

A focus on the European Union funded project (Youth Employability through Enterprise and Skills development) in West Nile.

Uganda currently has a population of 35 million people, over 78% of whom are below the age of 30. Youth unemployment and underemployment stands at 11% and 26% respectively. This has been partly attributed to the narrow size of the formal employment sector and the limited engagement of youth in the agricultural sector that employs more than 85% of the rural population. However the lack of employable skills remains one of the main causes of unemployment for youth in Uganda and Other causes can be attributed to limited access to financial services and a mismatch between job seekers on one hand and employment opportunities within the private sector on the other hand. This fact is backed by the National Employment Policy that diagnoses a number of missing links in youth employment in the country including gaps in skills, poor work culture/attitude and the lack of career guidance. Nevertheless, the government of Uganda has stepped up efforts to provide employment opportunities for the largely youthful unemployed population this is exemplified through:-The Uganda vision 2040 which provides a framework aimed at equipping Ugandans with relevant knowledge and skills to enable them either become self-employed or qualify for jobs, 'Youth livelihood's programme and ministry of education's efforts to address skills gaps through BTVET. The unemployment situation is not any different in west Nile and against this background SNV and her partners initiated the YES project to supplement government efforts to fight unemployment.

The 'Youth employability through Enterprise and Skills development' (YES) project is an EU funded project that SNV Netherlands Development Organisation is co-implementing with Centre for Governance and Economic Development (CEGED) and the Agency for Accelerated Development (AFARD). The three year project which started in October 2014 aims to sustainably improve access to employment and business opportunities for 5,000 rural and urban, in- and out-of-school youth from the ages of 15-30 in the districts of Arua, Nebbi, Yumbe and Moyo in West Nile. Among the key activities that the project is implementing to achieve its overall goal are:

- Provision of entrepreneur and life skills training for BTVET and urban youth on one hand and agribusiness plus good agronomic trainings for rural youth engaged in agriculture.
- Enterprise development and employment (labour market) linkages (including business incubation, match making with potential employers);
- Provision of start-up support (start-up kits, financial service linkages, youth business competitions, regular business clinics) including business coaching and savings promotion;
- Training and capacity-building of Business, Technical, Vocational, Technical Education and Training (BTVETs) institutes, non-state actors and local actors to support youth skills development and enterprise development and employment.

PROJECT RESULTS:

- Created additional employment for **5,697 youth** these mainly include self-employed in the agriculture sector and other business
- Decrease in number of youth living on **1.25USD** per day from **71%** at baseline to **56%**
- Increase in the average value of productive assets owned by youth from **UGX 3.2 million to UGX 6.4million UGX**
- **1034 youth** provided internship and apprenticeship by partner Private Sector Enterprises.

In the two years of the YES project implementation, the project has created additional employment for 2,662 targeted youth and for 3,035 non targeted youth.

To increase the market relevance and delivery of transferable hands-on skills to the youth, the YES project partnered with Private Sector Enterprises to provide internship and apprenticeship placements for the youth. 1034 youth have so far undergone internship and apprenticeship. SNV and its partners have partnered with 14 BTVETs to integrate entrepreneurship and life skills training into their learning in the institutions. The government has now made it mandatory for the BTVETs to integrate entrepreneurship and life skills training into their curriculum and the YES project entrepreneurship and life skills manual is being used as a resource tool in the BTVETs trainings.

The project is also working towards reducing poverty among the youth through skilling, enterprise development and promotion of agriculture as a business. To date the project has contributed to poverty reduction among the youth from **71%** at baseline to **56%**. This represents a **21%** decrease in the number of youth living on 1.25USD against the project target of **25%** by 2017.

More youth have acquired productive assets such as land, livestock, motorcycles and bicycles, computers and electrical appliances. The average value of productive assets has increased from **3.2million UGX (842 Euros)** at baseline to **6.1million UGX (1,605 Euros)** currently, exceeding the set project target of **5.3million (1,394 Euros)** by 2017.

Every day that I wake up and witness the visible transformation in the lives of the youth that the YES project is bringing about, I am motivated to do even more because I know that I am contributing to their growth and development. Hilda Achayo – Project Manager YES project

Voices of the Youth!

Scovia, embracing her fears and seizing opportunities as they come.



Unzia Scovia, an embroidery youth entrepreneur/tailor understands too well what it means to live in the 'comfort zone' of fear, afraid to take any risks least you lose even the little that you have. For one year she operated her business from a veranda with limited space to exhibit her products. Scovia's average monthly income was UGX 80,000 (21 Euros) after settling her rent. Scovia's situation was not helped by the expensive rent that the Landlord charged, but Scovia stayed. Scovia continued running her business with her embroidery/sewing machine making floral designs, comfortable being the only embroidery service provider in Moyo Town.

Then SNV and its partners launched the YES project. Scovia was one of the urban youth identified by the project for business development support. "One of the things that I learnt from the business planning skills training was to always make business decisions from an informed point of view after thorough analysis. It was my wakeup call. I notified my clients and relocated my business to a cheaper and more spacious veranda." Scovia said.

In 2015 Scovia participated in the YES business competition where she won a business expansion kit worth UGX 310,000 (82 Euros). Scovia invested most of the money into buying materials which she procured in bulk thereby reducing on her unit cost due to the economies of scale and increasing her profit margins. Since she relocated her business, Scovia's sales have increased. Today she earns average net monthly income of UGX 200,000 (53 Euros). Scovia committed to saving towards the purchase of additional sewing machines to expand her business. After five months of saving faithfully she was able to buy two additional machines worth UGX 1,030,000 (272 Euros). "This is nothing short of a miracle for me! At the beginning of the project I wanted to buy one additional sewing machine, now I have been able to buy two," Scovia explained.

Another lesson that Scovia learnt from her business planning skills training was the importance of diversifying her product and service range in order to grow her business. For a long time she had turned down any requests for embroidery training services from the young women in her community, which she initially considered a threat to her own business monopoly. But she learnt that diversification would boost her revenue streams. Now she offers training services at UGX 200,000 (53 Euros) per trainee per month. In 2016 Scovia enrolled two trainees and 2017 she trained 9 youth from the YES project who have now started their own business. Scovia plans to rent a room so that she can enrol more trainees and employ at least one person to help her run business.

"I thank the YES project for the continued business support that has enabled me to conquer my fears and made me to understand that success in business comes to those who do not hesitate to seize opportunities around them at the right time," Scovia added.

Arivile's gifted hands supplying households with utensils.



When Gift Arivile completed his Craft One Certificate in Plumbing at the Arua Technical Institute, he was glad he had a qualification to earn him a well-paying job. He was wrong! Every door he knocked on for a job, he was told to look further on. Disappointed, he decided to enrol for another course. He

Innovation taking Sam Amanderu places.

As a model farmer, Sam Amanderu of Pamuru Village, has 35 people under his mentorship. He helps them maintain good farming practices so that they get the most out of their efforts in gardens.

Amanderu, who dropped out of school in Senior Three, appreciates how the YES project has changed their fortunes for the better. "Before the project, we used to grapple with agriculture because we would do things the rudimentary way; planting crops anyhow and waiting for harvest time, which had a lot of disappointments because our crops were not performing well," he recalls.

When he was chosen as a model farmer with the YES Project, he realised the need for technical knowledge in farming. "I was taught that a nursery bed is relevant if one is to realise good crops. I learnt how to prepare it," Amanderu explains.

After two weeks of preparing his nursery bed, the 28-year old Amanderu removed the mulching material and transplanted his cabbage to the main garden. "I was advised during the training on how to space the crops. Besides crop management, I was also taught how to manage poultry and piggy projects," the farmer adds.

The acre of cabbages he planted after the training earned him UGX 6.2million (1,635 Euros). From the sales, Amanderu has been able to buy two cows each at UGX 600,000 (158 Euros). "I am now saving for a multi-purpose grinding machine for maize, cassava, and sorghum so that I can sell products that I have added value to," he reveals.

Farming is the way to go if the Youth are to make money



Amanuru Martine is a Young Model Farmer who lives in Gbalala Central village, Gbalala parish in Laropi Sub County-Moyo district. He is 28 years old, married with five children and has been growing vegetables for cash on subsistence level since 2010. Because his earnings were meagre, he took up fish trading since it offered him quick cash, however he spent the money as fast as he made it. Then his peers decided to nominate him to become their model farmer and Martine's life changed.

"I was selected as Young Model Farmer (YMF) in 2015 by my peers involved in tomato production under the YES project being implemented by AFARD in partnership with SNV. One of the key roles of a young model farmer is to mentor young farmers through practice rather than theory the good agricultural practices for better yields. In our case our focus

enrolled for a short course at Jiako, where he attained basic training in steel fabrication.

With his background in plumbing, he started designing and developing aluminium utensils and fabrication by casting method, a process by which aluminium scrap is melted and turned into a desired shape.

He would make saucepans and other steel products, which he would then vend in Yumbe. SNV Uganda through the Youth Employability through Enterprise and Skills development (YES) project, picked interest in Gift's skills and efforts, and offered to help him further his aspiration.

"When I was invited to pick and fill the interest form from the YES project, I was elated. They taught me how to make a business plan, how to keep my records and took me through entrepreneurship training. SNV gave me a head-start of Shs310, 000 worth of scrap," Arivile recounts.

This was his turning point. They also taught him on customer care, in which he would have to adopt a soft tone to woo clients, offer price discounts and improve on his product display. As a result, he was advised to open a display show where he currently sells his products. He rents the kiosk at Shs20, 000 per month. He sells the saucepans from Shs4, 000 to Shs40, 000, depending on their sizes.

Apart from the saucepans, Gift also makes ringing bells,

was on how to make tomato enterprise better yielding and profitable. The YES project invested in our training as young model farmers. I was trained in Arua and I gained extensively. From the training; I learnt how to manage my horticulture business better, relate with other community members and lead my peers. Various good farming practices like how to make and apply manure, proper nursery bed management practices, timely land opening and planting were satisfactorily explained. This changed my entire way of thinking about farming and how I was managing my garden!"

Martine and his peer group focused on tomato growing as their village priority enterprise. They were given high quality Tomato seeds - Rio Grande variety. Martine planted his tomato seedlings in. Despite the bad weather during the first season, he was able to sell his tomatoes and earn a net income of 1,500,000 UGX at the end of the season.

"Tomato farming is the real deal for me these days because I am able to earn and plan for income from it. I no longer go fishing because it has become unpredictable, instead I spend more time in my garden." Martine had to say about his experience. Said

Martine had set himself the target of being able to pay his children's fees by the end of the season and he was able to achieve that. He also bought 2 bullocks worth 1,000,000 UGX and still save some money. His bullocks have been trained as oxen for ox-traction, reducing his dependency on the hand hoe which is more labour intensive. Martine reinvested 350,000 UGX to his one acre Tomato garden.

With ox-traction technology in place, abundant arable land available for hire in his village, Martine is confident that he will one day be able to seasonally farm more than four acres of vegetables on commercial basis without compromising his household's ability to grow other food crops for subsistence and extra income. He also has his eyes set on buying an ox-plough and a piece of farm land

Many of Martine's peers are emulating his work, something that Martine is visibly proud of. "Young people should prioritise farming if they want to earn some reasonable income instead of wasting time on activities that earn petty money that comes and goes without any traceable change," Martine added.

needles, ventilation moulds and pounding mortars.

"In a day, I can make up to 20 saucepans and in a month, I can make Shs400, 000. I am grateful to the YES Project for teaching me how to handle my financial records, stock-taking, save and invest wisely," Arivile says while making a saucepan.

He employs two people at his start-up 'factory' which partly runs under a mango tree and semi-complete shelter.

From his earnings, he also saves with a new village saving group, where he deposits Shs20, 000 every week. Over time, he has been able to buy a plot of land at Shs900, 000 where he has constructed a house for his family.

He is now sharing knowledge with fellow youths that are interesting in steel fabrication and has so far mentored 10 youth who have also taken up the same business.

Gift has his eyes on setting up a steel-making factory one day.