention to her income, costs, or profits. As long as she got the money she needed to eat and re-stock her shop she was happy. After she got some financial literacy training she was able to learn proper business skills, and know how to keep track of her ingoing and outgoing cash flows.

Motivations

Although Judith’s father is alive, her parents separated when she was younger because her father did not want to support his children’s school fees. If it were not for Judith’s uncle, who brought them to Iganga and sponsored her through Primary 7, she would have had to drop out of school earlier. As a result of his help, she could stay in school until Secondary 3, when she became pregnant and had to drop out. This difficult family background has driven her to work hard for her success. “The misery I have been through since childhood made me think about being hard-working from an early age”, she explains, “Because I didn’t want to be miserable my whole life, and knew I would have to work hard to attain a good life”. She doesn’t want her son and other children that she supports to experience similar hardship, and dreams of being able to send them to boarding school in the next three or four years so that they do not have to walk so far to school. “It’s by no means easy”, explains Judith, “and success doesn’t come overnight, but after a couple of years of such hard work, you can start to see progress”.

As the day goes on, Judith’s generosity becomes more and more striking. Her shop means that she is the sole provider of the household and supports a large number of members. Although all of her brothers and sisters from her mother’s side are here, she also has some from her paternal side in the village. She doesn’t support them on a regular basis, but when they come to ask her for money and she has it, she will give it to them. “How can I not give if I have?” she asks. She also recently gave her second-hand clothes business to her sister, who had been having some health problems. This way, her sister could support her costs herself rather than be supported by Judith. Her other sister also runs a small clothes business in the market – it is doing well, but it is very small, so she told her sister not to take any money out of it so that it can keep growing. This means though, that Judith’s income is the only income for the household. While Judith’s shop is going from strength to strength, this has so far made little impact on her struggles given both that her priority is to keep investing in the business for its future growth, and that
as she becomes more successful, more people come to her for help. Perhaps equally admirable is the fact that she recounts these facts without so much of a complaint: the hardships she faces balancing the interests of her business at the same time as meeting commitments of school fees and household costs are more inherent in what she doesn’t say than what she does.

Judith laughs when I ask her if she has a boyfriend. She has no boyfriend at the moment and doesn’t want to be involved in a relationship as she dedicates herself to her business. “Of course, I get advances like all other young women here”, she laughs, “But I just turn them away”. Besides, she adds, she’s worried that given the success of the shop that they are more interested in her business than her. The way boys work, she says, they will give you 50,000 shillings as a ‘gift’ but find a way to get 100,000 shillings from you back without you knowing. “Both younger and older women are constantly complaining about their boyfriends and husbands mistreating them or cheating on them”, she says, “So why would I want to put myself through this?”. She is proud of her independence and does not want to get married, thinking that men mistreat women. If she can build a house in the future, then she will think about having more children, but she doesn’t want to marry, she reiterates.

Judith’s aspirations for the future are grounded firmly in the well-being of her family and business. In 2010 she was able to buy a plot of land using two years of savings from her business, and she dreams to one day build a house there. Ideally, she would like to have her shop attached to her house, but she is aware that with the extra responsibilities she has taken on with her brother’s death she has not been able to progress with these plans, and has had difficulties maintaining her savings. Tired though she is from her hard work and the pressures she faces, she is confident for the future seeing the job security that the shop offers given her continued investment in it. There is no ‘end goal’ for her shop, as such, given that she wants it to keep expanding. But through this process she has three main achievements for the next five years, including building her house and starting a business for her mother. “But what about your third dream?”, I ask, after she names these. A smile spreads across her face as she names the one thing that she, herself, aspires to on an individual level. “I’d like to drive and own a car too!”, she laughs. While she is alive and healthy she doesn’t see herself any problems meeting her goals. But as she doesn’t have anyone around to help her, she is proud of her ability to work for herself and is thankful that she has BRAC to support her.

**Shifting from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture**

This is not to say that small business development should be the sole focus of policy and programmes. An economy cannot develop fully built purely on small business and vocational training. Other employment challenges that must be met is the transformation of subsistence agriculture into a sustainable livelihood option and job creation in the formal sector. Agriculture may not be viewed as a popular form of employment, but it remains the main source of employment for youth, offering employment to nearly one in three Ugandan youth and has significant scope for greater youth engagement. Key to changing widespread negative opinions of youth will be increasing the profitability of this sector and assisting youth to make the shift from subsistence to commercial farming. This will require addressing the limited access to land and livestock by youth and the extensions of NAADs to the youth population. Providing young people with livestock and the information and support they need to rear them is one means of securing a regular income and greater stability, providing them with assets that can help them to continue paying their school fees when their parents withdraw financial support. While wider policy continues to create an
environment conducive to private sector development, job creation and greater opportunities in the agriculture sector, however, a focus on small business development will be central to helping to meet employment needs among youth until the structural change necessary for a greater sectoral balance is found.

The benefits of improving youth employment outcomes extend beyond the economic, with the youth and adolescent population holding the key to Uganda’s hopes for reducing population growth. Unless the youth employment challenge can be met, frustrations resulting from poverty, a lack of work opportunities and respect, and limited support and guidance will continue to feed into the risky behaviours undertaken by youth, resulting in the ongoing spread of sexually-transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and early pregnancy. As this research highlights, un(der)employment is a major determinant of peer pressure to indulge in risky sexual behaviours among young men and women, and this is evident at both the individual and community level (Chapter 5). While preventive approaches such as health education can impact positively on health outcomes if well-designed around the realities they face and delivered in a youth-friendly way, more effective prevention lies in tackling the underlying drivers of these behaviours, which lie primarily in economic insecurity.

6.2 SUPPORT

While youth are keenly aware that many of the keys to success are within their own control – such as hard work, good conduct and motivation – they also recognise that a successful transition to adulthood is also dependent on things outside their control, namely greater support and assistance. A number of institutions traditionally play an important role in youth development, most prominently parents (and the household) and the community. Lacking adequate support from these sources leaves large proportions of Uganda’s youth uncertain about their future, unhappy, and displaying low levels of self-esteem, reporting their lives as “worse than expected”. Negative stereotypes associated with young people in Uganda is a major obstacle. The potential for youth in community development, however, is huge. As the case study of Deo illustrates here, support and skills training taught him the skills of leadership, networking and community mobilisation that have been crucial tools in his vision to transform his community through assisting orphaned and vulnerable youth.

Box 17. Setting the context: support for youth

Young Ugandans reveal that fellow youth provide them with the most support, highlighting the limited emotional, financial, and material support they receive from their households and communities.

Parental support ends at school drop out, a trend that is rapidly increasing. Early engagement in the labour force has increased from 36 and 31 percent of young men and women aged aged 26-30, in comparison with 57 and 40 percent of those aged 15-17.

Youth find it hard to achieve citizenship given their exclusion from community events and decision-making. This is due to their age, their poverty, and widespread negative perceptions of youth in the community.
Deo is a 21-year-old university student from Kyanaisoke, Western Uganda. Although, like many other young people his age, he is seeking a pathway to education and career development to secure his future, his priorities are as strongly intertwined with his community as they are his own personal development. Consequently, he has invested huge amounts of time and resources setting up a community-based association helping vulnerable children in the community. He transfers productive assets (in the form of pigs), training and advice to orphaned and vulnerable children in his community to help them stay in school and improve their livelihood opportunities. His success in this sphere is not only testimony to his commitment and motivation to the community, nor to the training in leadership and social entrepreneurship that he received from Educate! that provided him with the skills and confidence he needed to turn his dreams into reality. Instead, he places the strong community support he has received at the centre of his success. He is, as the Educate! mentor for his region describes, a strong example of Educate!’s philosophy of “young people as the solution to problems in their own communities”. Receiving training in leadership and social entrepreneurship in secondary school, this equipped Deo with the skills and confidence to make his dreams, to provide a better future for the next generation come true. “If I am suffering myself”, he says, “Let the next generation not suffer”. Having little means through which to support themselves and to continue schooling when they lack parental support, Deo decided that he wanted to help orphaned and vulnerable children, to provide them with the foundations they need for their future development.

Creating the New Springs Gospel Choir was Deo’s first initiative under the association, seeing this as a way to develop the talents of members and ensure they have a forum in which to participate and grow. This way, he says, they are less likely to be tempted
to “lose their good manners”, as many do as they get older. Having recently recorded their first CD, the choir has been a great success. Concerts played across the district have earned some funds for the association, and more importantly, have made the community aware of the association and its activities. Deo soon recognised, however, that developing talents is not enough to ensure positive outcomes among children and young people when you are working with poverty-stricken families: you also need to have something to support them financially.

Consequently, he wrote a business proposal to start a poultry project, through which he could train children in poultry-rearing and distribute poultry to vulnerable children. A number of parents in the community helped him to start the project by giving him some chicks to distribute. The poultry project soon experienced problems with disease, however, and realising it was not a secure livelihood option for this vulnerable group, he decided to move towards a piggery project. Although more costly, this would also be more profitable and sustainable. Again, he talked to community members to get their support for this, but parents could not afford to help fund the project this time. After some time searching for assistance, his uncle helped him by giving him some piglets to distribute. Once a child has received two piglets they rear and breed them. Each time it has piglets, they keep half the litter and give the rest back to the association for redistribution. Deo has now given out piglets to 25 families in his Sub-County, and has a further 96 children registered and waiting for piglets.

The association is not simply an asset transfer scheme. Deo takes a hand-holding approach to guide and support beneficiaries. Prior to giving the piglets, for example, he makes sure that beneficiaries are capable of looking after them, and this means preparing a viable home – he has developed a model pigsty raised off the ground to minimise illness and disease – and being near to a viable food source. He also asks beneficiaries to pay 5,000 UgSh in exchange for the piglets – not to purchase the piglet, but to show commitment and to contribute to the cost of monthly vaccinations for their first six months. This is not enough to fund the full course of vaccinations, but he subsidises the rest himself out of his pocket. After the piglet has been given out, he also does regular visits to ensure beneficiaries are looking after the animals and treating them well.

Working with a local veterinarian and an NGO that offers demonstration plots for agriculture and livestock-rearing, Deo has selected the best breed of pig for the region, and the association now has one sow and one male pig they use for breeding. This breed is particularly effective because it produces between nine to 12 piglets each breeding cycle. Keeping half of the piglets themselves, this leaves beneficiaries with around five piglets to rear or sell. With piglets sold at 30,000 UgSh each if sold to individuals, or 50,000 UgSh each if sold to NAADs, this gives a large potential income each breeding cycle. Furthermore, once a sow is reared to adulthood, he explains, it can be sold for 250,000 UgSh, providing children and youth with enough income to invest in other assets, such as cows, or to pay school or university fees. He illustrates that he is currently struggling to pay his university fees, but that if he had a sow to sell, he could not fail to afford his fees. His main aim of giving assets to vulnerable children, therefore, is to help them to afford their own school fees when their parents can no longer pay them.

Being raised in poverty provided Deo’s main motivation. It has been his dream since childhood to help his community and the vulnerable children within it. His achievement of this dream, however, he attributes to the training he received from Educate!, which equipped him with the skills he needed to do this. The training assists youth in Secondary 5 and 6 to discover themselves, learn more about their communities and the problems within them, and to innovate in ways that can help to address these problems. The formation of Social Entrepreneurship Clubs in each school allows students to put in
practice the skills they have learned, choosing projects to run within the school that benefit pupils and generate income.

Deo highlights four aspects of the training and practical experience that made him realise his vision; the ability to be resourceful and create change with few available resources; the ability to fund-raise by drawing upon community support; the ability to learn about community responsibility and how to take a leading role in the community; and the ability to empower others so that they can continue his success when he is absent at university. He has recently started a university degree in Fort Portal, studying Banking and Development Finance at the University of the Mountains of the Moon, a subject he hopes will give him skills to ensure his association’s sustainability and accountability. With this in mind, he is now in the process of registering it with the Local Council as ‘People's Integrated Efforts for Development’.

Like Judith, Deo accredits his success and achievements to strong support from his peers, but also on his ability to draw upon advice and support from role models and important stakeholders in the community. The ability to network and garner support through these sources and the wider community has assisted him each step of the way. Alongside his relatives, he names several important sources of resources and expertise within his area, including a Senior Fellow of Ashoka that lives in his area working in agricultural demonstration plots, the founder of a regional NGO supporting agriculture and livestock, a former sports officer from Kibale District Council, and the NAADS Chairman in his community.

With the community at the forefront of the objectives of the association and its operations, much of Deo’s efforts over the past years have been spent learning and understanding the community through organising meetings. His philosophy is that if people do not come to meetings, they do not display commitment to community development, and this excludes them and their children from his association’s assistance. Implicit in this philosophy is the recognition that one person is not enough to cause change on their own at a greater scale. While individuals may cause real change in the lives of some, structural change, which gives greater opportunities for change across the whole community can only come when accompanied with community involvement, support, and participation.

The community quickly accepted Deo. Garnering this support, he says, was in part due to the confidence built during his training, but also through his efforts to prove his trustworthiness, showing, for example, respect for others, displaying good conduct, being honest, and talking to everyone in the community. “I may be young”, Deo explains, “But now people are at least willing to listen when I talk”.

Deo speaks with excitement of the recent progresses he, his association, and his beneficiaries have made. After running the pig-rearing project for over a year, he is now seeing visible change in the lives of his beneficiaries. One of his beneficiaries, John, was able to buy a cow after selling a litter of piglets, and Geoffrey’s household was able to invest in a solar panel to bring electricity to their household, helping him do his homework at night. Given his commitment to the community and his association, it is no surprise that when discussing his major objectives for the next few years they are closely associated with its ongoing success and development. He hopes that the association becomes formerly registered and can start to register additional projects, to see his existing projects prosper and expand, and, of course, to accomplish his studies. Given its success, the association is also turning into an entry point for external assistance. An NGO recently worked with Deo in a community development project for his area. After receiving training from the NGO on how to work with the community to identify and prioritise their needs, Deo conducted several community meetings, who together prioritised the need for a resource and IT centre in the community, which the NGO will help them to build.
A key message emerges from Deo’s experiences. He originally started his association armed only with knowledge and motivations, lacking access himself to a large amount of financial or economic resources. His remarkable success highlights the potential that these motivations offer, but also illustrate that transforming motivations into sustainable change and development cannot occur in isolation of support and acceptance of the community. Role models like this can play a strong role in transforming the image of youth in the community, but at present, the majority of youth lack the support they need to have the confidence or self-belief that they can achieve similar success.

This has important implications for policy and programmes aimed at youth development. While many of these efforts must focus on youth themselves, policy and programmes challenging the perceptions of youth in wider society, such as awareness campaigns or cultural dialogues between generations, will further strengthen youth outcomes by helping to foster the emotional support young people need to ensure they can rely on their family and communities as assets. While family belonging is important to youth, this is not realised, feeding into fears surrounding youths’ own family and children. This argument is also relevant at the community level to ensure that communities, too, are aware of their role in supporting youth in the transition to adulthood and providing a supportive environment that assists youth in reaching their dreams and potential. This current research did not look at perceptions and opinions of youth from adults, and further research on this subject is critical, both to shed further light on the decline we seen in financial and emotional support for youth and to help design suitable campaigns for trying to reverse this situation and garner greater support for youth from these sources.

Where traditional forms of support for youth have been lacking, the research reveals that fellow youth provide the only widely accessible source of support. In some cases, peers provide the sole support, in terms of solidarity, emotional and material support, such as lending each other small amounts of money, sharing skills they have developed, employing other youth in their businesses, and being positive role models. Judith, for example, prioritised the support she drew upon from her friends in achieving her success. The importance of this support in equipping youth with confidence, self-esteem, and the capacity to aspire cannot be overemphasised.

Mobilising youth into groups is a means through which this peer support can be enhanced and magnified. Indeed, when discussing the forms of support they need, many focus groups highlighted the need for assistance in mobilising them into groups or clubs. Groups are seen to widen opportunities for youth on several counts, offering a forum through which youth can become recognised by their communities and by institutions that want to help youth, who can provide them with information, resources, or training. Groups also enhance social capital, allowing youth to make friends, meet positive role models, and receive greater emotional and motivational support. Increasing social capital also extends to greater interaction with adults in the community. Where groups promote the image or development of the community, focus groups highlighted, youth can gain respect and become valued by their communities.

Benefits of group membership aside, however, youth also recognise that they face multiple obstacles to mobilising themselves into groups. Most groups highlighted that they are unaware of how to start up such groups, because there are no youth in their communities that have the leadership or management skills necessary. Financial barriers were also named as barriers to group membership, with many groups requiring fees or regular savings commitments that prevent poorer youth from participating. In some cases, youth also said that parents and/or partners are unwilling to let youth participate in these activities given expectations that their time must be spent in productive work or domestic responsibilities.

Alongside expanding youth participation in groups and clubs, wider interaction between youth and the community will have an important influence on civic knowledge and engagement among youth. Limited interaction with adults means that many youth lack political awareness and display
low levels of participation in local and national activities and elections, which in turn is likely to be an influencing factor in the low priority youth give to their national, Ugandan, identity. Lastly, given the size of Uganda’s youth bulge, lacking greater influence from adult members of the community, youth themselves are shaping their own new norms and behaviours, and in the process, traditional values are being eroded or replaced, exacerbating negative perceptions of youth in the community.

6.3 THE MANY FACES OF YOUTH POVERTY AND VULNERABILITY

While themes of employment and support cut across the whole youth population, another critical finding that emerges from the Youth Watch survey is that the youth population is far from homogeneous, with many youth experiencing vastly different opportunities and constraints depending on their gender, region, location (whether in a rural or urban areas), age, and educational status. This great diversity calls for well-designed and targeted interventions that take account of these differences across different categories of youth.

Differences in gender relate both to the drivers and outcomes of youth behaviours, highlighting that even if policies and programmes are pursuing gender equality, they need to focus on both genders. While the vulnerabilities faced by young women are greater, the drivers motivating young men to engage in risky sexual behaviours are equally strong, and impact directly on the vulnerability of young women.

Young women face a number of social and economic disadvantages. Dropping out of school earlier than young men, they receive, on average, 0.7 years less education in both rural and urban areas. They also have less access to finance, being less likely to have a cash income and only half as likely as young men to borrow money. They are disadvantaged, too, in ownership of physical and natural assets. While employment is not so closely tied with their identity as young men, work is part of a crucial strategy for making ends meet, and these disadvantages create greater obstacles for them in accessing secure employment. Difficulties securing employment feed into health vulnerabilities for young women, who can be drawn into risky transactional sexual relationships. Lastly, young women also participate less in social and political life, being less likely to participate in groups, clubs, and community work, less likely to have accessed any social programme, and less likely to have participated in national elections.

While the disadvantages faced by young women suggest that young men, are, in many ways, less vulnerable, it is important to account for the additional pressures men encounter on the path to adulthood. The increased pressures on them to be financially independent and the pressure of ‘being a man’ mean that they have multiple motivations and frustrations, leading them to engage in risky behaviours. Young men, report much greater future uncertainty and lower happiness scores than their female counterparts, and this has a direct impact on their decision-making and health outcomes. While programmes promoting their social and economic empowerment will have some positive impact to helping young women avoid risky transactional sexual relationships, impacts will be limited due to the ongoing drivers of risky behaviours from young men that underlie these outcomes.

The vulnerabilities facing youth also differ across rural and urban areas. Rural youth receive less education than their urban counterparts and are more likely to work and study simultaneously. They are, however, more likely to receive vocational training, as well as more likely to use those skills, primarily because agricultural training has the highest utilisation rates among vocational training courses. While most likely to be engaged in subsistence agriculture, rural youth are also less likely to be un(der)employed. They have fewer alternative economic opportunities, however, including
access to non-farm business and salaried work, the two most preferred forms of employment. While disadvantaged in many economic indicators, rural youth tend to experience greater social and community cohesion. They are more active in volunteer work, rate their communities more highly in a number of values, are more likely to feel respected, and display higher happiness scores than those in urban areas. They are also less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviours such as having multiple sexual relationships.

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Youth Watch survey reveals new insight into the social and economic lives of youth in Uganda, highlighting the challenges they face in every dimension of their lives as they struggle to complete their education, find regular and productive work, get married and start families, and become recognised as valuable citizens. Facing these challenges and frustrations equipped with few resources and limited support, Ugandan youth face an additional struggle: the struggle to make well-informed decisions that protect their health.

Youth are not and should not be defined by these struggles. Their potential in improving and developing their own lives, as well as those of their households, communities, and above all, their country was widely emphasised across all regions of Uganda. The case studies here highlight two cases of ‘Youth Promise’, and what youth can achieve if assisted with the right forms of support. Equally as inspiring as the achievements of Judith and Deo, however, is the fact that there are millions more youth in Uganda with similar dreams and motivations. Well designed programmes and a greater emphasis on youth in all policies and programmes will be central to Uganda’s development. Amidst rapid population growth, widespread poverty, limited job creation, and the other socioeconomic challenges facing Uganda, the vibrancy, energy, entrepreneurial spirit and motivations of youth really do hold the key to unlocking Uganda’s potential. This cannot happen, however, without a more supportive environment for youth, which requires two major shifts.

First, in order to better equip young people with the assets and resources they must draw upon in order to make a successful transition to adulthood, particularly in terms of accessing employment, programme design must shift towards an integrated approach to youth development. Difficulties securing employment are much more complex than simply a lack of skills, and while the strong vocational training base in Uganda is equipping many young potential entrepreneurs with skills for self-employment, this is not enough, on its own, to ensure positive outcomes. Addressing the multiple constraints to employment, including access to finance, guidance and mentorship, linkages with employers, and business skills, amongst others, will help a greater number of youth to utilise their skills in productive employment.

Creating a more supportive environment for youth also requires reshaping the institutions that play a key role in their lives – primarily the household and the community, but also the national political system and the economy – to recognise the value of youth and support them in their development. Given the widespread negative stereotypes of youth across these institutions, this will require significant attitude change, across parents, communities, employers, politicians, and even youth themselves. Only through more supportive environments - not only in financial and material support, but also emotional support-can youth be equipped with the necessary range and depth of assets that will help them to turn their dreams into reality and negotiate a successful transition to adulthood, including skills and capabilities, recognition, confidence, and good attitude. As Judith and Deo illustrate, success is not down to the programmes themselves, but to the individual's hard work, motivation and aspirations. Now is the time for a greater focus on and more comprehensive programmes for youth development so that these aspirations can be turned into realities, assisting much greater number of youth to become productive, happy and healthy citizens of Uganda.


Brawley, M. E., 2006, The Relationship Between Gender Norms and Expectations and the Sexual Practices of Ugandan Men, mimeo, the University of Washington.


Appendix 1.
Focus Group Discussion Questions and Sampling

Appendix 1.1 Focus Group Questions

Theme 1: Background issues

1. Can you tell us how you think young people are stereotyped/thought of in Uganda?
2. Are young men and women in Uganda stereotyped in the same way?
3. Do you think these stereotypes are true? Why/Why not?
4. What issues do you worry about?
5. Who can you talk to or get support from about these worries?
6. Do young men and women face the same worries?
7. What are your hopes and goals for the future?
8. Do you think you will meet these hopes and goals?
9. What kind of support do you need to meet them?
10. Do young men and women aspire to the same hopes and goals?
11. At what age do you feel young people become adults?
12. Why? What changes happen when you become an adult?

Theme 2: Key transitions

Have flash cards with the five key transitions on them in appropriate local language (Learning, work, health, family, becoming citizens)

1. What is the first word that you think of when I show you these words? Hold up the five flash cards one at a time, and ask all respondents to answer their word, and then decide upon the most important word for (most representative) the group.
2. These five words represent the five key transitions that young people make as they become adults. Which of these five do you think is the most important? Why? Do you think anything is missing?
3. Which of these five stages do you think is the most difficult?
4. Of these five life stages, in which do you receive the most support? Where from?
5. Of these five life stages, in which do you receive the least support? Where from and why?
6. In which of these five life stages do you need more support?
7. Do some kinds or groups of youth face greater struggles than others as they make these transitions? Why?
8. At what age do you feel young people become adults?
9. Why? What changes happen when you become an adult?

Theme 3: Support/Participation in society

1. As young people, do you feel an important part of society? In what ways or why not?
2. As young people, do you feel respected and recognised in society? In what ways or why not?
3. What needs to be done to make young people feel more integrated in society?
4. What forms of support do you need as young people?
5. Who provides you with these forms of support? Which forms of support do you not receive?
6. What types of young people do not get support? Why?
7. Which of these forms of support do you not receive?
8. Are there any young people in the community that you view and respect as role models? What makes you admire them?
9. How were they able to achieve these things?
10. How can you follow a similar path to these individuals?
11. Are you members of any groups outside the household? What kinds, and what do these groups do?
12. At what age do you feel young people become adults?
13. Why? What changes happen when you become an adult?

Theme 4: Work, school, microfinance, migration

1. What is more important to young people like yourself: going to school or working?
2. Do young people drop out of school to work, or work because they have dropped out of school?
3. How many of you work? What jobs do you do?
4. Have any of you received any support in getting your jobs, such as training, microfinance, other programmes? Where did you receive this support from? Was this support well-suited to your needs?
5. Does work provide you with financial independence?
6. Do people respect you more because you work?
7. Are there enough job opportunities available for youth here?
8. What are the major barriers to getting jobs for youth here?
9. What are the most desirable jobs that youth can do? Why?
10. What kinds of young people can do these jobs?
11. What are the least desirable jobs that youth can do? Why?
12. What kinds of young people do these jobs?
13. What kind of support do young people need in getting more and/or better jobs?
14. Do many young people in this area migrate to cities to look for work?
15. If yes, what types of jobs do they look for there, and do they succeed in finding them?
16. Do they face any problems when they migrate?
17. At what age do you feel young people become adults?
18. Why? What changes happen when you become an adult?
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### Table 2.1
Determinants of perceived job opportunities (Multinominal logit)

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<th>Non-farm business</th>
<th>Salaried employment</th>
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<td>Sex [1=Male, 0=Female]</td>
<td>0.322** (0.133)</td>
<td>0.709*** (0.116)</td>
<td>0.113 (0.093)</td>
<td>0.210** (0.104)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age (in years)</td>
<td>0.026* (0.014)</td>
<td>-0.080*** (0.014)</td>
<td>-0.005 (0.010)</td>
<td>-0.199*** (0.014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years of education achieved</td>
<td>0.057*** (0.019)</td>
<td>0.113*** (0.016)</td>
<td>0.082*** (0.014)</td>
<td>0.318*** (0.019)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Received vocational training [1=Yes, 0=No]</td>
<td>0.247* (0.150)</td>
<td>0.080 (0.124)</td>
<td>0.202** (0.100)</td>
<td>0.046 (0.114)</td>
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<td>Frequency of savings [1=Never, ..., 5=Daily]</td>
<td>0.149*** (0.057)</td>
<td>0.218*** (0.050)</td>
<td>0.307*** (0.041)</td>
<td>0.006 (0.048)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receives supports from family/friend [1=Yes, 0=No]</td>
<td>0.595*** (0.144)</td>
<td>0.063 (0.120)</td>
<td>0.407*** (0.100)</td>
<td>0.792*** (0.127)</td>
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<td>Rural [1=Yes, 0=No]</td>
<td>-0.351 (0.293)</td>
<td>-0.796*** (0.251)</td>
<td>-1.021*** (0.218)</td>
<td>-0.716*** (0.227)</td>
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<td>Asset score [Standardised with mean 0]</td>
<td>0.689*** (0.132)</td>
<td>0.714*** (0.120)</td>
<td>1.032*** (0.104)</td>
<td>1.120*** (0.106)</td>
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<td>Level of worry about crimes in the community [scale 1 to 10]</td>
<td>-0.097*** (0.033)</td>
<td>-0.022 (0.027)</td>
<td>-0.076*** (0.024)</td>
<td>-0.051* (0.027)</td>
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<td>Existence of honesty in the community [scale 1 to 10]</td>
<td>-0.020 (0.033)</td>
<td>-0.206*** (0.029)</td>
<td>-0.107*** (0.023)</td>
<td>-0.080*** (0.025)</td>
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<td>-1.801*** (0.470)</td>
<td>1.518*** (0.415)</td>
<td>1.078*** (0.334)</td>
<td>2.456*** (0.389)</td>
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Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1; Base category is Subsistence farming;
Table A2.2
Determinants of income (dependent variable is annual income in ‘000 shillings)

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<td>(130.38)</td>
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<td>-45.47</td>
<td>-232.27</td>
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<td>(136.89)</td>
<td>(191.16)</td>
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<td>(200.72)</td>
<td>(407.46)</td>
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<td>Above S6</td>
<td>400.82</td>
<td>199.35</td>
<td>609.03</td>
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<td>(183.33)**</td>
<td>(261.85)</td>
<td>(214.56)***</td>
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<td>-264.72</td>
<td>-309.60</td>
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<td>(144.26)*</td>
<td>(186.42)*</td>
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<td>22.56</td>
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<td>(12.72)*</td>
<td>(14.71)</td>
<td>(20.27)**</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>-307.30</td>
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<td>(64.88)***</td>
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<td>Was unemployed</td>
<td>-552.08</td>
<td>-509.40</td>
<td>-415.53</td>
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<td>(in the last week)</td>
<td>(97.03)***</td>
<td>(134.35)***</td>
<td>(167.71)***</td>
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<td>Was underemployed</td>
<td>-97.87</td>
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<td>-131.33</td>
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<td>(in the last week)</td>
<td>(58.12)*</td>
<td>(79.45)</td>
<td>(63.08)***</td>
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<td>-847.43</td>
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<td>(192.04)***</td>
<td>(223.62)***</td>
<td>(314.23)***</td>
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<td>1,074.93</td>
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<td>(414.48)***</td>
<td>(547.14)***</td>
<td>(588.27)</td>
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<td>R-squared</td>
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Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Table A2.3
Determinants of educational aspirations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aspire to return to school [1=yes, 0=No]</th>
<th>Additional years of education aspired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>-0.098 (0.038)**</td>
<td>-0.608 (0.183)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>0.061 (0.042)</td>
<td>0.581 (0.202)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>-0.181 (0.043)**</td>
<td>-1.330 (0.219)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>-0.115 (0.041)**</td>
<td>-0.582 (0.197)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Q</td>
<td>-0.043 (0.031)</td>
<td>-0.242 (0.208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Q</td>
<td>-0.007 (0.025)</td>
<td>0.079 (0.151)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Q</td>
<td>0.022 (0.027)</td>
<td>0.081 (0.146)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richest</td>
<td>-0.053 (0.038)</td>
<td>-0.291 (0.193)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>-0.031 (0.034)</td>
<td>-0.163 (0.163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-21 yrs</td>
<td>-0.137 (0.037)**</td>
<td>-2.474 (0.146)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25 yrs</td>
<td>-0.078 (0.038)**</td>
<td>-2.493 (0.176)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 yrs</td>
<td>-0.169 (0.040)**</td>
<td>-2.846 (0.196)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1 - P7</td>
<td>0.228 (0.052)**</td>
<td>2.649 (0.513)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1 - S4</td>
<td>0.389 (0.054)**</td>
<td>2.430 (0.509)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5 - S6</td>
<td>0.628 (0.064)**</td>
<td>1.890 (0.514)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above S6</td>
<td>0.467 (0.065)**</td>
<td>0.412 (0.522)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.019 (0.029)</td>
<td>0.041 (0.128)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a child</td>
<td>-0.023 (0.027)</td>
<td>-0.506 (0.173)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female X have child</td>
<td>-0.058 (0.026)**</td>
<td>-0.673 (0.204)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsistence farming</td>
<td>-0.174 (0.031)**</td>
<td>-1.067 (0.152)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial farming</td>
<td>-0.213 (0.050)**</td>
<td>-1.224 (0.308)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage employment</td>
<td>-0.097 (0.035)**</td>
<td>-0.851 (0.180)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-farm business</td>
<td>-0.100 (0.031)**</td>
<td>-0.678 (0.166)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaried</td>
<td>0.030 (0.046)</td>
<td>-0.178 (0.225)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-0.090 (0.055)*</td>
<td>-0.286 (0.228)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive money from parents</td>
<td>0.026 (0.022)</td>
<td>0.732 (0.116)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly impatient</td>
<td>-0.025 (0.019)</td>
<td>-0.136 (0.103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.415 (0.079)**</td>
<td>4.344 (0.572)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>3,319</td>
<td>4,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>0.291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
### Appendix A2.4

#### Determinants of the extent of supports to family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full sample</th>
<th>Female sample</th>
<th>Male sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central</strong></td>
<td>0.251 (0.067)***</td>
<td>0.232 (0.103)***</td>
<td>0.329 (0.088)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastern</strong></td>
<td>0.500 (0.065)***</td>
<td>0.388 (0.094)***</td>
<td>0.653 (0.092)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern</strong></td>
<td>0.501 (0.068)***</td>
<td>0.401 (0.097)***</td>
<td>0.621 (0.094)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western</strong></td>
<td>0.441 (0.066)***</td>
<td>0.500 (0.091)***</td>
<td>0.418 (0.095)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural</strong></td>
<td>-0.035 (0.061)</td>
<td>-0.008 (0.092)</td>
<td>-0.023 (0.080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>0.037 (0.004)***</td>
<td>0.029 (0.005)***</td>
<td>0.039 (0.006)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>0.171 (0.029)***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education in years</strong></td>
<td>-0.016 (0.004)***</td>
<td>-0.029 (0.006)***</td>
<td>-0.009 (0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrolled</strong></td>
<td>-0.033 (0.043)</td>
<td>-0.072 (0.072)</td>
<td>0.020 (0.054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Married</strong></td>
<td>0.224 (0.034)***</td>
<td>0.121 (0.043)***</td>
<td>0.330 (0.053)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Live with parent</strong></td>
<td>-0.125 (0.035)***</td>
<td>-0.194 (0.053)***</td>
<td>-0.085 (0.047)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worked last week (sc1)</strong></td>
<td>0.041 (0.043)</td>
<td>-0.013 (0.059)</td>
<td>0.153 (0.066)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have cash income (sd1)</strong></td>
<td>0.119 (0.035)***</td>
<td>0.046 (0.048)</td>
<td>0.195 (0.052)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2nd Q</strong></td>
<td>-0.019 (0.051)</td>
<td>-0.090 (0.071)</td>
<td>0.041 (0.073)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd Q</strong></td>
<td>-0.027 (0.040)</td>
<td>-0.020 (0.053)</td>
<td>-0.008 (0.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4th Q</strong></td>
<td>-0.031 (0.042)</td>
<td>0.049 (0.068)</td>
<td>-0.070 (0.054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Richest</strong></td>
<td>-0.194 (0.065)***</td>
<td>-0.119 (0.099)</td>
<td>-0.219 (0.086)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>1.166 (0.118)***</td>
<td>1.760 (0.157)***</td>
<td>0.755 (0.166)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations</strong></td>
<td>4,067</td>
<td>1,821</td>
<td>2,246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R-squared</strong></td>
<td>0.201</td>
<td>0.170</td>
<td>0.231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
## Determinants of participation in social programmes

### VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participate in...</th>
<th>Any social programme</th>
<th>NAADS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(0.002)***</td>
<td>(0.002)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.022</td>
<td>0.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled</td>
<td>(0.013)</td>
<td>(0.010)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.054</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of education</td>
<td>(0.017)***</td>
<td>(0.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received vocational training</td>
<td>(0.002)***</td>
<td>(0.002)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.090</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became an orphan by age 15</td>
<td>(0.015)***</td>
<td>(0.012)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.010</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to a political party</td>
<td>(0.032)</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>0.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>(0.018)***</td>
<td>(0.014)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.030</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with parent</td>
<td>(0.016)*</td>
<td>(0.012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.131</td>
<td>0.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a child</td>
<td>(0.020)***</td>
<td>(0.015)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.029</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset score</td>
<td>(0.010)***</td>
<td>(0.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.029</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to access social programme</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.014)***</td>
<td>(0.014)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>0.110</td>
<td>0.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.028)***</td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>0.068</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.030)***</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.028)***</td>
<td>(0.023)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.263</td>
<td>-0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.049)***</td>
<td>(0.039)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations: 5,323 5,243 5,323 5,243  
R-squared: 0.187 0.515 0.139 0.298

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
## Appendix A2.6
### Determinants of peer pressure

<table>
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<th>Male</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.002)*</td>
<td>(0.002)*</td>
<td>(0.002)**</td>
<td>(0.002)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of education</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.003)**</td>
<td>(0.003)*</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
<td>(0.002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un(der)employed (1=yes, 0=No)</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>0.093</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.019)**</td>
<td>(0.022)*</td>
<td>(0.020)**</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In(number of friends of the same sex)</td>
<td>0.033</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.013)**</td>
<td>(0.013)**</td>
<td>(0.012)</td>
<td>(0.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In(number of friends of opposite sex)</td>
<td>0.019</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.012)</td>
<td>(0.013)</td>
<td>(0.011)**</td>
<td>(0.011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asset score</td>
<td>-0.024</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>-0.053</td>
<td>-0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.013)*</td>
<td>(0.017)</td>
<td>(0.010)**</td>
<td>(0.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly religious (1=yes, 0=No)</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
<td>0.031</td>
<td>-0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.022)**</td>
<td>(0.024)</td>
<td>(0.020)</td>
<td>(0.022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk to parents about Friends (1=yes, 0=No)</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>-0.040</td>
<td>-0.063</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.027)*</td>
<td>(0.029)</td>
<td>(0.025)</td>
<td>(0.027)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with parents (1=yes, 0=No)</td>
<td>0.062</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>0.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.021)**</td>
<td>(0.020)**</td>
<td>(0.018)**</td>
<td>(0.018)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural (1=yes, 0=No)</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.031)**</td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.024)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.057</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>0.320</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.063)</td>
<td>(0.064)**</td>
<td>(0.056)**</td>
<td>(0.056)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village dummies</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>2,625</td>
<td>2,625</td>
<td>2,623</td>
<td>2,623</td>
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<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.362</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>0.290</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Robust standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1
Appendix 3
Findings from Youth Watch Introductory Consultation

Question 1. What do we think we know about youth in Uganda?

- There is a large youth population
- Unemployment is a problem for youth
- Youth are more educated than adults (thanks to universal primary education and greater higher educational opportunities/institutions)
- There are changing perceptions among youth: young girls used to be more afraid of HIV/AIDS than pregnancy, now they are more afraid of pregnancy.
- Early pregnancy is a problem: 24.6%
- HIV/AIDS prevalence is higher among youth
- Family, adult, and community support networks are getting weaker. Migration away from families is also a problem in shaping behaviour.
- There are many orphans and vulnerable children among youth.
- There is a gender bias in families in rural or poor families prioritizing boys.
- A high crime rate among youth
- More young people are employed in the informal, than the formal, sector.
- Drug and alcohol abuse is a problem among youth. More young women smoke now.
- Have access to education earlier than their parents
- They are energetic
- They have inadequate job skills
- They are passionate given the relevant knowledge
- They are largely excluded from decision-making
- They are exploited
- They are very mobile
- They are not interested in agriculture (although employed there) and would prefer white collar office jobs
- They are vulnerable to vices e.g. drugs and prostitution.
- They are often viewed negatively in society
- They lack proper career guidance.
- They constitute a high percentage of small-scale business.

Question 2. What do we need to know about youth in Uganda?

- Are youth victims of crime and fear crime?
- Has the GO focused on youth in the right areas and to the right extent?
- Are youth giving back to their society? Is it part of their ‘duty’ to transform? Which youth are giving back – is it those that come from disadvantaged or privileged families?
- Their aspirations and barriers
- Their perceptions of older people
- How they need to be supported
- The skills they have vs the skills they want
- Their frustrations
- Where they access information from
- What defines them and the role that they play
- Their abilities and potential
- Which government programmes include and exclude them
- Their knowledge and access to youth-friendly services
Pl. give me full address of Uganda, I put it on back cover