Problem or Promise? Harnessing Youth Potential in Uganda

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Youth Watch 2011
Problem or Promise?
Harnessing Youth Potential in Uganda

11 November 2011

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Overview

• Three key lessons
• Introduction
• Research Methods
• Conceptual Framework
• Research Findings
• Conclusions
• Engaging with youth
Three messages to take away

1. Risky behaviours associated with youth are symptomatic of a much wider range of problems.

2. Focus equally on young men and women: young men face a more difficult transition to adulthood and the repercussions of these difficulties impact upon both sexes.

3. Attitudes need to change, but attitudes towards youth, not of youth.
Introduction

- Over 20 percent of Uganda’s population aged 18-30, and over 90 percent of youth live under $2/day.
- Youth a key focus of BRAC, as well as a national priority.
- Youth Watch 2011 to create a deeper understanding of the social and economic lives of youth in Uganda
Research Methods

- Nationally-representative survey of 5,361 youth in Kampala, Central, Eastern, Northern, and Western Uganda (PPS Sampling).

- 74 focus group discussions in rural and urban areas within each region:
  - Five key transitions
  - Perceptions and stereotypes of youth
  - Employment
  - Youth participation

- Case Studies
Sample profile

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- Received skill training (%)  | 57 | 28 | 20 | 12 | 56 | 32 |
- Have children (%)           | 35 | 39 | 49 | 49 | 43 | 44 |
- LFP rate (%)                | 49 | 76 | 65 | 75 | 87 | 73 |
- Un(der)employment rate (%)  | 40 | 16 | 39 | 46 | 27 | 32 |

| Observations (n) | 704 | 1,182 | 1,238 | 981 | 1,256 | 5,361 |

- Experiences and opinions of youth in education and training, employment, financial behaviours, health, marriage, and aspirations
Conceptual Framework

Stock of Assets

Access to assets

Aspirations

Perceived opportunities

Outcome 1: Youth ‘Promise’
Successful transition to adulthood

Outcome 2: Youth ‘Problem’
(Negative outcomes)

With the right forms of support...

Some aspire, but do not meet

Some do not aspire at all

Negative Feedback Loops
Chapter 2: Youth and Assets

• Responsibilities youth face as they get older require a stock of assets to meet living costs and investment needs:
  – Human capital
  – Financial capital
  – Productive assets
  – Social Capital
2.1 Education and training

• Average years of schooling range from 6.0 in North to 9.4 in Kampala.
• Most early dropouts occur at primary level.
• Determinants of educational attainment
  – Household economic status (3.0 years of schooling)
  – Gender (-0.7 for young women)
  – Rural-urban location (-0.4 in rural)
• No financial returns to education unless completing higher education.
• Youth prioritise vocational training over other forms of learning
2.2 Vocational training

- 27% youth are unable to use their skills for income-generation.
- Rural youth more likely to receive and use VT.
- Female youth less likely to receive and use VT.
- Kampala (53%) and other urban youth (59%) face greatest barriers to skills utilisation (capital).
2.3 Health

- Perceptions of health linked closely to income and employment.
- Youth ‘live healthier lives’ in areas with greater employment opportunities.
- Young women and poorer youth report higher health risks: exposure to sexual coercion and early pregnancy.
2.4 Access to finance

- Youth need to **save** and **accumulate assets** to meet adult responsibilities.
- Youth predominantly save ‘**occasionally**’ (45%) and at **home** (60%).
- Loans, although associated with investment, are rare.
2.5 Productive assets

- Youth are asset-poor in the household, and young women more asset-poor.
- Alongside limited financial capital, youth face difficulties supporting themselves.

![Bar chart showing ownership of various productive assets by household and respondent.](chart.png)
2.6 Social capital

- **Limited social networks** mean youth have few sources of support with the exception of fellow youth.
- Young women participate less in almost all groups and clubs.
- 40% youth participated in voluntary activities. Young men, rural youth, and older youth more likely to participate.
Chapter 3.1: Youth support

- Youth voice strongly a lack of financial, material, and emotional support.
- Poverty and stereotypes limit the ability and willingness of households and communities to support their youth.
- Direct implications on behaviours of youth.
3.2 Youth in the household

- Youth are no longer considered dependents after dropout.
- Pressure to be financially independent has accelerated in recent years, particularly for young men.
- Lack of financial and emotional support limits the ability of households to uphold boundaries and sanctions.
3.3 Youth in the community

- Discrepancy between the role youth envision for themselves in the community and their involvement.
- Stereotypes of youth feed into their ability to participate in community activities and decision-making.
- Lack of support and inability to participate is evident in low ‘community values’ accorded by youth.
Chapter 4: Opportunities and Aspirations

• Resources and constraints shape opportunities and aspirations.
• Above all, limited assets and support create obstacles to employment.
• Difficulties securing employment creates obstacles for youth in starting families, becoming citizens, and hoping for a better future.
4.1 Limited economic opportunities...

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</table>

Estimated GDP loss due to youth under- and unemployment is 356.4 billion shillings ($142.6million).
...create obstacles for youth

• Transition to family:
  • Significant fear of marriage, particularly among young men

• Transition to citizenship:
  • Perceptions of adults and citizens closely associated with employment and marriage.
  • Unemployment reinforces negative stereotypes of youth

• Transition to adulthood:
  • Low self-esteem, future uncertainty, and limited perceived opportunities lead to limited or non-existent aspirations

• Problems with health:
  • Drives negative SRH outcomes and other risky behaviours.
Chapter 5: Youth problem

• Risky sexual behaviour is commonly associated with youth, but less commonly recognised are the drivers of these behaviours.

• Limited support, a lack of assets, and limited social and economic opportunities prevent some youth from aspiring for a better future.

• Gender variation in the drivers and outcomes of risky behaviours.
5.1 Peer pressure and risky sexual behaviours

For individuals and communities:

• Un(der)employment is a major determinant of peer pressure to have sex, particularly for young men.
• Young men have to redefine ‘manhood’ through multiple sexual relationships.

• Household poverty can force young women to engage in transactional sexual relationships to meet basic needs.
• Early pregnancy is more feared than HIV/AIDS by young women.
Chapter 6. Youth Promise

- Research reveals great heterogeneity among youth.
- Two universal themes: employment and support.
- Aspirations to self-employment illustrate a strong entry point:

![Bar chart showing currently employed, preferred future employment, and anticipated future employment across different sectors like subsistence farming, commercial farming, wage labour, non-farm business, and salaried employment.](chart.png)
6.1 Employment

• Hard work and good conduct are key to successes, but youth also recognise that success will be dependent on greater support and assistance.

• Comprehensive packages of assistance:
  – Vocational training and
  – Business Skills
  – Financial literacy
  – Access to finance
  – Self-confidence
  – Leadership skills
  – Hopes and ambitions
Case Study 1: Employment

Judith, BRAC ELA Programme

• With two loans invested in her grocery shop, Judith now earns 150,000 shillings a day profits.

Keys to her success:
• Learning from others
• Access to finance
• Financial planning
• Motivations
Case Study 2: Citizenship

Deo, Educate!
After leadership and social entrepreneurship training, Deo is helping nearly 30 children in his community stay in school through asset transfers.

Keys to his success:
• Community support
• Motivations
• Resourcefulness and financial planning
6.2 Support

- Discrepancy between the way youth are perceived and the roles they want to play.
- Few youth receive the recognition they need to participate in their household and community.
- Case studies may represent individuals, but there are thousands more youth with similar potential if given the right support.
Engaging with youth

U-report (Unicef):
“Research finds that youth today receive less financial and emotional support than 10-20 years ago, do you agree?”
6,200 responses, 70 percent said YES, explaining change due to large family sizes; poverty; and a lack of love and care.

• “YES!!! Because they think we are grown ups now…”
• “Financial hardship has caused parents stress, hence abandoning their responsibilities”
• “When parents pay fees they think its all done”
• “Yes, especially emotional support. Parents are too busy trying to make ends meet to give children any attention”
• “Exactly, Yes! Apart from a few, maybe 2 in 100”
Questions for discussion

1. What key findings catch your attention in the chapter?
2. What implications do these have on policy and programmes for youth?
3. What further knowledge do we need to take findings to policy?