

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**YOUTH PERCEPTIONS ON YOUTH LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME AS
SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC
EMPOWERMENT IN GULU DISTRICT, NORTHERN UGANDA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This study is original and has not been submitted in whole or in part for any degree award in any other institution.

KITAMBO ENOS

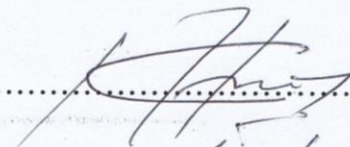
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DEDICATION

*In memory of the late Auntie Nyanabakiiga Birizita who laboured to bring me up and groom me when I lost my mother at three years. You never lived to celebrate this great achievement.
My wife and children, you are a strong force of encouragement!*

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACDO:	Assistant Community Development Office
ART:	Antiretroviral Therapy
ASEAN-EU:	Association of Southeast Asian Nations-European Union
BDS:	Business Development Support
BRAC:	Bangladesh Rural Advanced Committee
CAP:	Chapter
CDD:	Community Demand Driven
CDO:	Community Development Office
CSA:	Cassette Sellers Association
DJ:	Disc Jockey
DPOs:	District Production Officers
DTPC:	District Technical Planning Committee
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECA:	Economic Commission for Africa
GEM:	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GoU:	Government of Uganda
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immuno Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IA:	Indego Africa
IDI:	In-depth Interviews
IDP:	Internally Displaced Persons
ICT:	Information Communication Technology
IFSW:	International Federation of Social Workers
IGA:	Income Generating Activity
IGT:	Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
IRB:	Institutional Review Board
IS:	Institutional Support
LC1:	Local Council One
LMA:	Landmine Action
LRA:	Lord's Resistance Army

LS:	Livelihood Support
MAKSSREC:	Makerere University School of Social Research Ethics Committee
MDG:	Millennium Development Goals
MFI:	Microfinance Institutions
MoFPED:	Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development
MoGLSD:	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
NAADS:	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NCDC:	National Curriculum Development Centre
NDPs:	National Development Plans
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPA:	National Planning Authority
NRM:	National Resistance Movement
NUSAF:	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
NURP:	Northern Uganda Reconstruction Project
NYCs:	National Youth Councils
NYDA:	National Youth Development Agency
OWC:	Operation Wealth Creation
PDO:	Programme Development Objective
PECs:	Personal Entrepreneurial Competences
PRELNOR:	Project for Restoration of Livelihoods of the Northern Region
PRDP:	Peace Recovery and Development Plan
PYD:	Positive Youth Development
RA:	Research Assistant
RET:	Refugee Education Trust
ROI:	Return on Investment
SACCOs:	Savings Credit and Cooperatives
SEE:	Social Economic Empowerment
SE:	Social Entrepreneurship
SDA:	Safari Day Allowance
SDG1:	Sustainable Development Goal One
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SE:	Social Entrepreneurship
SEE:	Social Economic Empowerment

SEI:	Social Entrepreneurship Interventions
SID:	Society for International Development
SSA:	Sub-Saharan Africa
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UGX:	Uganda Shillings
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNCST:	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
USE:	Universal Secondary Education
UWEP:	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
VSLA:	Village Savings and Loan Associations
VSO:	Voluntary Services Overseas
YACs:	Youth Advisory Centres
YDE:	Youth Development and Empowerment
YEDP:	Youth Enterprise Development Programme
YEE:	Youth Economic Empowerment
YES:	Youth Engagement Services
YEPP:	Youth Employment and Empowerment Programme
YIGs:	Youth Interest Groups
YIGA:	Youth Income Generating Activity
YLP:	Youth Livelihood Programme
YLWHA:	Youth Living With HIV/AIDS
YouWiN:	Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria
YPTEP:	Youth Professional Training and Employment Project
YSEE:	Youth Socio-economic Empowerment
YSEF:	Youth Self-employment Fund
YUSACECOs:	Youth Savings and Credit and Cooperatives
YVCF:	Youth Venture Capital Fund

ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship plays an important role in fostering youth socio-economic empowerment world over. Uganda Government's interest is to invest in youth livelihoods through various social entrepreneurship programmes over a period of time. It is generally unclear how youth perceive the impact of these interventions in promoting youth socio-economic empowerment in Gulu District in Acholi, sub-region, Northern Uganda. The study explored the contribution of social entrepreneurship on youth socio-economic empowerment. Through the lenses of Empowerment Theory (2000) and Positive Youth Development Framework, this study targeted youth (18-30 years) who were beneficiaries of government-oriented Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP). Qualitatively, employing exploratory design and a case approach on Youth Interest Groups (YIGs) was pertinent in generating evidence to address the research questions. The findings indicated that social entrepreneurship interventions have the potential to leverage socio-economic empowerment among the youth, but they can do so if certain conditions are met. The failure of most YIGs signify that youth were not fully prepared to take up investments in various sectors. The few benefits registered indicate the prior organisation and commitment towards executing income generating activities. With politics at play, youth were misinformed about the agenda of the intervention, thus developing the greed for cash than expanding and sustaining investments for social change. The findings established that structural and institutional barriers continue to limit YLP interventions. Funding alone is not enough in causing social change among the youth. Thorough and holistic entrepreneurial training incorporating psychosocial support and parental involvement are key in to ensuring social innovation and profitable youth entrepreneurship. Youth should be supported to appreciate and practise social entrepreneurship for sustainable development. The study informs our theoretical and empirical understanding of social entrepreneurship by recognising government entrepreneurship programmes as socially entrepreneurial.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction to the Chapter

The chapter provides a background about war in Acholi sub-region, northern Uganda, the conceptualisation of youth, youth empowerment, and social entrepreneurship. With reference to youth, the chapter examines youth entrepreneurial interventions for empowerment in other areas and sets the stage for the statement of the problem, research questions, scope, and rationale for the study. The chapter also presents the conceptual and theoretical frameworks guiding the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Social entrepreneurship (SE) plays an important role in the socio-economic empowerment of youth in the contemporary world; it operates with different social mission to help the youth realise their aspirations. Socio-economic empowerment entails the youth taking significant social action, youth positive development, employment and income generation, bargaining power and improved social welfare (Hart, 2007). Social entrepreneurship complements the field of social work, thus emphasising moving beyond treatment and prevention towards promoting youth productivity and development. In the recent decades, the notion of social entrepreneurship (SE) and its manifested relationship with socio-economic development has gained prominence in both academia and policymaking arena (Karanda & Toledano, 2012). S. Kumar and Gupta (2013) note that SE involves seeking business solutions to address social problems/needs, catalyse social change, and alleviate the suffering of marginalised people, and the poor, in the case of this study, the youth. Social entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial activity with a social purpose towards social impact (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006). Wolk (2008) sees it as sustainable ventures that combine business principles with a passion for social impact in society. This distinguishes it from commercial entrepreneurship that focuses more on profit maximisation and wealth accumulation.

Social entrepreneurship occurs at individual, group, and community levels. Therefore, SE is premised on social mission, innovative solutions to social problem, sustainability, pursuing new opportunities, and impact (Hossain, 2019¹). Supporting youth in social entrepreneurship is an engine for enhancing their proper functioning, inclusiveness, thus socio-economic

¹ <https://hotcubator.com.au/social-entrepreneurship/what-is-social-entrepreneurship-the-four-essential-pillars/>

empowerment. This is achieved by focusing on the particular entrepreneurial intervention in promoting youth social entrepreneurship for improving livelihoods. The principles of social entrepreneurship suit in the empowerment drive for youth. The established youth enterprises are supported financially and technically to execute and expand business ideas to improve on their social change

Youth challenges are a global concern that requires a concerted approach towards empowerment. The youth comprise the largest population most especially in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Globally, youth population stands at 73 million (ILO, 2022) and this worsens unemployment challenge. Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) such as social entrepreneurship programmes promote youth wellbeing and empowerment. Empowerment entails issues of mastery and control of one's life, mobilisation of resources, attribution and critical awareness (Yowell & Gordon, 1996). Social entrepreneurship is grounded on social welfare and value, innovative ideas, social capital, social inclusion, leadership, accountability, entrepreneurial motivation, persistence (Faruk, Hassan, & Islam, 2016) in enhancing youth welfare.

Globally, social entrepreneurship is recognised as the solution to youth challenging situations. For most developing countries, social entrepreneurship (SE) is pivotal to unlocking economic inclusion and socio-economic development (Ngonini, 2014). Youth social enterprises promote individual functioning, prosperity, increased bargaining power and social change for both individual and common society good. The work of social entrepreneurship programmes in developing countries, mostly in poor and post-conflict situations had been greatly felt in many parts of the world including but not limited to Pakistan, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and other countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The SE motivates young people to participate in productive activities. The Youth Engagement Services (YES) network in Pakistan is credited with dealing in introducing and institutionalising the concept of youth social entrepreneurship in educational, technical, and development institutions (Khan, 2017). Like in other nations in Middle East, YES has partnership with local and international organisations in launching its initiatives to raise a generation of young social entrepreneurs. The YES launched the Social Enterprise Challenge Competition in partnership with British Council in 2008, aimed at promoting creativity, innovation and critical thinking among the youth. The approach created a generation of young, determined entrepreneurs motivated to become change makers within their communities. Furthermore, YES launched the Youth Social Enterprise Generator aimed

at sensitising, training, engaging, and creating enterprising young generation. Such initiatives build youth capacity towards socio-economic empowerment.

Furthermore, the contribution of social entrepreneurship is evident in Sierra Leone where the 11-year civil war greatly disrupted the availability and quality of livelihood opportunities in the country. As a result, a number of youth had fewer employable skills; less prepared for the job market and faced difficulties in transition to adulthood (NYCS & UNDP, 2013). UNDP in partnership with government of Sierra Leone initiated the Youth Employment and Empowerment Programme (YEEP) in 2011 to provide business development and career advice to the youth in Sierra Leone. The programme provided social entrepreneurial skills in business such as in turning industrial and domestic waste into energy-efficient cooking fuel, agribusiness, carpentry, and management skills to over 200 youth-led businesses. These skills are central in solving social and economic problems, and preventing youth from engaging in future violent conflict (Galtung, 1996). Therefore, my study perceives empowered youth as peace ambassadors and agents of socio-economic development, engaged, inspired, and motivated to take on entrepreneurship for social change.

Similarly, in Liberia, the government and NGO-Landmine Action (LMA) ran intensive best practices agricultural training programmes for ex-combatants, affected rural youth and other high-risk youth. LMA gave youth seven months' skills training, counselling, microcredit, business planning, which gave them a peaceful, sustainable, and legal alternative to extract resources, easy reintegration, and employment (Blattman & Annan, 2011). These activities were advanced by the Youth Enterprise Development Programme (YEDP) and Youth Professional Training and Employment Project (YPTEP) in Liberia and Guinea-Bissau respectively (Izzi, 2013). The training equipped, motivated and inspired youth to engage in agricultural activities, such as farming, produce buying and selling, agro-processing and value addition in Liberia and Guinea-Bissau. Agriculture is major a source of self-employment and income for rural youth in Liberia (Blattman & Annan, 2011). Social entrepreneurship does not target specific activities but is an all-inclusive and provides interdisciplinary and practical skills to the marginalised (Boschee, 2001). The methodology avails an enabling environment for youth to participate productively in socio-economic development.

Additionally, in Nigeria, the federal government initiated the financial intervention platform codenamed Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) platform geared towards youth capacity building and seed-capital provision. The main objective was facilitating and

empowering aspiring entrepreneurs towards implementing and developing their business acumen and job creation (Adebayo, 2015). This empowered the youth to become engines for future self-employment, self-reliance and social change in their community (Izzi, 2013). The youth create employment for themselves and other members of the society.

The role of SE in Rwanda was felt in transforming society most especially young generation (Kaufman, 2012). Rwanda provides many lessons for post-conflict peace building, empowerment, reconstruction efforts, and the benefits and values of social entrepreneurship such as cooperatives movements (Sentama, 2009). These cooperatives have promoted interpersonal relations, contribution, livelihoods and peace building among youth and general society. Similarly, Indego Africa (IA) and Generation Rwanda provide practical examples of the women artisans who produce and sell hand-made accessories and home-décor products (Kaufman, 2012). Women attended skills training programmes leading to self-reliance, social capital, and empowerment among the people. In these cooperatives, the principle of networking for inclusive participation and enablement is key for accelerated development (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). Further, IA embraced asset building embedded in the empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 2000). Such rich and contextually relevant background from Sub-Saharan Africa provides the basis for this study focusing on youth socio-economic empowerment.

In Uganda, youth (18-30 years) continue to experience livelihoods constraints. Uganda has the second lowest median age in the world, where formal sector youth employment rates are below 30%, and youth are mostly engaged in insecure and informal casual work (Alfonsi et al., 2020). The 2014 census indicated that population of young people below 30 years is 78 per cent of the entire population only second to Niger at 83 per cent (UBOS, 2016). Youth bulges continue to worsen the youth unemployment challenge thus calling for interventions aimed at socio-economic empowerment.

Over the past two decades a number of policies, initiatives, strategies, programmes and institutional frameworks have been approved by the State to demonstrate government's commitment to empower marginalised populations (such as the youth) through investing in production and entrepreneurship (Kwesiga, Wamajji, Mwesigye, & Mubangizi, 2019). These programmes are geared towards supporting youth engaged in social enterprises for social welfare. Nevertheless, most youth in Uganda, are left out of the planning process of development programmes, policies meant for them, and this affects their decision-making,

prosperity, empowerment, and peace. According to UN (n.d), until structural barriers are removed, implementing employment-based interventions targeting young people may just fuel greater frustration. Social entrepreneurship offers youth an avenue to leverage on talents, skills, capacities to effect change, and have an impact in society.

Social entrepreneurship seeks to use innovative solutions towards building youth capacities for sustained development. Social entrepreneurial interventions do not only provide for post conflict needs but facilitate employment creation, galvanise opportunity recognition and social capital in the northern Uganda (Sserwanga, Kiconco, Nystrand, & Mindra, 2014). Social entrepreneurship emphasises inclusiveness, participation, sustainability, responsibility, and ownership. The youths are the future generation, agents of change, and thus, their reorganisation, and empowerment would spark the journey to an employment generation, quest for sustainable development and peace in the region.

In recognition of the above, the Government of Uganda (GoU) has initiated several interventions purposed towards achieving middle-income status by 2025 and prosperous and modern country by 2040 (GoU, 2013). To achieve this, it was envisioned that youth should be at the forefront of innovations, technological utilisation, industrialisation and leadership (Ejang, 2020). Some studies stress that youth in conflict areas are poor and socially excluded from mainstream spaces of development due to limited education, and unemployment (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008; Annan, Blattman, Mazurana, & Carlson, 2011). Conversely, this exacerbates more misery, social instability, and reduce youth livelihoods. To avert the situation, the need to integrate and support social entrepreneurial interventions for youth empowerment forced the GoU to initiate several programmes and policies to improve youth social welfare.

Relatedly, the Uganda National Development Plan 2010/2011-2014/2015 emphasised promotion of non-formal skills, start-ups, and youth entrepreneurship as part of strategies to address the challenges of labour, poverty and employment in Uganda (MoGLSD, 2013). Cognisant of insufficient creation of quality and gainful jobs and continued youth unemployment at the rate of 13 per cent, skills and vocational development for youth gained priority in the second and third development plans (NPA, 2020). The notably implemented programmes in Gulu district, Acholi sub region, Northern Uganda, Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), (NUSAF I, II & III), Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), Operation Wealth Creation (OWC),

Northern Uganda Reconstruction Project (NURP), and many other programmes with an entrepreneurship approach.

These programmes supported youth enterprises to increase social value in the community. However, these programmes were too general to meet youth specific needs, and more so, most youth do not participate in decision-making and planning of these programmes (Kwesiga et al., 2019). Studies conducted by Kwesiga et al. (2019) indicated that political tokenism and political gerrymandering influence effective youth participation in most programmes. The principal-agent relationship holds where youth leaders at national and local levels represent the majority youth. However, studies by Kwesiga et al. (2019) reported that 70 per cent of youth lacked confidence in national youth councillors² to represent their voices effectively in project planning and meeting their specific needs.

The first youth specific programmes implemented to provide start-ups for youth enterprise development and education include, Skilling Uganda, Youth Enterprise Scheme, Youth Capital Venture Fund (YCVF) and Graduate Capital Venture Fund launched in 2010 and 2012 respectively (Ahaibwe & Mbowa, 2014). Nonetheless, most of these business start-up programmes are urban accessed, hence neglecting rural illiterate youth. Most of these programmes focused on funding than other entrepreneurship aspects (Ahaibwe & Kasirye, 2015; Diraditsile, 2016; Mwangi & Namusonge, 2015). Furthermore, majority of the youth in northern Uganda did not benefit from the programmes due to limited collateral security, exposure, sensitisation, poor youth mindset, lack of participation, limited entrepreneurial attitudes, unfair beneficiary selection, inappropriate testing, insufficient knowledge and information of the programme as the region was recovering from LRA war (Ejang, 2020; MoGLSD, 2013). The gaps in these programmes necessitated a complementary programme to facilitate youth participation in addressing major youth challenges. In response, the GoU introduced the Youth Livelihood programme (YLP) as a nationwide revolving fund (microcredit) to foster youth entrepreneurship and socio-economic transformation. YLP is specific to the youth and a current intervention meant for youth enterprises growth, and self-reliance. The programme builds on social entrepreneurship principles such as inclusiveness, equity, innovation, and empowerment to cause social change. The intervention support youth with innovative ideas meant to achieve the social mission, thus, justifying its choice in this study. It is thus, crucial to provide a review of the intervention in terms of how/when it started,

² Elected youth leaders at local and national levels to represent youth views.

the major activities and objectives to identify what is common among other social entrepreneurial programmes. In northern Uganda, most of the current youth were born and/or raised during the war, thus, have additional (two-fold) challenge, they are sometimes referred to as ‘war generation’ (Vorhölter, 2014). For almost two decades, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) war ravaged northern Uganda. The civil war began in 1980s between the national resistance movement’ (NRM) government and leaders of the ousted past regimes (Omona, 2008). The rebellion changed leadership from time to time due to repulsion from government forces. Leadership changed from Uganda People’s Democratic Army under Brigadier Odong Latek to Holy Spirit Movement under voodoo Princess Alice Lakwena, then to her nephew Joseph Kony of Lord’s Resistance Army in 1990. The LRA war was believed to be among the longest civil wars in Africa, only second to the Sudanese war (Omona, 2008). The conflict claimed lives of people and paralysed the economic and social fabrics of life. Scores of people lost their lives, property destroyed, economic activities retarded, poverty escalated and human life suffering deepened (Otunnu, 2002). The horrific and prolonged war devastated society and human life. Otunnu further laments that the destruction of infrastructure and continuous decline in the socio-economic development affects the future generation. Acholi sub-region suffered the conflict more than any other part of the region. Northern Uganda comprises other sub regions including Lango and West Nile which were also affected by the war but not at the magnitude of Acholi sub-region. It is believed that over 12,000 people were killed, 20,000 children kidnapped to become child soldiers and slaves, spies, and over 1.5 million people displaced to Internally Displaced People’s (IDP) camps (Nampindo, Phillipps, & Plumptre, 2005). Government forced people to leave local areas to resettle in established camps, leading to breakdown in Acholi culture (Vorhölter, 2014). Cultural breakdown meant changes in economic practices, political orders, social relations, gender roles, norms and values, and changes in lifestyle. Although, most youth were born during or towards end of the war, the destruction on socio, economic and cultural settings affected their parents and communities, and continues to complicate youth livelihoods in the post-conflict period (Reinke, 2016). Youth live in the so called ‘modern society’ since the Acholi traditional society was shattered during the war.

Many parents were denied quality education, economic participation, and children were affected too, denied quality education, quality employment, as well as participation in economic activities both during conflict and post-conflict periods (Betancourt et al., 2012). This has led to persistent poverty, and youth unemployment, resulting into social instability,

moral degeneration, social and economic violence, frustration, and psychological harms (Annan et al., 2011). Female youth were the most affected through rape, childbearing, and motherhood at tender age. The youth continue to experience the scars of the civil war in the post-conflict situation.

The then Gulu district³ was the epicentre of the civil war (Omona, 2008), hosted many IDPs. presents a large youthful population hence many unemployed and poor youth (UBOS, 2017). Most of these youth were born and raised in IDP camps characterised by cultural breakdown, and changes in socio-economic lifestyle (Vorhölter, 2014). Youth (war generation) in Acholi subregion is at different levels of development compared to other regions. Therefore, their entrepreneurial abilities are different from those of other counterparts in other regions. These youth are not only at crossroads but tricky, dangerous, ambitious, unreliable, incomprehensible, uncertain and possibly dangerous to society (Vorhölter, 2014; Whyte & Acio, 2017). The inequalities in the region because of two decades of war, exacerbates conflict drivers such as contestation over land, displacements, unemployment, and loss of identity. This calls for approaches towards supporting youth socio-entrepreneurship to not only focus on youth themselves but also society. According to Namuggala (2017) youth in post-conflict resort to social evils e.g. sex work, gambling, contemporary dancing, theft and other uncivil behaviours to generate income and meet the unending basic needs. The 'war generation' as they sometimes referred to do not want to return to the life of rural farming as with previous generations (Vorhölter, 2014), thus resort to immoral activity for survival. With the breath of peace in 2006 after the signing of the cessation of hostilities agreement between Uganda government and LRA rebels in Juba South Sudan on 26th August, 2006, recovery from the aftermath of the war and start of economic progress and productivity in the region (Omona & Aduo, 2013), youth should have been at the forefront of socio-economic transformation. Several programmes implemented in region aimed at promoting social and economic development. The current youth livelihood programme (YLP) aims enhancing youth socio-economic transformation and change. The study, the focused on the youth benefiting from YLP an entrepreneurial programme implemented by government to foster socio-economic development. The key question that arose was how to create social and economic structures, which promote purposeful engagement of the youth in the process of helping themselves (empowerment).

³ During the LRA war, Gulu district was large, composed of the Omoro, Amuru, and Nwoya as counties. The current Gulu district is different because of the subsequent political development that led to the creation of other districts such as Amuru district in 2006, Nwoya in 2010 (from Amuru), Omoro district in 2016 and then Gulu city in 2020. This leaves Gulu district with small area with only Gulu City and Aswa County.

The youth should own the process of improving their social welfare to achieve sustainable livelihood for themselves, fellows, and community. In the 21st century, the time of storm and stress where youth are taken as risky, problems, and destructive has been replaced by tapping into youth potentials, resources, skills for own and community development (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005). Empowerment takes different forms in different people, context, and changes drastically over time. Empowerment can be social, political, economic, and psychological, and, at individual, community, and national levels (Zimmerman, 2000). My study focused on socio-economic empowerment⁴ manifested through self-employment, increased income, freedom, and participation in decision-making, and are a precursor for other empowerment categories. Therefore, YLP as social entrepreneurship positions itself for youth empowerment.

The YLP is a five-year Government of Uganda (GoU) entrepreneurship-rolling programme initiated in 2013/2014 financial year. The programme targets the poor, single parents, youth with disability and unemployed youth in the whole country. This is an intervention specially designed to promote youth entrepreneurship and social change in Uganda. The programme is implemented by the MoGLSD, financed solely by the GoU, with an initial budget estimate of Uganda shillings 265 billion⁵ for five years (MoGLSD, 2013). YLP employs the community demand driven (CDD) model implemented by both central and local governments. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) guide it with commitment to vigorous promotion of human development through social entrepreneurship and skills development. The main Programme Development Objective (PDO) is to empower the targeted youth to harness their business ideas, socio-economic potential and increase self-employment opportunities, self-reliance and income levels (Ahaibwe, Kasirye, & Barungi, 2014; Bukenya, Kasirye, & Miranda, 2019).

To ensure socio-economic empowerment the programme specifically aims at providing youth with; (i) marketable vocational skills and tool kits for self-employment and job creation; (ii) financial support to enable the youth establish Income Generating Activities (IGAs) (iii) entrepreneurship and life skills as an integral part of youth livelihoods (iv) relevant knowledge and information for attitudinal change (Bukenya et al., 2019; MoGLSD, 2013). Furthermore, the programme focuses on three main components, namely, Skills Development (SD) at 20%, Livelihood Support (LS) at 70% and Institutional Support (IS) at 10%, with priorities in

⁴ Others forms of empowerment such as psychological, political, cultural can be attained once socio-economic changes are attained.

⁵ An equivalent of USD 72,016,108 of 2013 rate of exchange and prices

entrepreneurship, business management, life skills, and mindset change. Youth investment options under SD include bricklaying, carpentry, agro-processing, bakery/cookery, computer use, among others. The LS component entails basic training in entrepreneurship skills and follow-up support, with investment options in diary, high value crops, piggery, improved goats, integrated farming, produce buying and selling, etc. IS meant to improve technical, administrative, capacity of implementers, and good governance at all levels of programme implementation (MoGLSD, 2013). The programme concurs with empowerment theory and Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework which stresses sustainable skilling, asset building, connecting youth to local resources and ensuring collaboration, thus improving on youth functioning (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). The programme creates opportunities for self-employment through hands-on training, financing, and income generating activities.

Purposeful capacity building embedded in entrepreneurial programmes should ensure that youth live healthy and productive lives. This is achieved through provision of revolving funds (loan) as support to Youth Interest Group Activities (YIGA⁶) to enable them, increase income, employment and improve social welfare. The principles embedded in the programme follow social entrepreneurship paradigm geared towards social change. The youth enterprises are supported to start, finance, and expand their business ventures for skills development, self-reliance, and social impact. However, youth in northern Uganda have a unique factor of conflict history compared to counterparts in other regions, thus affecting their socio-economic progress. Thus, it is prudent to explore their perceptions on social entrepreneurship for youth socio-economic empowerment in the region. Against this background, it is principal to investigate youth social entrepreneurs' contribution towards the youth socio-economic empowerment in Gulu District of Northern Uganda.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

After the LRA (1986-2006) war, the questions arose as to how to restore positive peace, resolve conflict, and empower youth with more pressing tasks to handle in the community. This called for more energy, resources and passion for people to foster socio-economic transformation war affected areas such as northern Uganda (Lederach, 2007). Government and other organisations have adopted several initiatives to capacitate the youth who form 25.2 per cent (18-30 years)

⁶ Groups formed of up to 15 members, to conduct a joint business, funded by the government programme

of the population of Gulu district (UBOS, 2017) in northern Uganda. Achievements under youth opportunities programme funded under NUSAF and limited space for youth voices in previous programme led to the current YLP as a youth-specific government programme. The YLP interventions support youth enterprises enhance their potentials, expand operations, and increase self-employment and social change. The interventions aim at building assets of the youth and enhance their capacity to earn a living and better socio-economic standards. These social entrepreneurial interventions are appropriate for sustainable development, and peace building in the sub-region. Although government has invested and implemented such programme the youth continue to face daunting challenges, and it is unclear if the youth have been fully empowered by these entrepreneurship interventions. There are limited qualitative studies thus, the study on social entrepreneurship for youth socio-economic empowerment.

1.3 General Objective

The study generally investigated youth perceptions on the contribution of social entrepreneurship in promoting youth socio-economic empowerment in Gulu District of Acholi subregion in Northern Uganda.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the nature of youth enterprises supported under Youth Livelihood Programmes.
2. To examine livelihood challenges in Gulu district of Acholi subregion in northern Uganda.
3. To explore how best to capacitate the youth to optimally benefit from social entrepreneurship interventions.

Research Questions

1. What are the categories of youth enterprises?
2. What factors influence youth participation in these enterprises?
3. What have youth achieved from social entrepreneurship interventions?
4. How are youth hindered from achieving their potentials in their enterprises?

5. How can stakeholders build the youth capacity to maximise gains from entrepreneurial programmes?

1.4 Scope of the Study

Whilst the impact of interventions for youth employment promotion have been documented, their contribution from social entrepreneurship perspective on youth socio-economic empowerment is less understood. The aim of this study was to investigate youth perceptions on YLP as SE for youth socio-economic empowerment in Gulu District as a case of Acholi Sub-region in Northern Uganda. To achieve this; content, geography and time are very important.

Content Scope

The study focused on youth perceptions on YLP as social entrepreneurship for youth (18-30 years) socio-economic empowerment. The specific focus was on its contribution through nature of youth enterprises, the livelihood challenges, and strategies for capacity building. The current YLP intervention was considered as social entrepreneurial because of its principles of inclusiveness, social mission, empowerment, and sustainability. YLP supported youth entrepreneurs in their social enterprises to strength their operations for social change. Social entrepreneurship emphasises using innovative solutions to create a sustainable impact among the youth in society. Indeed, the government programme employed entrepreneurship approach towards youth entrepreneurship, self-employment, increase in income and social change. Socio-economic empowerment links to other types of empowerment because it encompasses a holistic approach for fostering youth independence, interdependence, self-reliance and mastery of lives. Empowerment focuses on individual youth to groups (organisational level) and then community. This study concentrated on the group level i.e., Youth Interest Groups (YIGs).

Geographical Scope

The study was conducted in Gulu district of Acholi sub-region in Northern Uganda. Like in other districts in northern Uganda, the LRA war greatly affected the region, and many youths are facing several challenges despite government interventions. Gulu district experienced the wrath of the civil war and hosted a large population (Mallett, Atim, & Opio, 2016; Omona, 2008). More still, many youths from neighbouring districts of Amuru, Omoro, Nwoya (formerly part of Gulu district), Pader, Agago, and Kitgum still yearn and commute to Gulu

district for opportunities. The existent programmes under the PRDP, NURP, NAADS, NUSAF I, II, III, YVCF, Skilling Uganda were so general that they did not adequately cater for the Northern Uganda youth who are the majority and a force to reckon with in terms of numbers, potentials, and productivity.

Similarly, Kwesiga et., al (2019) recognises that most programmes in Uganda are so centralised that marginalised youth are not given specific attention. Youth participation is limited to tokenism and political gerrymandering and national youth councils fall short of representing grassroots' youth when it comes to programme design and planning. Additionally, youth in Acholi subregion have a unique experience of the LRA war context compared to youth in other regions of Uganda. Therefore, the youth in northern Uganda were selected due to this two-fold challenge of growing up in conflict and post-conflict situation and facing youth challenges like the other youth.

Time Scope

Although the Northern Uganda region started enjoying peace in 2006, this study considered the period from 2013 to 2020 when economic recovery commenced, and the YLP programme was initiated. It is the period when this youth specific social entrepreneurship programme was initiated and rolled out to youth. The period of economic revitalisation set in, and a number of programmes implemented to cause social change. Although, YLP is a national programme, targeting all youth in Uganda, its social entrepreneurial approach to harness the economic potentials and decision-making powers provides the background for the consideration in this study.

1.5 Significance for the Study

Social entrepreneurship and youth socio-economic empowerment are modern approaches towards creating a sustainable society. This study may form a basis for more understanding on how this approach can be made visible in addressing youth challenges in our community. Thus, the future researchers interested in the field may use the information to incorporate SE in their approaches most especially government agencies such as Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs, National Planning Authority and Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development responsible for youth affairs.

It will contribute to a body of knowledge and literature on social entrepreneurship research by other academicians and scholars. This is most especially by contributing to the already existing literature in northern region and Uganda in general.

The study examined the challenges faced by the youth and recommended appropriate measures to overcome such challenges in a bid to empower the youth socially, and economically. The youth are the driving force to socio-economic development, therefore, understanding livelihood problems acts as a guide to sustainable measures in future.

It is envisioned that the study may help government, and development partners in formulating programmes geared towards youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. The research may assist government especially, the MoGLSD, and Office of Prime Minister, NPA in their programmes such as the YLP, Skilling Uganda, EMYOOGA- Presidential Initiative on Wealth Creation, and NUSAF respectively to match with national development plans (NDPs) and specific sustainable development goals (SDGs). They may use the findings in employing the social entrepreneurship approaches in their projects and sustaining youth social welfare.

Furthermore, the study findings may help in supplementing the livelihood approaches and sustainable solutions to the challenges faced by the youth. The youth who are the primary participants provided local and own solutions towards solving their own problems. This will be constructive in understanding their vulnerability and enhancing social protection.

Additionally, the study may assist the local, national, and international non-governmental organisations with empirical facts, which may assist them in imparting the youth with social entrepreneurial skills that may promote self-reliance, motivation, social cohesion and self-efficacy thus creating a positive social impact in society.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Studies disclose a gap in programmes intended towards youth entrepreneurship and socio-economic transformation in Acholi sub region. In Northern Uganda, it is clear that for long the youth have been one of the marginalised groups since they stem from a post-conflict society. It is believed that 95 percent of Acholi sub region suffered most of the conflict (Mallett et al., 2016; Omona, 2008), thus youth deserve a unique approach towards empowerment. According to (ILO, 2020) youth unemployment globally stands at 13.6 per cent, thus increasing social, political, and psychological harm to the young people. The risk of youth unemployment affects

mostly youth in developing countries such as Uganda due to a big number of youth released annually to the labour market (Banks, 2016; Namatovu, Langevang, Dawa, & Kyejjusa, 2016). One of the challenges of government is development of approaches, policies and programmes that will steer youth in northern Uganda towards self-reliance and self-employment. Many youth continue to face unprecedented challenges of poverty, unemployment, frustration that are a recipe for, political, social instability and moral decay and lawlessness (MoGLSD, 2013).

Youth socio-economic empowerment can contribute to reduction of the poverty in Gulu district Acholi subregion. Poverty in the subregion stood at 33.4 per cent and 67.7 per cent in 2016/2017 and 2019/2020 respectively (UBOS, 2018b, 2021). If not addressed, the poverty level is feared to stagnate or escalate thus causing more misery and social instability among the youth. Therefore, building youth capacity to create own jobs through own enterprises provides a response to unemployment and poverty. Social entrepreneurship provides a sustained approach towards socio-economic empowerment. This is achieved through youth livelihood and entrepreneurship programmes that stimulate youth potentials, skills, and qualities through training, financing, and mentorship. Thus, capturing youth voices and perspectives provides avenues for examining youth enterprises, and gains from entrepreneurial interventions, and links them to challenges faced, and best strategies towards optimising benefit from existent social entrepreneurial interventions.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Youth socio-economic empowerment does not stand in a vacuum. Enhancing the youth welfare goes beyond treatment and prevention of maladaptive behaviour to recognising youth potentials, strengths, and resources towards promoting proper functioning. Traditionally, social work focused on problems, deficits, and diagnosis rather than strengths, and resources (Cheon, 2008). The time of storm and stress where youth were looked at as risky and destructive has come to an end (Lerner, Almerigi, et al., 2005). Most social work theories centred on treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention. Despite the problem-focused tradition, there is increased interest on positive aspects of human development such as, building skills, assets, competences for increased productivity, resilience self-reliance and wellbeing (Benson, 1997; Delgado & Zhao, 2008; Lerner, 2004). Social entrepreneurship with its core values of sustainability, social value, empowerment, opportunity recognition, and inclusiveness, plays a key role in building such assets. This calls for theoretical framework that appreciates youth as resources, and active participants in the socio-economic development arena.

There are many social work theories which could have been applied, however, for this study, I selected appropriate frameworks. The shortfalls in social work theories such as resilience, psychosocial theory, other others, call for theories with specific focus on youth empowerment. Particularly, recent development paradigms of empowerment, positive youth development in social work also gives support to entrepreneurship, and wellbeing (Lerner, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000). In understanding the prevailing environment surrounding the youth and building their potentials, the study is guided by the empowerment theory by Zimmerman. Positive Youth Development Approach by Anyon and Jenson (2014) complements empowerment theory. The complementarity therefore helps us to examine relationship between social entrepreneurship and youth socio-economic empowerment. The concept and practice of empowerment is fundamental in youth livelihood studies as it provides a basis for creating social value, sustainability, economic prosperity, and wellness. The subsequent subsections give details on the theories used for this study.

Empowerment Theory

Empowerment has gained prominence in social and community work. This encourages self-help groups help themselves out of dependence (Cheon, 2008). Zimmerman (1995, 2000) advanced the theory. It emphasises empowerment as a process, that is, a mechanism by which individuals, organisations, and communities gain mastery of their lives. Mobilisation of community groups, neighbours and individuals is possible. Zimmerman (2000) asserts that social problems exist because of unequal distribution of, and access to, resources. The theory aims at building positive assets, connecting people to local resources, sustainable skilling, changes in life, and decision-making powers. Thus, person-environment interaction is very important in the empowerment.

Furthermore, the value orientation of this theory suggests goals, aims and strategies for implementing change. The theory postulates mutual respect, feeling of efficacy, critical reflection, and group/citizen participation, to facilitate equal share, access, and control of valued resources. There is collective action, which builds the competences, skills and engaged citizenship (Lee, 2001; Wallace, 2001). It is a model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and inspiration that influence one's life and quality of life in the community (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Empowerment calls for a distinctive language that makes it easy to understand common efforts adapted to change and influence our communities. Empowerment replaces the professional

terms of ‘client’ and ‘expert’ with ‘participant’ and ‘collaborator’. Learning is promoted and a sense of ownership, responsibility, and collaboration is created.

Zimmerman opines that empowerment is context and population specific. Empowerment applies at different levels such as individual, group or community levels, and it is multidimensional, apart from economic, it is social, political and psychological, the power to change is very central in empowerment (Page & Czuba, 1999). Page and Czuba further argue that empowerment is a social process and occurs in social contexts such as schools, communities, and groups, through which the youth can develop. The theory is also supported by other studies on youth empowerment which emphasises collective effort to create socio-political change (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger-Messias, & McLoughlin, 2006). The authors provide a paradigm shift from risk preventive approaches of rehabilitation or containment to capacity building through community participation, entrepreneurship, human liberation, and empowerment. This is aimed at promoting healthy youth development (Small & Memmo, 2004).

Empowerment would mean community valuing the ‘youth’ as resources, contributors, participants, service providers, ensuring safety at home, school, and neighbourhood. Indeed, this study focuses on youth as potential resources destined for socio-economic transformation. The concept of empowerment grounds itself on increasing opportunities for young people to their achievements in society, and how proper functioning can be enhanced (Helve & Wallace, 2001). The youth are targets of change, whom interventions such as Youth Livelihood Programme aim at capacitating their enterprises for social change. In line with the theory, YLP targets unemployed and poor youth through revitalisation of economic potentials and self-employment.

Overall, YLP aims at empowering the young generation to become responsible citizens. This corroborates the assertion that social work goes beyond problematising youth to facilitating productivity and proper functioning. It also emphasises engaging the youths in community service activities to bring about positive change. Empowerment increases the bargaining powers and opportunities for youth to develop skills, employment, and effective influence. Indeed, this study appreciates and recognises youth perceptions from YIGs 102. This challenges the conventional entrepreneurship concept that aims at controlling and exploiting others to maximize profit. Indeed, the empowered youth could play roles in developing their own potentials, exploit their skills and contribute greatly to positive change. That is why the

study established the achievements registered through the YLP, and the factors limiting their participation.

The value creation holistic goal of social entrepreneurship as highlighted in positive theory of social entrepreneurship is directed towards attaining social change (Santos, 2012). This argument directly links the Commonwealth understanding of youth empowerment as creating and supporting the enabling conditions for the youth. Indeed, the enabling environment is crucial in exploiting the available opportunities for sustained growth. The intervention capacitates and integrate the youth in the process of finding solutions and become part of the implementation process. Cultivation of resources and strategies or more functional competence facilitates attainment of personal and collective goals (Lee, 2001). Basing on the context and population specificity of the theory, my study focused on youth in collaborative enterprises commonly known as YIGs. However, an individual working in teams must have change within to willingly participate in group activities. Nonetheless, members of the community influence some individuals change behaviour. To qualify the theory, this study focuses on youth enterprises, opportunities and success stories, hindrances, and youth capacity building.

While Zimmerman's Empowerment theory is vital in youth development studies, it is limited by over focusing on the social dimension. Its aspect of value orientation focuses on health, adaptation, competence and natural helping systems and it is silent on economic empowerment. It lacks specificity on the category of people to empower and the trickle-down effect. Therefore, it is necessary to complement it with other theories that have youth specific approach with economic ingredients. For this study, the Positive Youth Development Approach was used to compliment the Empowerment Theory. This is the subject of the subsequent sub-section.

The Positive Youth Development Approach (PYD)

We cannot talk about youth welfare without focusing on positive youth development. The PYD approach is fundamental in social work discipline since it emphasises promoting functioning of the youth. The Positive Youth Development Approach seeks to fill the gap with a broad goal of helping the youth transit to healthy and responsible adulthood. PYD emphasises the relationship between youth strengths and resources and their capacity to live healthy and productive lives (Anyon & Jenson, 2014). Proponents of this approach stress principles of economic independence, competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring and compassion as key outcomes (Lerner et al., 2000). Furthermore, Lerner, Lerner, et al. (2005)

developed the sixth C of PYD that is contribution to describe psychological, behavioural, and social attitudes hypothesised as features of a thriving, functioning and well-adapted youth.

PYD has the ecological perspective, that is, contextual environments influencing youth wellbeing and functionality. Ecologically, human beings are continually growing, changing and learning (Lee, 2001). PYD uses the concept of ecological assets to illustrate these youth strengths and competences. To Damon (2004), every child has unique talents, strength, interests, and potentials, therefore, external development assets (community influences) optimise youth empowerment. He further emphasises the noble purpose in the youth and youth adults. More importantly, the tenets of PYD include sense of responsibility, connectedness, and positive values. PYD strategies are identifying strengths, engaging, motivating, and collaborating with young people.

The approach as well envisions the ‘youth’ more as resources than problems for the society (Damon, 2004). Youth are not broken to be repaired or in need of psychosocial repair or problems to be managed but resources to be tapped for own development and community development (Lerner, Almerigi, et al., 2005). Social entrepreneurship exploits these resources to cause social change in society. PYD postulates moral identity, contribution to civic society and recognition of spirituality. Although Damon (2004) recognises the existence of development challenges (e.g., poverty, cultural values) affecting young people, he opposes the earlier underestimation of youth capacities. PYD focuses on the youth potentials and stresses understanding, educating, and engaging the youth in productive activities rather than correcting the maladaptive tendencies. This is through developing the skills, attitudes, mindset, competencies, and values of the youth to become successful adults. PYD creates environments in which youth can strength their confidence, and character towards meeting their needs and preparing to live productive lives (Cheon, 2008). The approach embraces creating an enabling environment for effective participation in the development process. Ultimately, PYD posits that mutual beneficial relationship between young people and other people and institutions, and they enter adulthood as successful and positive contributors. Youth can eagerly explore the world, gain competence, and acquire capacity to contribute essentially to the world.

The approach links to this study in recognising the youth contribution in socio-economic empowerment drive. The internal assets such as personal characteristics, commitment, positive values are what objective one is building on. Basing on the scope of YIGs signifies the identity, resilience, social cohesion, and emotional competence embedded in PYD. The key tenets of

the framework are enshrined in the study findings, which established social capital, increased income, and psychological satisfaction as achievements as well as factors limiting full contribution to positive development.

In summary, my research is based on the support from two theoretical frameworks, namely: the empowerment theory and the PYD approach. Although there are some differences and tensions between these two frameworks, my study attempts to adopt the most relevant insights and prepositions (Robbins et al., 1998, 2005). Together, they provide a conceptual framework that helps us view different human experiences from the perspective of socioeconomic empowerment, including the nature of entrepreneurship, livelihood challenges, and connection to the social entrepreneurship under investigation. These two guiding perspectives also provide a body of knowledge that can guide research and research paradigms. The empowerment perspective clearly assumes that youth empowerment is contextual, multidimensional, and process oriented. The PYD model recognises the importance of youth strength, skills, resources, and ecological assets, as well as their positive contributions to social well-being. On this basis, the livelihood intervention supports social entrepreneurship among young people, which in turn strengthens the productivity of youth enterprises for personal development and social change. PYD and empowerment theories claim that positive results can be achieved through the tapping into strengths, and individual abilities, and their environmental resources, thus improving the functioning of young people. There is a nexus among PYD, empowerment approach and social entrepreneurship, because they all emphasise promoting a safe environment for youth productivity, and envision youth as targets of change, with a focus on social change, and socio-economic empowerment. Lastly, they both focus on youth as collaborators and active participants rather than beneficiaries.

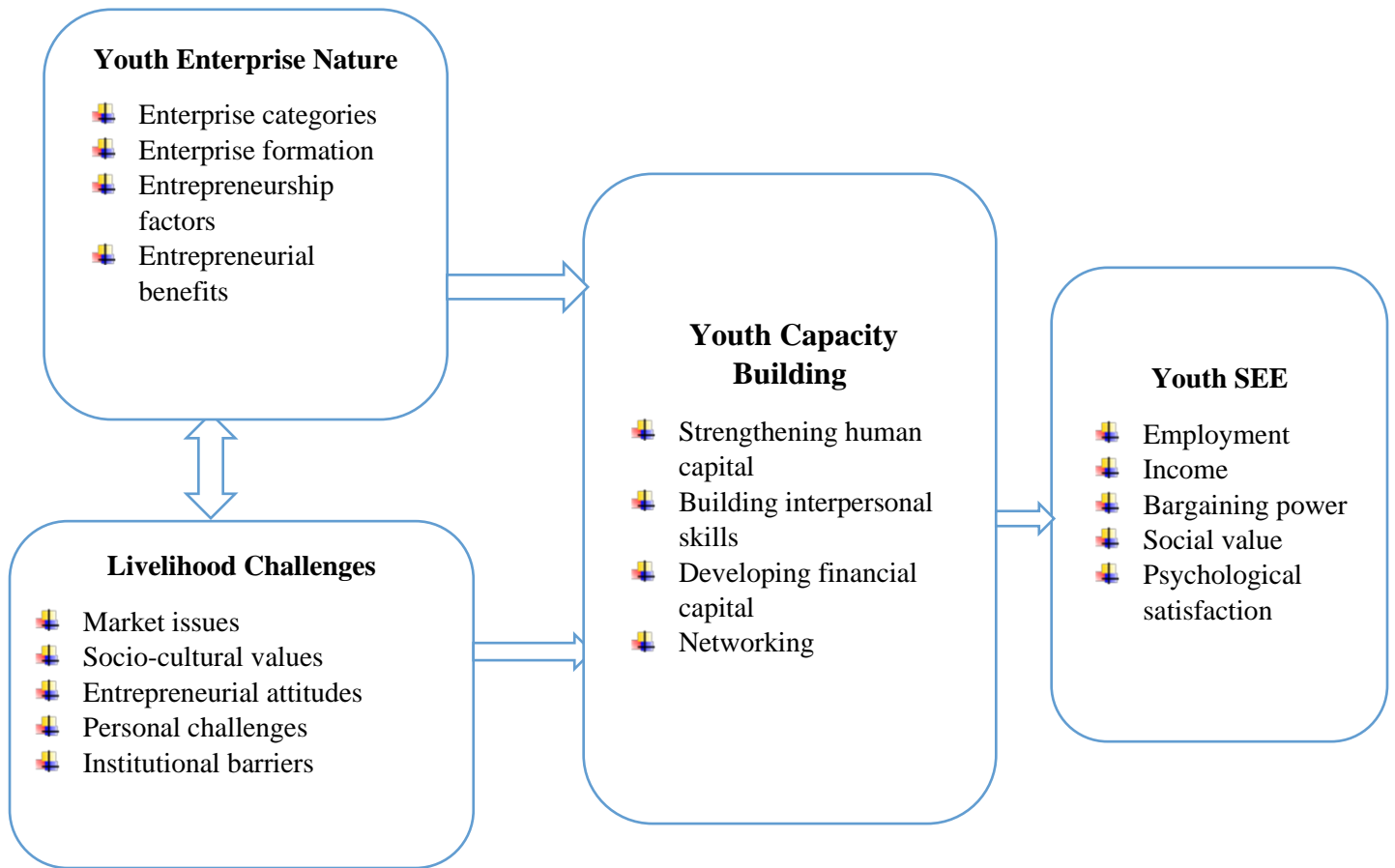
1.8 Conceptual Framework

Social entrepreneurship starts with identifying the nature of youth enterprises thus situating them for entrepreneurial progress. Examining youth enterprises is key in establishing types, process of formation, entrepreneurial motivations, and sustainability. The entrepreneurial motivations are fundamental in connecting youth to local resources. These inner drivers facilitate the process of developing a social mission, and activities geared towards social change. The factors for youth participation (motivations) helped to analyse the achievements delivered from the enterprises. The magnitude of gains determines youth resourcefulness. The empowerment theory and PYD recognise these youth as resources, which can be enhanced

through social entrepreneurship. This facilitates active youth participation and positive contribution in entrepreneurship (Damon, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000). Through recognition of enterprise characteristics, it is easy to decide and debate on the benefits accruing from these interventions. The interventions would enhance employment opportunities, entrepreneurial skilling, and social capital, access to microfinance, information and market opportunities thus building youth assets as envisaged in previous theories. Furthermore, benefits would include enhancing youth strengths, resources, capabilities and resilience and overcoming barriers, and shocks thus ensuring positive contribution (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005).

Despite the benefits, it is important to focus on livelihood challenges affecting the performance of youth enterprises. Cognisant of limitations (limited entrepreneurship traits, institutional, personal barriers, socio-cultural values) to full empowerment, it is fundamental to design strategies for continuous youth capacitation, through building human, financial, interpersonal, social capital and undertaking needs assessment. These measures facilitate continuous learning, inspiration, and understanding youth problems thus creating an enabling environment for meaningful participation. Youth socio-economic empowerment is manifested through increased income, skills development, social networks, bargaining power and decision-making, taking control of one' life, agency, and proper functioning for improve social welfare. The following conceptual map guides literature review, and deductively provided the thematic foundation for methodology.

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework Showing the Connection between Social Entrepreneurship and Socio-economic Empowerment



Source: *Author's Conceptualisation 2017-2020*

1.9 Operationalisation of Concepts

There are many concepts applied in this study. There range from entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship to youth and youth empowerment. The subsection aids the reader to understand the operationalisation of such terms throughout the study.

Entrepreneurship

The concept ‘entrepreneur’ has evolved since 1700s, with its origin from French word ‘*entreprendre*’ meaning ‘*to undertake*’. Originally, the word entrepreneur stems from economic theory by Cantillon (1755), yet, it was Says (1803) who accorded its prominence (Adebayo, 2015). Whereas Jean-Baptiste refers to entrepreneurs as economic agents who mobilise means of production (land, labour, capital), Schumpeter (1934) looks at an entrepreneur as an

innovator who destroys the status quo of existing products and create new goods and services. Therefore, an entrepreneur strives for four goals, namely; the need for achievement, risk taking, initiation and internal locus of control (Schumpeter, 1934). All these propositions were vital and operational in probing youth views and perceptions in this study.

Entrepreneurship is the act of creating new business firms and is taken to be a key factor in creating social and economic mobility (Castellani & Lora, 2014; K. Ellis & Williams, 2011). Success is thus measured in the amount of profits/wealth generated not social change (Austin et al., 2006).

Social Entrepreneurship

A social entrepreneur is an individual with a feeling of hope and innovative solutions to the most pressing social problems of the society (Ashoka, 2012) cited in (Abu-Saifan, 2012). Social entrepreneurs are visionaries who are concerned with practical implementation of social vision to cause social change. According to Abu-Saifan (2012) a social entrepreneur is a mission-driven individual who uses a set of entrepreneurial behaviours to deliver social value to less privileged, all through an entrepreneurially oriented entity which is financially independent and sustainable.

Although, social entrepreneurship (SE) employs business principles, it focuses on social change unlike entrepreneurship that aims at profits and wealth creation. SE links between charity and private sector (Westley & Antadze, 2010) in tackling the social needs of the population. Similarly, social entrepreneurship view people as ‘partners’ not ‘customers’. The benefits from social entrepreneurial activities accrue primarily to target population as opposed to owners (Alvord, Brown, & Letts, 2004; Austin et al., 2006; Zahra, 2008). The youth in this study viewed YLP as social entrepreneurship for social change.

The Youth

The concept ‘youth’ is quite debatable as a number of scholars, organisations and countries tend to provide their perspectives basing on culture, purpose, organisation and challenge at hand. UNESCO (2004) defines youth as the transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of the interdependence as member of the community. UNESCO further argues that the category youth is more fluid than the fixed age groups, as it involves leaving compulsory education and finding the first job. However, the definition

ignores youth who are neither educated nor employed. The Commonwealth focuses on 15-29 years as age bracket for the youth. This understanding can as well depend on societal conceptualisation.

United Nations in its writings recognises that there is no internationally accepted definition of youth but goes ahead to consider youth as “a period of transition from the independence of childhood to adulthood’s independence”. The United Nations, for statistical reasons, defines the ‘youth’ as those persons between the ages of 15 years to 24 years, without prejudice to other member states’ definitions. The UN further recognises other definitions across societies of the world. The African Youth Charter defines “youth” as every person between the ages of 15-35 years (ECA, 2011). Different countries consider a different statistical range.

In Uganda, there is no consensus on the definition of the youth. The Uganda National Youth Council that derives its authority from the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda defines ‘Youth’ as any person between the ages of 18-30 years. On the contrary, other legal documents in Uganda define youth differently. A case in point is the National Youth Policy 2001 which defines youth as ‘All persons; female or males aged 12 -30 years undergoing a period of great emotional, physical and psychological changes that require societal support for a safe passage from adolescent to full adulthood’ (MoGLSD, 2001).

The traditional Acholi ‘youth’ are regarded as young people between the ages of 14-30 years, but transition to adulthood is less the passing of age threshold than the acts of taking a spouse or having a child (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). In Africa, marriage is key in marking transition from youth to adulthood. However, war generation transit to adulthood earlier due to the social roles and responsibilities assumed at a tender age. Similarly, Namuggala (2017) applies an integrated approach and reflects on local functionality and relational perspectives to human growth and development while reconceptualising youth. To Namuggala (2017, p. 68) youth are “persons who identify or who the community identifies as such, irrespective of their numeric age”. This study adopted definition by National Youth Council, which focuses on 18-30 years⁷ regardless of marriage or not. In this study, I interchangeably apply the word youth with young people or young generation. The age bracket (18-30 years) comprised 22.5 per cent and 22.9 per cent of the total population in 2014 and 2016 respectively (UBOS, 2018a) in

⁷ However, those below 18 years and are members of youth interest groups under YLP participated in this study since group views, perspectives are fundamental. Those above 30 years but joined YIGs when 18 years are legible to participate in the study as well.

Uganda. Thus, the justification for the choice of my study. These youth are legible for government programmes because it is a constitutional (1995 Constitution) requirement. In addition, it is a human rights obligation (MoGLSD, 2013).

Empowerment

To Batliwala (1994) empowerment is a process by which the powerless gain and create control over the circumstances surrounding their lives. To this effect, empowerment is demonstrated by ability to generate one's income, participation in decision-making, and employment, improve bargaining power, hence freedom and self-sustenance. Youth empowerment creates and supports enabling conditions under which the youth can act on their own behalf, organise themselves, and act on their own terms, rather than at the direction of others (Secretariat, 2007). The study adopted this definition to emphasise youth as potential resources to contribute to socio-economic development. Before embarking on conceptualising socio-economic empowerment, it is necessary to define social and economic empowerment.

Social Empowerment

Social empowerment means developing a sense of autonomy and self-confidence act individual, and collectively to change social relations, institutions, and discourses that exclude the poor and keep them in poverty (Eyben, Kabeer, & Cornwall, 2008). The key as aspect transforming institutions and liberate one's wellbeing.

Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment is allowing people think beyond daily survival and exercise greater control over both their resources and life choices. It means living beyond subsistence and taking risks to increase income (Eyben et al., 2008).

Socio-economic Empowerment

Therefore, I adopted socio-economic empowerment as the process of liberating people and communities from cycles of poverty and assigned social roles and giving them the resources, to raise their and their communities' social and economic opportunities (Eyben et al., 2008). The youth develop the ability to change society one wants to live in, gain respect, and recognition. This conceptualisation sets the stage for the operationalisation of the terms throughout the study.

1.10 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter One introduces, contextualises, and conceptualises the study. It goes ahead to show the distinction between entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, and its applicability. The chapter further presents purpose of the study. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks provide basic presentation to guide the discussion in later chapters. The different concepts applied in the study are defined to guide the reader.

In the second chapter, a review of related literature on social entrepreneurship and youth empowerment is done. The chapter discusses major themes of the study as presented in written materials, books, journal articles, reports to provide a deductive scientific stance on findings chapters. The chapter concludes with emerging gaps in literature both methodologically and contextually.

Chapter Three contains research methodology. It provides philosophical views followed in the entire process of data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings. The chapter also provides challenges I faced during data collection.

The findings from the study are presented in Chapters Four to Six. Chapter Four tackled the nature of youth enterprises and youth entrepreneurship. It presents the composition of enterprises, categories, formation and entrepreneurial motivation and the perceived benefits from the study. These themes emerged both deductively and inductively. The fifth chapter contains examines livelihood challenges to YLP and Youth Socio-economic Empowerment. The chapter demonstrates economic vulnerabilities, socio-cultural, and other barriers hindering youth from participation in gainful entrepreneurship, thus limited socio-economic transformation in the area. Chapter Six contains capacitating youth optimise benefits from existing SEIs. The chapter outlines and discusses the strategies that employed to build the capacity of youth. These are holistic and comprehensive to build a strong youthful entrepreneurial force.

The seventh chapter provides a summary of the findings, conclusion, and recommendations. This final chapter of the thesis reviews the aims of the research, integrates principal findings from chapter four to six and theoretical lenses, and presents conclusions. The contributions this study makes to theory, and practice. The chapter provides a section on recommendations and proposed framework. Methodological limitations to validity and generalisability of findings and areas for future research opportunities are presented.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of related literature based on study subject and associated study objectives. The literature presents social entrepreneurship as a driver in creating youth socio-economic empowerment. The review is based on the existing studies and theories and guided by the objectives as stated in chapter one. Within this review, I present the nature of youth enterprises in form of categories, entrepreneurship motivations and factors for formation of these youth enterprises and link them to subsequent section on benefits. Examining youth challenges provides the precursor and motivations for taking stock to limitations to youth socio-economic empowerment. The chapter proceeds by exploring how best the youth can be made to benefit from existent social entrepreneurial interventions. This review aimed at establishing the best ways to enhance the youth's potentials towards effective youth entrepreneurship and empowerment.

2.1 Nature youth enterprises and youth entrepreneurship

Many governments have initiated programmes to encourage youth engage in small and medium scale enterprises. In Ghana, there is Ghana Youth Social Entrepreneurship Programme, the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi-Donor Trust Fund (YEI Trust Fund) programme, and Pan-African Youth Entrepreneur Development (PAYED) (Magagula & Tsvakirai, 2020). The programme ensure inclusion in business and motivation to engage in several enterprises in a bid to empowering themselves. When reviewing the nature of youth enterprises and entrepreneurship, it is important to focus on the social mission (eliminating poverty) alongside market-oriented organising and embracing distinctive identity (Grimes, McMullen, Vogus, & Miller, 2013). Since the hybrid organisations apply market-based solutions to social issues, the benefits accrue to the target group (for the case the youth) as opposed to the owners or management (Alvord et al., 2004), thus attaining social value. Regarding this, understanding category of youth enterprises, hybridity of enterprises, youth social motivations, opportunity recognition, and social innovations aimed at income generation and solving social problems is very important in this study. Thus, the study focuses on this hybridity to align with tenets of empowerment and positive youth development approaches in building youth capacity.

2.1.1 Composition of youth enterprises

Many factors influence operation of enterprises and youth participation in entrepreneurship. However, it is fundamental to highlight first socio-demographic composition of these enterprises. In presenting category of youth enterprises, I consider socio-demographics crucial in fostering individual innovation, commitment, efficiency, and success. Studies posit significance of literacy, age, gender, education, location, family background in innovation, creativity, productivity and, entrepreneurial intentions (Boonchoo, Wadeson, & Tsang, 2013; Raman, Anantharaman, & Jayasingam, 2008; S. P. Singh & Singhal, 2015), and attracting funding (Soomro, Abdelwahed, & Shah, 2019). Literature shows that age, family household size, living with a partner or wife/husband have significant influence on the ability to take risks in particular form of business (Spicka, 2020). The composition of youth enterprises is premised on youth dynamism in interest groups. When engaging in YIGs and enterprises youth dynamism plays a big role, socio-demographics determine choice and performance in YIGs. Holland (1985) emphasises understanding why youth get attracted and satisfied in specific occupations (Chaudhary, 2017). Demographics determine one's unique values, interests, attitudes, perceptions, personal needs, and thus defining characteristics of entrepreneurs. Henceforth, this study aimed at considering youth socio-demographic features of YIGs and their influence on youth entrepreneurship.

Youth willingness to undertake entrepreneurial ventures is motivated by several factors. These are psychosocial, demographics, and cultural factors such as gender, family background, marital status, and self-efficacy (Bagby, 2004) cited in Moa-Liberty, 2016. Further, demographic features, and attributes in addition to life space, perception, risk-propensity influence choice of enterprise and its business performance and youth participation (Setti, 2017; Soomro et al., 2019). Setti (2017) specifies personal attributes mattering for entrepreneurial aspiration and intentions; include consideration for age, sex, education, gender, competences, and motivation. Human capital such as education background, skills and experience increase perception to enterprises, their quality of business, productivity and competitiveness in market (Ogbueghu, Dauda, & Yakasai, 2020). However, others hypothesise little impact of socio-demographics on youth entrepreneurial intentions (Setti, 2017). Therefore, leveraging on demographics should be accorded special consideration when dissecting youth entrepreneurship. After focusing on youth socio-demographic features, I now

embark on the categories of youth enterprises, this is, in agriculture, service sector, trading, and manufacturing.

2.1.2 Categories of youth enterprises

Focusing on categories of enterprises, literature shows that the youth utilise entrepreneurial programmes to operate a variety of ventures ranging from agriculture, service, manufacturing, extractive industry to trading. These enterprises are presented and discussed in the following sub-sessions.

Youth agrienterprises

Agriculture is the backbone of most countries and youth engagement in agriculture is very important. Youth involvement in agriculture and food security is becoming a critical component in the pathway of sustainable development (Magagula & Tsvakirai, 2020; Mungai et al., 2018). Young people comprise 85 percent of population in developing countries where agriculture is the main source of income. In Malawian economy, majority of youth positively perceive agriculture as a decent employer, and profitable venture (Zidana, Kaliati, & Shani, 2020). Majority venture in agribusiness compared to other types of business. Studies in western Uganda portray agriculture as the immediate means of catalysing economic growth and employment for the youth (Loga, Kibwika, & Birungi Kyazze, 2022). Therefore, youth engagement in agribusiness is important (Mungai et al., 2018). Youth find themselves in crop production, poultry, aquaculture, piggery and livestock production (Nguru, Asena, Sikalieh, Muriithi, & Khamati, 2017). Rural youth tend to engage more in agriculture (crop production, poultry, and piggery) compared to the urban counterparts. In Africa 90 per cent of rural youth (15-and 16-year old) and 80 per cent of 24 years engage in agriculture, with more women remaining in agriculture than men due to low education (Fox & Thomas, 2016). Therefore, there is a gender disparity when it comes to youth participation in agrienterprises.

In Myanmar, the youth were engaged in organic vegetable farming and sawdust mushroom plantation after thorough training, inspiration and sensitisation by government and third partner programme (ASEAN-EU, 2017). Mutinda, Baltenweck, and Omondi (2015) show that youth participation in dairy production in East Africa is very low, indicating a gap in animal husbandry. Studies in Africa and Asia stress that a number of factors influence youth participation in agribusiness including access to land ownership and other assets, finance, poverty levels, weather changes, cultural factors, market opportunities, participation in policy

dialogue, knowledge, role model, literacy and information (Arulingam, Nigussie, Senaratna Sellamuttu, & Debevec, 2019; ASEAN-EU, 2017; Mutinda et al., 2015). Such factors force youth to migrate to towns than engage in productive commercial agriculture. Mutinda et al state that the youth in Uganda are not as resource poor⁸ as other youth in other East African countries. Although most educated youth prefer jobs in service sector to agriculture (Ahaibwe, Mbowa, & Lwanga, 2013), agriculture remains a dominant sector in most developing countries and immediate employer and backbone of economic development (Loga et al., 2022). Most of the service business are urban based thus justifying for increasing youth urban population.

Youth engagement in service enterprises

Youth participation in providing intangible benefits to clientele in the community is what I am referring to as service enterprises. Service businesses in the simplest form requires passion, skills, and customer care. Young people with creativity, determination, and innovativeness can earn money while engaging in designing, providing DJ services, theatre, tourism guidance, day camps for neighbourhood children, beautification, coaching, boda boda taxi⁹, information communication and technology innovations (ICT) among other services (Hamilton & Hamilton, 2012b). Urban youth mostly focus on service because of supportive infrastructure such as electricity, water, and social amenities, in addition to the lifestyle and socio-economic standards in towns, and cities. The boda boda industry has attracted both rural and urban, educated, and uneducated youth including those without any capital. The youth perceive it as an economic activity, source of survival and employment, and financial independence, and connectedness most especially in most cities like Kampala (Amone, 2021; Doherty, 2017; Howe & Davis, 2002).

Furthermore, some service enterprises may not necessarily need huge start-up capital to initiate and operate the venture. Regarding this, Hamilton, and Hamilton (2012) present a case of Community Cleaning Service created by two men in Mathare low-income suburb in Nairobi Kenya. The young men developed own their idea and organised to sell their services to clean shared-household toilets. The most common housing arrangement in their community is a four-

⁸ In most parts of Uganda, land is available, and youth can easily access and utilise the land. Communal land ownership permit youth to exploit such resources compared to youth in Kenya and Rwanda where governments and other corporations control land ownership and activities on the land.

⁹ Commonest, short-distance, cheapest and flexible motorcycle taxi service. The word 'boda' originated from border-to-border transport where bicycles and motorcycles could be used to carry smuggled goods, and passengers between Uganda and Kenya border. The riders would shout border to border to attract customers. It started with bicycles and advanced to motorcycles.

to six-story building with five or six apartments on a floor and one toilet and shower on each floor. Because no one wants to clean a communal toilet, toilets often become all but unusable. The youth offered their services at a price low enough that all families on a floor would agree to contribute. As a result, the company prospered, the young men earned income, and sole owned SC Johnson Company provided cleaning products in bulk below cost. The cleaning company subsequently received a contract from city government to clean public toilets. This case study implies that, the biggest capital needed is one's idea, customer base and willingness to take up the risk. This study explored if the youth in Gulu district in northern Uganda, appreciate opportunities in service industry. Other than service, young entrepreneurs perceive pursue opportunities in the manufacturing sector and retailing.

Manufacturing sector and retailing youth enterprises.

The youth participate in the transformation of raw materials into finished products and sell them for profit. They engage in a range of value addition including but not limited to agro-processing, carpentry workshops, moulding, and bakery, food processing, metal fabrication, distilleries and glass works (Kirumirah, Tambwe, & Mazana, 2020). Most of the manufacturing enterprises operate at micro level thus, selling their products directly to their customers. Notably, these need much working capital requirements, innovation, stable market, and a firm fixed capital base. Social capital, entrepreneurial orientation, business innovations play a great deal in the choice of these enterprises and business performance (Mwangi & Namusonge, 2015; Perdomo-Ortiz, González-Benito, & Galende, 2009; Smith, Courvisanos, Tuck, & McEachern, 2011). The networks, cohesion, teamwork, and inspiration facilitate excellence in execution of business activities and improvement in productivity.

To finance manufacturing requirements, most vulnerable populations and youth enterprises derive their support from common vocational cooperatives, peer-lending institutions, micro-enterprises, affirmative businesses (social firms) and informal networks (Midgley & Conley, 2010). It is premised on social development values of empowerment, equality, social justice, and asset development (Zimmerman, 2000) for the disenfranchised, low income and poor people around the world. The poor people such as gang-affiliated youths, unemployed, women, homeless, IDPs and refugees, and recovering addicts are supported to produce valuable products for survival. Such positive manifestations corroborate the role of social entrepreneurial interventions in empowering the youth in Gulu district with focus on YLP supported enterprises.

The youth perceptions on profit from their businesses differ. Whereas, some enterprises aim at profit maximisation, The youth enterprises focus on profit making while meeting basic needs, in what is conceptualised in this study as ‘social enterprises. Concerning this, youth perceive enterprises to be either profit making, non-profit making or hybrid enterprises; however, most are attracted by profits.

For-profit making, non-profit making and hybrid youth social enterprises

For profit making, young people operate enterprises (e.g., agribusiness, service or manufacturing) sell products for profit (income) but aim at creating a sustainable positive impact on the community (Dees, 1998; Santos, 2012). The venture employs commercial methods to take economic risk, permanently produce good and/or services and generate income, which is invested to expand the impact.

Non-profit making enterprises do not make financial profit from delivering goods and services, but generate funds from donations, and other external assistance (Borzaga & Defourny, 2001). Social enterprises have the potential to solve social problems in society. From these perspectives, it is difficult to operate discrete profit-making enterprises without non-profit making aspect. Therefore, the combination of profit making, and non-profit making is what this study considers as hybrid social enterprises.

Social entrepreneurship recognises youth enterprises as for profit making, non-profit making and hybrid organisations. Hybrid enterprises combine profit and non-profit making goals; thus, most youth enterprises aim at hybridity. Social entrepreneurship is perceived to play key roles in changing the society, thus youth as social entrepreneurs are referred to as change agents (Dees, 1998; Praszkie & Nowak, 2011). The following social entrepreneurial principles (Dees 1998) guide hybrid enterprises:

- (i) Adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value),
- (ii) Recognizing and relentlessly pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission,
- (iii) Engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning.
- (iv) Acting boldly without being limited by resources currently at hand, and

- (v) Exhibiting a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created (Praszkier & Nowak, 2011:9).

From the above principles, it is evident that hybrid enterprises combine both profit making and pursuing the social mission. Midgley and Conley (2000) illustrate the hybridity with a case of Grameen Bank Cooperatives (Bank for the Poor) which funds young poor women and men operating hybrid enterprise in manufacturing and value addition, and later selling the products to make profits while improving on household income (Yunus, 2003). Youth are driven to entrepreneurship to earn income while meeting necessities of life. Social welfare and social value creation are at the forefront of engagement in enterprises (Santos, 2012). With different purpose and understanding, youth are inspired to form and participate in social entrepreneurship to achieve such purpose. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss the process of formation and motivations.

2.1.3 Enterprise formation and entrepreneurial motivations

The discussion on the philosophies of enterprise formation and the factors for enterprise formation are very important. The degree of business ideas, sociological orientation such as celebrations, political timing and urge to meet the basic needs motivate most youth to establish income-generating activities (Asaka, Aila, Odera, & Abongo, 2012; Autio & Fu, 2015; Kamau & Mohamed, 2015; Okhomina, 2010). Other studies appreciate the role played by family environment in inspiring the young generation towards starting venture to benefit from entrepreneurial programmes. Parents influence their children toward entrepreneurial decisions. Family influences, motivates, train, and orients the children towards entrepreneurship (Campanella, Della Peruta, & Del Giudice, 2013; Chowa & Despard, 2014; Olugbola, 2017).

Studies by Sambo (2015) in South Africa appreciated that role of parents in promoting youth motivation, inspiration and engagement in entrepreneurship. While these scholars emphasise family influence, the existence of mentors in society play an additional vital role on youth involvement in empowerment activities (Cetindamar, Gupta, Karadeniz, & Egrican, 2012; Farrukh, Khan, Khan, Ramzani, & Soladoye, 2017). However, Sharma (2014) claims that there is no significant influence of family mentorship on youth entrepreneurship. Overall, family mentorship is very important in fostering an entrepreneurial culture among the young generation. However, youth enterprises are guided by social motivation, opportunity orientation and innovation.

Social motivation to youth social entrepreneurship

SEs are built on social motivation that is, what youth want to cause as social change. Motivation influences one's decisions and plays a key role in predicting the success of social entrepreneurs (Wokorach, 2020). Social motivation is indicated by the urge to solve certain societal needs affecting youth themselves, that is, fellow youth and community. This entrepreneurial motivation means several factors that may either push or pull individuals towards supporting the members of the community, for this study the youth. The motivation to overcome challenges of poverty, unemployment, hunger and enhance means of livelihoods of the youth is necessary in youth development studies (Hansen, Shrader, & Monllor, 2011; Yoosuf & Premaratne, 2017). Youth engagement in entrepreneurial interventions is positioned on employment creation and improving the social welfare. A case in point is the Kosovo Youth Employment Action which was geared towards promoting employment among the youth (Stewart, 2015). This contributes to self-reliance, self-efficacy, financial independence and contribution as stipulated in the theoretical frameworks.

Motivation plays a crucial role in transforming the entrepreneurial intentions into real actions or the response to the social problems (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011). Therefore, social entrepreneurs have the motive to maximise social value including changing the attitudes, youth behaviours, and focus (London, 2010). Motivation can be career calling, push and pull factors which focus on the prosocial activities (Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016). However, such studies do not bring out clearly the intentions within the society that are designed by the government to inspire youth other than political gains. Nonetheless, the entrepreneurial motivation is driven by youth opportunity recognition, and social innovation.

Opportunity recognition for youth entrepreneurship

Opportunity recognition in social entrepreneurship means an entrepreneur's ability to create a solution to social problems (Hansen et al., 2011). Nonetheless, Hansen and Colleagues do not define how social problems can be converted into opportunities. It is important to appreciate the fact that challenges provide opportunities for empowerment and raise the appetite for the young people to venture in enterprises. This means that various stakeholders need to scan the environment, identify the problems from the environment to generate sustainable solutions. Though Hansen et al. (2011) focus on the entrepreneurs themselves, this study considers

interventions by government as social entrepreneurial interventions which capacitate youth to solve own problems.

The programmes directed towards youth empowerment are regarded as avenues that provide opportunities which include inclusiveness and directed towards social mission (Praszkier & Nowak, 2012). Thus, this study considers government programmes as socially entrepreneurial perceived to be avenues for wealth creation and social and economic development (Bukonya et al., 2019). Any opportunity that has enough potential to cause positive social impact which justifies the investment of time, energy, and money qualifies as an attractive opportunity (Guclu, Dees, & Anderson, 2002). It is worth noting that opportunity recognition in SE does not focus on future goods and economic returns (profits) but social values and unmet social needs within the society, (creating value for the society) (Oncer & Yildiz, 2010). Yitshaki and Kropp (2016) argue that entrepreneurship opportunity recognition in Israel was based in life events such as poverty, trauma, in the past and present such as available resources, market demands, unemployment, identification of social needs, and finding an ideal that evolves over time. The opportunities emanating from challenges and available resources form a basis for inquiry of the social entrepreneurship in Gulu District, in Northern Uganda.

Social innovation for youth entrepreneurship.

Social innovation is a major characteristic of youth enterprises. Phillips, Deiglmeier, and Miller (2008), present social innovation as a new idea or novel solution to a social problem, which is more effective, efficient and sustainable, and the benefits from such solution accrue to the whole society than individuals. The youth are motivated by the innovations introduced towards causing social change. Innovation focuses on new ideas, institutions or strategies aimed at fulfilling social needs or tackle social problems such as new ways to reduce poverty, discrimination, and illness (Young-Foundation/NESTA, 2007). Social innovation involves generating and implementing ideas, new products, new ways of delivery and better ways of solving social problems and challenges. This means that such innovative activities and new ideas are motivated in the work of meeting the social needs (Mulgan, 2006) and social goals of targeted youth (Young-Foundation/NESTA, 2007). For this case, the BeadForlife makes handcraft paper beads, necklaces, earrings, from trash paper and sells them to earn income (Orobia, 2013).

Youth engagement in innovative activities facilitates exploitation of local opportunities and serving the local needs. Innovation facilitates youth participation and sustainability of enterprises. Sustainability is key as regards youth ventures. It is achieved through inventory management, and proper utilisation of available opportunities (Kodithuwakku & Rosa, 2002; Langevang, Namatovu, & Dawa, 2012) and financial management (Walukhu, 2015). By doing this, youth generate ideas towards utilisation of the opportunities for socio-economic empowerment.

Social innovation is measured by the value created by interventions such as jobs created, business start-ups, products produced youth groups sustained, and number of youths participating in decision-making in society. However, this does not rule out the fact that social innovation involves theoretical assumptions. To me, understanding socio-economic challenges requires in-depth examination to generate sustainable ideas. The youth require being innovative to transform the available resources into quality products that are marketable and generate more income for sustained growth and social development. Though the definition of social innovation depends on the discipline, my study takes the social science perspective that emphasises meeting the social needs. Innovation for social change encapsulates the role of social entrepreneurial interventions on youth empowerment. However, commitment is key in entrepreneurial motivation and social innovation.

Commitment as a key tenet of entrepreneurial motivation

Entrepreneurship by nature requires total commitment to social mission and they are restlessly searching for, recognising, and pursuing new opportunities and motivation to serve that mission. Thus, they act against all odds and use limited resources to solve the social problems such as unemployment, poverty, education, health, homelessness among others. The nature of interventions is geared towards youth economic empowerment hence community transformation (Kruse, 2015; Praszkie & Nowak, 2012). Other studies attribute commitment and youth participation to socio-demographic features of age, sex and marital status (Angba, Adesope, & Aboh, 2009). Globally, the practice and recognition of social entrepreneurship is expanding, and organisations such as Ashoka, Skoll Foundation, Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship are recognising social entrepreneurs year after year (Abdou, Fahmy, Greenwald, & Nelson, 2010). These organisations championed the coining of the definition of social entrepreneurship, and the focus is on generating solutions that tackle social problems in community.

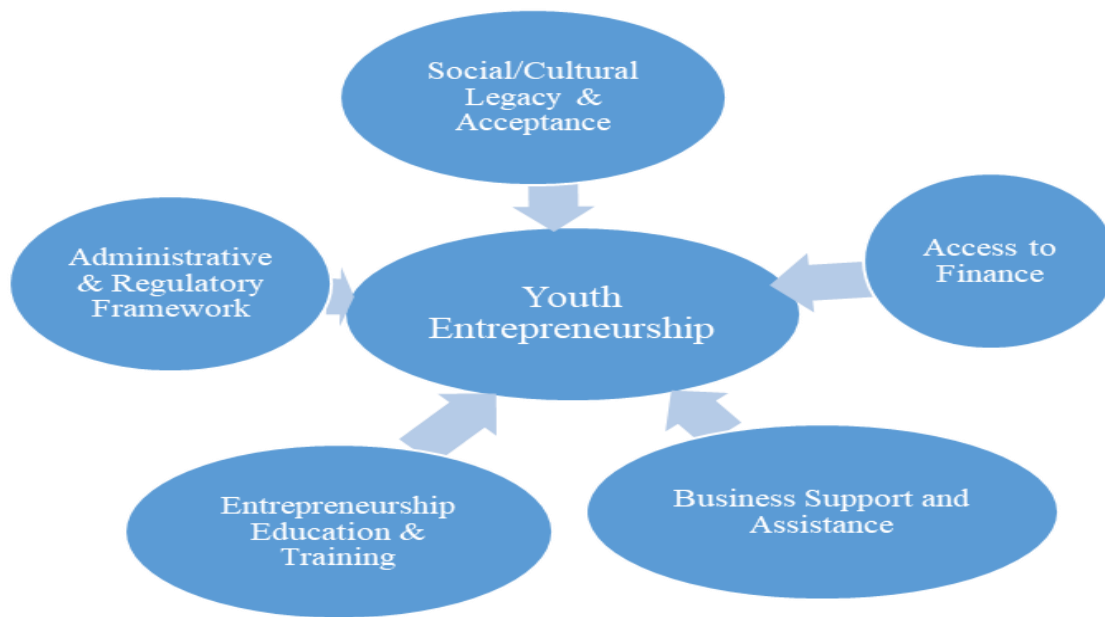
Some of the social entrepreneurial ventures contribute to youth socio-economic empowerment indirectly for example on basic service and infrastructure. An example is the Piramal Water Private Limited, a private organisation which attempts to solve the challenge of portable water in most impoverished rural areas in India by creating a solar powered unmanned water ATM which dispenses water at a small fee (Miller, Grimes, McMullen, & Vogus, 2012). The infrastructure promotes access to cheap and affordable water for both for home consumption and irrigation.

Other than the third sector, government entrepreneurship programmes emphasise total commitment from the youth, and productive utilisation of available resources. The empowerment theory and PYD stress this special trait of commitment, therefore, creating an enabling environment for youth participation entrepreneurship and social service delivery (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Jennings et al., 2006; Zimmerman, 2000). Are youth in northern Uganda, socially motivated, committed, and oriented towards social entrepreneurship for empowerment? The question that this study set to investigate, taking Gulu district as a case study.

2.1.4 Factors influencing youth entrepreneurship

Youth engagement in enterprise formation and participation in entrepreneurship is determined by many factors. These influences affect the operation and sustainability of youth enterprises. Schoof (2006) maintains that social and culture attitudes promote commitment and an entrepreneurial culture which affect sustainability of enterprises. He posited entrepreneurship education, improving access to finance and reducing administrative barriers, and improving business support and development services as key strategies to arouse motivation and commitment towards formation and participation in enterprises. Schoof (2006) presents five crucial factors for entrepreneurial engagement that interventions exploit to foster youth entrepreneurship. These are demonstrated in the framework below:

Figure 2.1 Factors that influence youth entrepreneurship



Source: *Adopted from Schoof, 2006:23*

The illustration above shows that commitment to engage in enterprises is influenced by interrelated factors. Social/cultural, legacy and acceptance in each society affecting youth entrepreneurship and sustainability. This comprises values and beliefs, norms, and exposure to business and entrepreneurship. According to Schoof (2006), these shape the behaviours, nature and type of enterprise, and participation. To Schoof, culture has an influence on pursuit of individual and collective goals, entrepreneurial orientation, risk taking, proactiveness, and self-efficacy. Acceptance and legacy in the community motivates youth to undertake ventures. Personal environment, individual awareness, parents, relatives, and friends, familiarity with concept of entrepreneurship, reputation, and credibility of entrepreneurs have a strong bearing on young people’s perceptions of entrepreneurship. In my opinion, entrepreneurial mindset starts with the family where the youth are raised from, interaction with peers and other relatives in the business environment. Family, relatives, and friends act as mentors, role models, and change agents. This aspect is investigated in this study to explore the extent to which the parents in Gulu district northern Uganda contributed to youth entrepreneurship.

Education and training have important impact on youth entrepreneurial career path through imparting skills, knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and behaviours (Schoof, 2006). Youth make decisions and appreciate entrepreneurship as a career option. Schoof cites Henry Ford saying, “a country’s competitiveness starts not on the factory floor or in the engineering lab. It starts

in the classroom” (Schoof, 2006, p.34). Therefore, entrepreneurship education is key in developing young people’s skills, competencies, attributes, and enhances innovation, creativity, and personal responsibility towards entrepreneurship and self-employment. Youth are prepared to use the available finance, and, with supporting administrative and regulatory framework (taxation, registration) youth are attracted to enterprise formation.

Business development support (BDS) and assistance smoothen the process of enterprise formation and operation. Such social services are central in overcoming the challenges faced by the youth from any environment and smoothening the way for active involvement in self-employment in various enterprises highlighted as Agrienterprises, service sector, manufacturing, and retailing. The services help youth to recognise opportunities and act on these opportunities for successful entrepreneurship (Wokorach, 2020). Therefore, there are cases where social entrepreneurial interventions have played a fundamental role in changing the community.

Cases of social entrepreneurship-oriented interventions in the world

Other examples of reputable social entrepreneurship include the Yunus microfinance institution called the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh in 1976. This pioneered collateral free microloans to eradicate poverty among the impoverished communities in Bangladesh and has since spread to the entire world (Yunus, 2003). Another example is Bangladesh Rural Advanced Committee (BRAC) formed in 1972 to offer microcredit and other social entrepreneurial services to the needy. Along with these is the Kash Foundation more than 13-year-old microfinance institution that has worked successfully in politically unstable Pakistan. The youth in their enterprises are destined to offer commitment, and dedication towards solving own problems and those of other community members.

In Cairo, the Alashanek Ya Balady Association for Sustainable Development (AYB-SD) provided microcredit loans, training, and job-opportunities to young women and families (Abdou et al., 2010). Such initiatives enabled the youth to start their own income generating activities, hence creating opportunities for themselves and fellows in society. Abdou et al. (2010) argued that the area of microfinance is overlooked yet it has greatly influenced lives of people in the Arab world such as Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Yemen among others. They point out Sanabel, an umbrella microfinance organisation with over 60-member microfinance institutions (MFIs) across the Arab region. A bigger number of women in Jordan, Yemen, Egypt and Sudan accessed microcredit. However, microfinance is concentrated in certain areas

not others and the regulations to accessing loans discriminate certain categories of people, which undermines the inclusiveness value of social entrepreneurship.

The lack of financial accessibility and credibility (Gwija, Chuks, & Iwu, 2014; Jakubczak, 2015) undermines the social inclusion, transparency, accountability, and equity embedded in social entrepreneurship. Like YouWiN financial interventions situated in all geo-political regions in Nigeria, YLP is operated in all districts in Uganda catering for all the youth. The youth are supposed to utilise these interventions to execute business ideas and ignite social change through creating jobs. Does the microfinance approach prevailing in YLP empowering youth towards establishing and managing enterprises? Considering the empowerment approach, it is important to investigate how these interventions foster capabilities of the marginalised youth in the region.

Social entrepreneurship interventions in promoting youth welfare were witnessed in Asia. The youth in Pakistan gained training, financial, and technical aspects (Khan, 2017). The Show Your Creativity Competition was also launched to promote entrepreneurial spirit among the younger generation of Pakistan. This project loans one thousand rupees to the youth to make profit and social impact. This involved awarding certificates to those with the biggest social investment, best business idea, and high financial return. These programmes inspired the youth to identify viable opportunities, fostering hardworking, creativity and innovativeness in their ventures. Do we have competitions in the YLP in Uganda; do partnerships facilitate youth adequate contribution? Therefore, if embraced, competitions, and partnerships contribute immensely to changing the mind and lives of young people.

Stewart (2015) stresses that the Kosovo Youth Employment Action, as a programme geared towards promoting youth employment focused mainly on training and skills development. However, the coverage was low and there was weak market demand for skills attained. This means the training lacked opportunity orientation as one of the principles of social entrepreneurship, and lack of sufficient market curtails youth participation in agrienterprises (Arulingam et al., 2019). To enhance participation in these enterprises the provision of finance for start-ups, and imparting of skills youth are deemed productive thus self-reliance (Stewart, 2015; Uwonda, Ejang, Biromumeisho, Kansime, & Ojok, 2017a). Therefore, these youth entrepreneurship programmes target economic empowerment youth. To me, the goal shifts from economic transformation to socio-economic empowerment of the young people.

Most government's youth entrepreneurship initiated programmes focus on funding, examples include; YCVF, Skilling Uganda, *Emyooga*, in Uganda, Youth Enterprise Development Fund in Kenya, Botswana Youth Development Fund among others (Ahaibwe & Kasirye, 2015; Diraditsile, 2016; Mwangi & Namusonge, 2015). These support young social entrepreneurs to expand enterprises and spread the social impact. These create value through opportunity recognition, identifying the innovative solutions and taking risks (Chand, 2009), and are aimed at increasing income while meeting the social mission. The youth exploit such funding opportunities to engage in social enterprises of their choice in agriculture, tourism, transport, beautification and recreation. The success of social entrepreneurial interventions depend on the leadership characteristics, social entrepreneurship inputs (motivation) (Austin et al., 2006), opportunity identification (social problem-solving, addressing social ills) (Brooks, 2009), access to resources (donations, fees, returns on investments, government support, etc.) (Wilsker & Young, 2010), and multiple stakeholders. It is unclear if these programmes had specific products that are friendly, cheap and affordable for youth empowerment. Such interventions have been successful in post-conflict situations, and other environments with social problems. Therefore, this necessitates an examination of benefits youth perceive on social entrepreneurial interventions.

2.1.5 The benefits of social entrepreneurship interventions (SEIs)

The nature of enterprises determines the benefits generated from the interventions. Most SE interventions aim at promoting youth enterprises and socio-economic development. As posited in empowerment theory by Zimmerman (2000), empowerment is a continuum, thus, this chapter presents benefits from individual to organisational and community. The SEIs such as YVCF, Enterprise Development Fund Kenya, Youth Development Fund Botswana, and Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (YES) Nigeria, among others, all aim at facilitating youth participation in productive activities, thus enhancing livelihoods and social change (MoGLSD, 2013). Therefore, all programmes are premised on promoting youth entrepreneurship, wealth creation and harnessing youth potentials. These benefits are interlinked and holistic in nature.

The subsection tackles perceived achievement ranging from self-employment, human capital development, enterprises expansion, as discussed below. Therefore, key benefits include employment creation, improved skills, financial boost, building social capital, and improved social welfare. Striving to tackle social problems is the fundamental goal of social entrepreneurship (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). Efforts by some governments and

organisations have proven insufficient to reverse the destructive trends caused by conflicts and other disasters (Nicholls, 2008). The hope for the future of humanity lies in the power and effectiveness of socially motivated, highly empowered, hardworking individuals, to fight for social change in the way we live, think, and behave. Notably, everyone is a ‘change maker’. Young entrepreneurs are critical and at the forefront of this change; they have a vision and have a big impact’(Drayton, 2006), thus leading to discussion on the following benefits.

The creation of employment opportunities for the youth

Social entrepreneurship programmes are a transformative force towards creation of employment opportunities for the youth. The environment is set for the young people to establish their own businesses, as evidenced in Uganda, Kenya, and post-conflict Yemen (Abdou et al., 2010; Ahaibwe & Kasirye, 2015). The youth develop the motivation to embrace self-employment by creating their own income generating ventures. Social entrepreneurship through skills training, attitudinal change, mentorship and accessing start-ups empowers the youth to undertake their own ventures. Sikenyi (2017) corroborates arguing that youth employment been promoted in Kenya through the entrepreneurial funding to youth programmes.

In Nigeria, financial interventions offer the training, mentorship, motivation and seed-capital for the youth to participate in job creation (Adebayo, 2015). This support does not only provide economic success of income, but also enables the youth to exploit their potential, recognise opportunities, become self-reliance, reduce crime, participate in decision-making and meet their social and economic needs. More still, the ventures created generate employment opportunities for other youth, thus, improving on the standard of living and contribute to social change. However, this can only be achieved if the young men and women possess the entrepreneurial passion, hard work, connectedness and confidence towards achieving decent work for all and economic self-sufficiency (Damon, 2004; Davis, 2002; Delgado, 2004; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005). More so, efficacious job creation and self-employment is based on both business skills and life skills necessary in business management.

Induced entrepreneurship skills and knowledge

Achieving goal of entrepreneurship programmes is dependent on youth gaining sustainable skills and knowledge from entrepreneurial interventions. A significant challenge to youth lies in lack of business skills, technical skills, for example the ability to assess markets, identify

opportunities, set missions, understand customer service, and formal record keeping. Others include determining quality standards, business planning, and financial management (Alemu, 2017; Lemmon, 2012). Often, skills building becomes the entry point for working with young entrepreneurs as part of providing technical support. Social entrepreneurship such as British Council for Peace (Bpeace), Business Edge, and 100,000 Women Initiative have built the capacity of young entrepreneurs in post conflict or areas recovering from conflict such as Afghanistan, Egypt, Central African Republic, Liberia, South Sudan, and El Salvador among others. Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Women was a five-year programme that sought to empower female entrepreneurs in developing and emerging markets through equipping them with business and management education. Lemmon (2012) maintains that the entrepreneurship programme is of great efficacy as over 5,800 women have been trained in business skills and management. Lemmon (2012) provides an example of Liberian women who acquired skills in catering, retail, agri-enterprise, and tailoring, contrary to Afghanistan women whose priority sectors included construction, food production and handcraft. This initiative does its work through partnerships with the local environments, to understanding target population needs.

Some entrepreneurial ventures meet the educational and development needs of the young people affected by conflict, a case in point is the Refugee Education Trust (RET) in eastern DRC (MacNeil, 2013). Such entrepreneurial training is a crucial part of gender empowerment and developing the sustainable livelihoods of girls/females, as seen in Lesotho (O'Neill Berry et al., 2013). However, Business Edge targets largely skills training at employees, managers, and first-line supervisors in formal enterprises, (Lemmon, 2012). This, therefore, excludes the start-ups and those who are unemployed and informal sectors, and programme does not provide the reason for this choice. Nevertheless, such training enhances the self-reliance, confidence, financial independence, changes youth attitudes and provides skills for labour market (Schoof, 2006). Thus, youth are prepared to use the available microcredit and increase on income.

Access to microcredit for enterprise development

The social entrepreneurial interventions provide microfinance to the youth, hence increasing on their income and wealth. Microfinance is one of the popular intervention for empowerment and poverty reduction in developing countries (Widyaningrum, Bhat, & Lee, 2017). Widyaningrum et al. (2017) define microfinance as financial services provided to low-income individuals, and poor segment of the population to improve on their livelihoods. The mission is to promote social change, social cohesion, liberate and empower people to enhance the

welfare of people, and this embodies the mission of social work (IFSW, 2014). Access to finance enables youth to set up their own microenterprises, manage them and expand them for income generation, and social transformation. Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) which have empowered the people include Grameen Bank, BRAC, and Self-Employed Women's Association Bank (Yunus, 2003). Equally, the micro-finance programme (Small Enterprise and Self-Employment Fund-YSEF) in post-war Nepal targets the youth through provisions of loans to harness the productive capacity of the young people (Snellinger, 2018). Loans become start-up capital for the youth business ventures.

Youth have increased on their income through small business ventures through the sale of products and ploughing back the profits, and in doing so; they achieve financial sustainability, independent of donors, private sector, and government (Di Domenico, et al., 2010). The youth's involvement in entrepreneurial activities generate revenue for themselves hence leading to improved welfare. Financial sustainability challenges the tradition of relying on donations and philanthropy for income.

The end of the twentieth century in western society provided a new logic to promote revenue generation through trading than relying on tradition sources of donations and government support. In Uganda, youth were supported with Youth Venture Capital Fund as start up to establish and expand businesses (Ahaibwe & Kasirye, 2015). The operation of YLP also entails provision of revolving funds to youth to initiate, start, and expand youth income generating activities. However, young people are therefore challenged to be more enterprising and financially stable (Di Domenico, Haugh, & Tracey, 2010). However, some youth are denied access to finance due to regulations and strict procedures required to access finance, thus limiting equity and equal access to finance.

Promotion and strengthening of social youth networks

The entrepreneurship interventions facilitate self-organisation of social capital among the youth in society. Borrowing from sustainable livelihood framework, social capital entails the social resources (i.e. networks, claims, associations, social relations and affiliations) young people based on when pursuing different livelihood strategies necessitating coordinated action (Krantz, 2001). Putnam (1996) cited in Praszkie and Nowak (2012) simplifies social capital as features of social life (such as networks, norms and trust) that enable participants to work together more effectively. The notion of social and financial capital are comparable because

social networks create tangible value individually and collectively (Praszkier & Nowak, 2012). Therefore, this achievement is through formation of youth groups such as self-help groups, youth interest groups (YIGs), and cooperatives strengthen networks among youth. Social entrepreneurship shapes strong ties between families and neighbours thus, such relationships provide a safety net for basic survival among youth (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). The interventions strengthen networks, co-existence, and togetherness among the members. Cooperation and collective action for common good are essential for, resilience and social and financial sustainability (Krantz, 2001; Schoof, 2006), and socio-economic empowerment of the young generation. Bekkers, Völker, Van der Gaag, and Flap (2008) corroborate:

social capital is an important asset for individuals, groups, and communities because it not only increases health and economic growth and decreases crime and suicide rates but also gives access to resources that are important in finding a job, obtain social support or achieving political power (p.185).

The above quotation indicates that SE is a fundamental approach in building cohesion and teamwork among people, which in turn provides facilitates access to other opportunities.

Most youth networks motivate and drive social capital, thus, social entrepreneurship programmes united and cement the relationship among the youth groups (Aldrich & Kim, 2007). The youth are bound to benefit from social networks through sharing knowledge, access, extension service, information, and work (Baron, 2000; Mugabi, Omona, State, & Jansson, 2018), confidence building, contribution (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005) peer counselling and participation in decision-making (Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Social capital is a source of collective responsibility, feeling of belonging, social cohesion, thus enhancing social change among the youth (Jennings et al., 2006). This social capital energises youth towards accomplishment of set goals.

Durkheim's theory of social integration stipulates that people are more likely to observe social norms, exercise voluntarism in more cohesive groups than disintegrated ones (Bekkers et al., 2008). Likewise, the social entrepreneurship model appeals to young people and gives them a chance to prove innovative solutions to social, economic, and environmental challenges in a unified way. A social entrepreneurial idea that is close to the local people and communities reduces the social cohesion gap through involvement of the youth including those in vulnerable groups. The youth need to reorganise themselves, exploit their potentials and master their lives, thus empowerment. When youth cooperate, they formulate innovative ideas for successful enterprises.

Evidence in Uganda indicates that the youth form groups as a prerequisite for benefiting from government funding such as UWEP, YLP and Youth Entrepreneurship Fund, Presidential Initiative on Wealth, and Job creation (*Emyooga*) (MoGLSD, 2013, MoFPED Communication, 2020). Youth ventures sustain themselves through group formation and social connectedness (Loga et al., 2022). This can be achieved through networking and building bonds thus increasing psychological satisfaction. Hence, social entrepreneurship is the heart of inclusive development due to its emphasis on the people and social cohesion. In this regard, social entrepreneurship challenges the conventional entrepreneurship that focuses entirely on the purchasing power of the individuals and profitability. From a personal perspective, social capital is a very important asset that facilitates the foundation for other benefits. Social capital eases opportunity recognition and exploitation, hence effective utilisation of empowerment interventions. This study undertook to establish the extent of networking and social capital among the youth in in Gulu district, northern Uganda.

Opportunities for growth and development

Entrepreneurship interventions provide opportunities and activities which positively enhance people's skills, beliefs and self-confidence (Sserwanga et al., 2014). Participation in social entrepreneurship expands access to market and information. This restores self-confidence, self-efficacy, commitment, and assertiveness eroded by civil war, and other societal challenges. Additionally, the social entrepreneurship undertakings promote the innovation, personal initiatives, hard work, teamwork and leadership skills (Sserwanga et al., 2014). Interventions promote youth awareness, eases identification of opportunities, consequently enhancing individual and collective contribution (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005). They can draw lessons from their activities and aim at business expansion.

The youth are engineered towards discovering their potentials, standing out of the many and taking initiative to exploit available opportunities towards improving own lives and lives of others. They can create their own employment, produce, and market goods and services, and participate in decision-making. The collectiveness in social entrepreneurship leverages existing resources such as land, labour, builds new resources and impact emergence and reshaping of existing institutional arrangements and youth infrastructures that support scalable efforts for social change (Montgomery, et al, 2012). However, the level of self-confidence differs among the youth depending on the situation, society and context, and the studies are silent on the indicators of self-efficacy, and assertiveness. Consequently, youth continue to experience

constraints, which hinder them from achieving full potentials, that why this study proceeded to tackle the livelihood challenges.

2.2 Livelihood challenges on youth empowerment

Understanding youth challenges augments the understanding of youth empowerment. Situated in the empowerment theory, youth's environment contributes to their participation in decision-making and economic activities. Therefore, it necessitates examining the challenges to youths' potential to participate in entrepreneurship and successful conducting enterprises. The young people across the globe especially in developing countries where population growth and density are very high face unprecedented challenges in their move to access resources for socio-economic empowerment. Most of the critical issues for youth development are poverty, education, health, gender biases, social responsibilities, and good citizenship (Sen, 1999; UN, 2004, 2018). These challenges forced most governments implement programmes for youth social entrepreneurship. However, youth face several challenges in conducting their enterprises.

Likewise, in developing countries mostly Sub-Saharan Africa, the situation of the youth is even worse as the social, economic, political, and cultural fabrics of life were disorganised by the conflicts, governance issues, and struggle for survival. With the population of the youth increasing from time to time, there are serious challenges and these increase their vulnerability thus creates unhealthy environment for youth engagement in development as posited in the PYD approach and empowerment theory (Lerner et al., 2000; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). These challenges are categorised and reviewed in the following sections as institutional, personal, socio-cultural values and entrepreneurial competence. However, these barriers are intertwined; one factor cannot be discussed in isolation.

Poverty and youth entrepreneurship

Poverty affects youth performance in entrepreneurship and productivity. Although youth social entrepreneurship is geared towards reducing poverty, poverty stages a barrier to youth social mission and progress. Persistent poverty has been a major challenge among the youth progress in entrepreneurship for over a long period. Globally, the significant relationship between poverty and youth entrepreneurship has gained both academic and policy attention. For example, the United Nations Millennium Development Goal One (MDG1) aimed at halving extreme poverty by 2015, and Sustainable Development Goal one (SDG 1), the first among

the seventeen development goals focuses on the 'End Poverty in all its forms everywhere' among the world population (UN, 2018). However, poverty persisted thus SDG1 and SDG8 under Agenda 2030 still emphasises eliminating poverty and creating decent work and economic growth. Although the goal is eradicating extreme poverty by 2030, attaining this goal may prove difficult in developing countries due to violent conflicts, civil wars, and other political and structural barriers (Burt, Hughes, & Milante, 2014).

The large share of the world's poor live in such fragile states. Fragile states such as South Sudan, Somalia, DRC and Burundi are home to a quarter of the world's poorest population. In Guinea-Bissau, the conflict negatively impacted on the fiscal and balance of payment positions as it weakened productive infrastructure (Gacitua-Mario & Wodon, 2007). Armed conflict and massive displacement have specific dynamics on the experience of poverty into the daily lives of refugees and internally displaced people (Eyber & Ager, 2003). The youth live in difficulties especially meeting their basic needs of life as the means of survival are shattered.

The conceptualisation of poverty should not be understood in economic wealth only, but in disparate factors such as social, cultural, psychological, political and ecological (Ochoa, 2001), and lack of capacity to realise one's full potentials as a human being. The capability approach stresses that development should go beyond economics but happiness, satisfaction, healthy family relations, achievement and social aspirations (Sen, 1999). The empowerment and PYD frameworks, stress a healthy environment for youth contribution and connectedness, which all are not economically oriented. The multidimensional nature of poverty must include issues of survival, quality of life, justice, equity, and purpose in life (Eyber & Ager, 2003). Poverty manifests through 'unfreedoms' including illiteracy, poor health, food insecurity, social norms, poor governance and social exclusion affecting youth livelihoods (Tiwari & Ibrahim, 2012).

The notion of social exclusion is central when defining poverty as people experience limited participation in decision-making, voiceless atmospheres, and myriad other issues. The lack of resources prevents youth from participation in the normal life of the community, and incapable of transcending their own situations, and exploiting their potentials, assets and contribution (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). There are both direct and indirect impacts of conflicts at micro and macro levels and the outcome of war is destruction, deprivation, frustration, rather than creation of value and assets (Annan, Green, & Brier, 2013; Levine, Muwonge, & Batana, 2014; Luckham, Ahmed, Muggah, & White, 2001). The youth are the

most affected segment of the population with limited skills, low education levels, psychological distress, limited access to finance and employment opportunities.

It is worth noting that poverty poses the major challenge to youth in both conflict-affected regions, and other developing economies. The challenges of youth in sub-Saharan Africa and other developing countries cannot be solely attributed to conflicts, but poverty is a crosscutting issue caused by many factors in the world. Therefore, there are multiple explanations to chronic poverty among youth in our society, a single factor is not sufficient to present facts on the causes of poverty. Conflicts, existing political, social, cultural, and economic structures contribute to poverty among the youth.

According to the Sawa World model, education and its relevancy are directly linked to poverty rates (Cushing, 2014). Many youths are inadequately prepared to compete for available jobs in the labour market, and/or engage in productive activities. The inappropriate skills, inexperience, lack of orientation to work and productivity has sustained poverty among the youth. Cushing (2014) stresses that many youths are forced to drop out of school due to financial hardships, cultural and structural environment. Many parents cannot afford quality education and employment, hence remaining poor. The effect reciprocate on children, as Machell, Disabato, and Kashdan (2016) put it ‘youth raised in poverty have a likelihood of living in poverty as adults’.

Structural and institutional barriers such as politicisation of programmes, and limited supportive infrastructure such as information centres, and extension services affect youth entrepreneurship in developing countries. Worse still, benefits of national development are not equitable and equally shared among regions (Mawejje, 2020) to the extent that some regions are developed while others economically paralysed begging for a unique approach as compared to other regions.

Politically, youth active participation in designing, shaping, and influencing policy development and implementation remains a challenge. There is limited youth involvement in policy dialogue on issues affecting themselves in most projects meant for improved livelihoods (Arulingam et al., 2019). The presence of legal frameworks (such as 1995 Constitution of Republic of Uganda as amended 2005, National Youth Council CAP 319, and Local Government Act 1997) succinctly stipulate participation in the development process. Nevertheless, meaningful participation is questionable with political patronage, pervasive

corruption, and monetisation of process (Kwesiga et al., 2019; Mwesigye, 2019) whereby most youth are kept in darkness about development programmes thus increasing their poverty levels.

Additionally, high levels of dependence in developing countries are associated with poverty. Youth use part of the funding to meet their basic needs of those of dependants thus reducing on working capital. According to Maweje (2020) poverty has worsened the dependence burden in Uganda. His studies reported that Uganda's population is young with 82 per cent below 35 years, 65 percent below 20 years and 18 percent below 5 years. To Maweje, 100 economically active people serve 103 dependants. To Sebudde, Wodon, and Maweje (2017) persistent poverty has further inflamed early marriage as three out of eight girls get married before 18 years, leading to dropouts, early pregnancies and child bearing thus increasing consumption than investment. This stifles socio-economic programmes since savings and investment decisions are altered. However, if poverty situation among the youth is not handled sufficiently, the socio-economic transformation of our community remains a dream than reality. Would the broad-based economic and social programmes address yield gains amidst poverty? The focus of social entrepreneurship practically in enhancing youth potentials is affected by poverty consequences.

Socio-cultural values and youth empowerment

Social and cultural factors affect youth performance in youth entrepreneurship. Socio-cultural values of societies affect the youth's wellbeing, entrepreneurship, and socio-economic development (Sommers & Uvin, 2011). Socio-cultural factors tend to affect the participation rate of young women and young men in entrepreneurial activities differently (Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011). These factors influence youth's attitudes, participation and understanding of entrepreneurship (Schoof, 2006). In developing countries, youth participation in social entrepreneurship varies with gender, as more young men are likely to be self-employed, participate in decision-making than young women. Some societies (such as South Sudan) force their children and youth to get married at an early age for recognition as 'adults' so that their families generate wealth. In Rwanda and Burundi, cultural requirements of manhood and womanhood are not yielding, discriminative, disappointing, and exceptionally make lives difficult for many youth (Dibaba 2017; Gillies, 2008; Pereira & Countinho, 2019; Sommers & Uvin, 2011). Social settings, which provide negative messages about youth abilities and a limited range of life options, may lead youth to make poor choices in life regarding use of time, resources, and potentials. The low inclination and participation of female youth in

entrepreneurial programmes is due to gender specific barriers and intentional environment (Chaudhary, 2017; F. Wilson, Kickul, & Marlino, 2007; Zellweger, Sieger, & Halter, 2011). The gender differences, with respect to entrepreneurship, are highly influenced by macro-environment most especially patriarchal traditional culture.

Socially, societies exclude the youth from participating in social, political, and economic spheres of life. In the Arab Mediterranean societies (Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria), youth are isolated from decision making, politics, access to social services, and information about government programmes (Backeberg & Tholen, 2018). Where there are existing programmes to empower the youth, sometimes society reduces them to mere recipients of programme packages than initiators and designers (Arulingam et al., 2019; Kwesiga et al., 2019; Mawejje, 2020). For instance, “most youth programmes in Palestine are designed by adults on behalf of young people under the assumption that adults know what is best for young people” (Hammad and Albakri, 2007, p.214). Conversely, youth needs are disregarded, assets not built and youth contribution undermined (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). To me this is a precursor to disorder and social instability, and thus, a disincentive to commitment and productivity in our societies.

Developing countries require clear understanding of the socio-cultural needs, complexities, and utmost civic engagement of a given target group (Hammad & AlBakri, 2007). Correspondingly, there are many programmes, plans and policies in Uganda (e.g., NDP II, Vision 2040, National Strategy for Youth Employment, *Emyooga*¹⁰ Wealth Creation Initiative, NUSAF I-III) focusing on youth livelihoods and employment. However, the extent to which youth participate in designing these programmes is dismal due to societal limitations. With this discrimination and exclusion in planning, the youth may not access and benefit fully from such programmes (Ndhlovu & Twala, 2017). Society assumes the youth to be very young, inexperienced, and less prepared to handle finances, project activities and participate in community decision-making (McGowan, Cooper, Durkin, & O'Kane, 2015). Because of the above, the youth tend to perceive that all the programmes are meant for the adults hence reducing their accountability, responsibility, and personal initiative. Such exclusion based on gender, political affiliation, age, clan, tribe, and role in society stagnates youth entrepreneurship and socio-economic transformation.

¹⁰ *Emyooga* derived from Runyankole dialect (local language in western Uganda) referring to specialized skills enterprises/groups. It is a presidential initiative on wealth and job creation launched in 2019 to transform 68 percent homesteads from subsistence to market oriented production.

The socio-cultural norms and rigidities such as gender stereotypes, marital obligations, and discrimination limit the youth from actively participating in decision-making and livelihood activities (Hatak, Harms, & Fink, 2015; Orobia, Sserwanga, & Rooks, 2011). These social norms and perceptions lead to loss of self-confidence, esteem, motivation and block youth from undertaking specific enterprises (Orobia et al., 2011). This condition contravenes the tenets of empowerment theory and PYD framework embedded in this study. Similarly, young women are devalued, considered less competitive, with limited capacity to lead community development initiatives (McGowan et al., 2015). Gillet (2007) posits that early socialisation of female youth in homes as mothers and homemakers, gardens; house chores reduce orientation to entrepreneurship activities. Women and girls are confined to housework chores, garden and socialisation as mothers (Chaudhary, 2017; Setti, 2017; Soomro et al., 2019). However, as a woman gets married and her responsibilities increase, she finds themselves at crossroads but to engage in micro businesses for survival, yet some husbands prohibit wives from participation.

Notwithstanding the existence of laws protecting the rights of children and youth, gender based discrimination, violence, child labour, gender relations, and exploitation continue to surface in the African context (Dibaba, 2017). The youth are seeking refuge in cities and towns (Ali, 2014) where the standards of living are perceived to be better. From an opinion, persistent poverty and unemployment influences the socio-cultural spheres. Thus, youth influx to towns is both to seek for safety and socio-economic survival, and this causes more problems of open urban unemployment, poverty, social unrest, and low production in rural agriculture sector. Therefore, cultural factors limit the youth from exploiting available opportunities thus hindering socio-economic development. From my personal analysis, literature is silent on how social entrepreneurship can challenge cultural practices and foster youth empowerment. Similarly, some cultural values promote hard work, self-confidence that are prerequisites for empowerment and this provides a basis for this study on social entrepreneurial and youth socio-economic empowerment.

Personal challenges

In some instances, youth take a personal blame expressed in terms of limited commitment and negative attitudes towards work, lack of intrinsic motivation to agriculture, and blue collar jobs pose additional barrier to the youth progress today (Ahaibwe et al., 2013; Andersson, Gunnarsson, Hedlund, & Rosén, 2017). These are conceptualised as personal or individual

barriers; common among them is the fear of failure to take risks, limited commitment, and carelessness, and knowledge barriers as stressed in Europe and Asia (Kazmi, 2018; Tubadji, 2021). However, structural barriers contribute to personal challenges. Socio-cultural systems, economic, and unsupportive political and economic environment reduce youth active participation in entrepreneurship. These affect youth entrepreneurial thinking, attitudes, and ability. The youth require appropriate entrepreneurial attitudes to successfully participate and benefit in social entrepreneurship programmes (Aja-Okorie & Adali, 2013). Due to their social and cultural background and nature of education system, youth lack entrepreneurial spirit to initiate motives, think creatively, take risk, be flexible, have passion, and communicate.

Social sentiments affect youth ability to engage in entrepreneurship venture and self-employment. Therefore, most youth prefer paid employment from big companies, NGOs, and civil service (Egorov, Lebedeva, Prokhorova, Shobonova, & Bulganina, 2019). The perception of entrepreneurial activity is negative colouring, fear to take risks, lack of will, mindset, and focusing on overcoming challenges than achieving success (Egorov et al., 2019; Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011; Kitubi, 2021). Young people lack the entrepreneurial aspirations to utilise available resources, set up business, introduce new products/services, finance start-ups, and penetrate both local and international markets (Herman & Szabo, 2014). Personal challenges are closely linked to the weak entrepreneurial competences.

Generally, strategic thinking and negativity challenge youth's entrepreneurial intentions and participation. Entrepreneurial attitudes assist the youth to benefit from interventions through initiating business ideas, start business, manage, and benefit from them while supporting others as well. In addition, negative attitudes such as negativity, arrogance, lack of morale for entrepreneurship, and work limit youth productivity. Although, there is need for attitude change, mindset change is a gradual process necessitating rigorous training, sensitisation, and mentorship in all programmes. These processes are sometimes absent among the youth related entrepreneurial programmes as most programmes focus on short-term training and provision of finance. With ignorance of most youth, the urge for luxury, and limited growth mindset, youth tend to shy away from the empowerment interventions, funds or misuse the funding. To me, the absence of entrepreneurial competences and acumen limit youth competitive participation and contribution in entrepreneurship and those who try to participate become inefficient. Does the situation in Acholi sub region provide a different perspective on youth

entrepreneurial attitudes? The study set in to explore contribution of personal factors on youth empowerment.

Institutional barriers

The institutions influence youth progress in social entrepreneurship and empowerment. Most government programmes are centrally planned and designed with limited consideration for local youth needs and youth aspirations. The lack of participation in decision-making (Kwesiga et al., 2019), and candid representation at programme initiation and planning affect the outcomes of the programme. Thus, the existence of many youth development interventions has not translated into youth employment. In this regard, Charles and Jameson-Charles (2014) lament that youth development landscape is populated with various youth entrepreneurship and state supported employment interventions, for employment promotion, however, youth unemployment remains significantly high. The structural factors limit youth active engagement in income generating activities.

Youth participation is key if youth employment and empowerment are to be achieved. Studies in Ghana by Ile and Boadu (2018) emphasise active participation in policy process as a key factor in ensuring adequacy and effectiveness of socio-economic programmes meant for youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. This emphasis implies that the top-down approach to overcome youth unemployment at grassroots level lack youth involvement in policy design and implementation, outreach, and appropriate targeting between rural and urban, female and male youth (Hlungwani & Sayeed, 2018; Tabengwa, 2017). To Lakuma, Marty, and Kuteesa (2016) longer poverty spells are reported in literature to be in northern Uganda and eastern Uganda than in western and central regions, since the latter have comparatively well-developed urban settings, infrastructure and private sector investment hence more employment opportunities in both formal and informal settings.

The young people may take blame for their negativity towards certain jobs and professional careers, thus individualising problems, and responsibilities. This discourse is constructed in the deficit perspective where youth are regarded as ‘problems to be solved’ (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005), ‘broken’ or in ‘danger of being broken’ (Benson, 2003; Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma Jr, 2007). However, the failure to secure decent employment may stem from structural factors and other actors such as parents, spouses, teachers, society, patriarchal culture, market, government (decision makers) who are more powerful than youth themselves (Lundahl &

Brunila, 2020). The empowerment approach is looked at as a strong framework for empowering youth, however, the critical question is whose ability, capacity, and mandate does the approach permit? Is it for individual youth, organisation, or community, poor or marginalised, rural, or urban? Who exactly do policy initiatives seek to empower?

The weak forward linkages between agricultural and industrial development has continued to worsen marketability of products in Uganda (Mawejje, 2020). Mawejje (2020) further asserts that Uganda's population is young with 85 per cent below 35 years, 60 per cent below 20 years, and these could have been employed in agriculture sector, had it been fully supported and developed. The agriculture sector strategic plan 2015-2020 under NDP II outlines the national agriculture policy intended to attract, retain, motivate and support youth employment in various aspects of agriculture value chain to the tune of UGX 52.9 billion¹¹ under that national strategy for youth employment in agriculture (Kwesiga et al., 2019). NDP II has been over taken by NDP III and Uganda Vision 2040, which stress commercialisation, and competitiveness of agriculture production and agro-industrialisation (NPA, 2020).

On the other hand, youth employment in agriculture remains debatable, as most youth are not incorporated in planning process and lack information about the existing policy frameworks. This implies that the prevailing youth development policies, programmes and frameworks are even considered a strain on public purse and may not satisfactorily overcome the myriad youth issues and development challenges (Benson et al., 2007). As emphasised in critical social theory of youth empowerment, critical youth empowerment and employment is premised on key dimensions (Jennings et al., 2006).

These dimensions are as follows. (i) A welcoming and safe environment; (ii) Meaningful participation and engagement; (iii) Equitable power-sharing between youth and adults; (iv) Engagement in critical reflection on interpersonal and socio-political processes; (v) Participation in socio-political processes to effect change; and (vi) Integrated individual and community level empowerment (p.41). Consequently, the exclusion of youth in most of the youth programmes renders them inappropriate for youth employment. The inequality in sharing of benefits of economic growth among regions, coupled with limited funding to infrastructure, limited experience, inappropriate skills, lack of access to credit, land and quality

¹¹ This is equivalent to USD 14,316, 644.11 with 1\$ at UGX 3,695

training, to keep pace with growing youth population (Kwesiga et al., 2019), worsens the youth unemployment problem.

Unfortunately, Uganda government's own manufacturing sector and state corporations (unlike in India, China, Brazil, Russia too) are not widespread and developed to generate enough jobs all youth. Although the government formulated the Buy Uganda and Build Uganda (BUBU) policy, many foreign products flood the market and outcompete the locally manufactured products, thus posing an additional burden to youth innovation and profitability. More still, lack of access to credit, land or productivity-enhanced infrastructure, political and social instability, deter investment and entrepreneurship hence limiting young Africans from reaping from own enterprises (Betcherman & Khan, 2015). Is the YLP taking a different approach in supporting youth agri-entrepreneurship? To me, such revelations imply many factors affecting youth social entrepreneurship and socio-economic empowerment in developing countries.

Youth continue to face a number of institutional obstacles to entrepreneurship and start-ups which prevent them from knowing or accommodating rules, markets, laws, values, and opportunities that contribute to culture, participation, practice, and success in the market (Robinson, 2006; Schoof, 2006). Robinson states that barriers occur at macro and micro levels of market and government and dictate the relationship between youth enterprises and customers, enterprise and community, state, and funding agencies. These barriers, to be discussed below, comprise limited institution support, lack of knowledge about opportunities, enterprise and support agencies and rigid government processes (red tape).

In most developing countries there is minimal and relevant institutional support to youth income generating ventures most especially from government and other agencies (Namatovu, Dawa, & Mulira, 2012; Shittu, 2017). Rural youth are not aware of the existent empowerment programmes meant for them, at times this is attributed to lack of information or discrimination by implementing authorities. Youth participation is exercised through patronage, and political tokenism, corruption, gerrymandering (Kwesiga et al., 2019), and template projects. The same studies established that youth in Uganda lack confidence in the national youth councils due to ineffective representation of their views.

The interventions by private individuals and NGOs lack the support from government to boost their operation since governments do not provide them with finance, information, expertise, equipment, and mandate. Surprisingly, even programmes initiated by the government do not

receive enough support such as infrastructure, finance, advice, extension service, information, monitoring and evaluation. However, it is not easy to ascertain the magnitude of support and its relationship with the performance of social entrepreneurship for youth empowerment. The youth enterprises and other projects lack extension services necessary for effective execution of activities. In my opinion, this unfair environment obscures youth from available market, finance, and training opportunities. Could this be any different from Gulu district of Acholi sub-region, northern Uganda? This is one of the questions to be answered later in this study.

Furthermore, institutions fail to avail market opportunities for locally produced products from youth enterprises. Ehlers and Lazenby (2007) contend that market opportunities can influence adversely or ignite the prosperity on the entrepreneurial intentions of the youth. Mollentz (2002) affirms that the absence of market and demand for the products are among the factors limiting youth entrepreneurship in developing countries. Limited market is attributed, on the one hand, to poor infrastructure and lack of market information most especially in rural setting (Namatovu et al., 2012), and competition from foreign goods. On the other hand, Kazela (2009) argues that the presence of market opportunities without willingness to take risk would still retard the effectiveness of interventions. If the youth develop negative perceptions about the market environment of their venture, they might not start or even close their ventures (Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011). Furthermore, products that do not meet the quality standards in the market face stiff competition from large and medium enterprises. From a personal point of view, market opportunities can enhance their ability to generate more income to sustain the ventures. Therefore, poor market conditions, or absence of market opportunities constrain the youth's participation in social entrepreneurship.

Morestill, one of the most inhibiting factors to youth empowerment is lack of awareness and accessibility to youth entrepreneurship support structures and initiatives (Gwija et al., 2014). The youth are limited from business information, access to funds, and start-up capital financing avenues. Studies in South Africa indicated that business support is unsatisfactory, thus, youth lacked business advice, mentorship, and financial assistance. Youth lack knowledge on values, norms, government regulations, financial markets, lending institutions, and other business practices. This reduces youth assets, participation, cohesion, character and contribution as stipulated in empowerment theory and PYD framework (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). Youth support structures such as National Youth Development Agencies (NYDA), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), were not playing

much role in developing youth entrepreneurship and empowerment in Khayelitsha township of Western Cape Town in South Africa. The lack of NYDA support, Youth Advisory Centres (YACs) worsens the challenge of inaccessibility to business information, and entrepreneurial opportunities in South Africa. Therefore, youth are left ignorant about the available funding, training, and market opportunities both locally and internationally. Youth are demotivated from engaging in successful businesses for socio-economic empowerment.

More still, enterprise and support agencies are not available for youth involved in entrepreneurship in most developing countries. Generally, few enterprise agencies or centres provide business advice, training, guidance, counselling to young people, leaving majority youth unattended too. White and Kenyon (2001) cited in Uddin, Chowdhury, and Ullah (2015) stress that there is lack of particular business support for young entrepreneurs seeking to expand and further develop microenterprises in developing countries. Studies in Bangladesh, Poland and Pakistan revealed deficiencies in business assistance and support (Jakubczak, 2015; Kazmi, 2018; Uddin et al., 2015). These deficiencies included lack of trained and educated facilitators, counsellors, development workers, mentoring services and limited knowledge of available business support agencies. These limited youth progress and entrepreneurial innovations. Training and advice to youth entrepreneurs is absent yet youth mentoring process creates opportunities that may expand their operations and social change (Liang, Spencer, West, & Rappaport, 2013). This exposes institutional weakness in supporting youth entrepreneurship and empowerment.

Additionally, complicated processes and rigid red tape limit youth entrepreneurship. Complex documentations, administrative hurdles (unsupportive tax systems and tax levels, changes in regulatory framework, and lack of transparency, ineffective competition laws, registration procedures and costs), and corruption demotivate youth from establishing enterprises and participating in economic activities (Schoof, 2006; Uddin et al., 2015). The business registration processes are difficult for youth to understand in addition to associated costs and laws (Gwija et al., 2014). Furthermore, regulatory barriers such as intellectual property registration, taxation issues affect most youth efforts in the empowerment drive in developing countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and other countries (Kazmi, 2018; Uddin et al., 2015).

Studies in Poland and Pakistan indicate the lack of financial credibility, unsupported and complicated tax systems, and complicated laws as being among the major challenges to youth entrepreneurship and empowerment (Jakubczak, 2015). However, in Hungary, there is clear

taxation and registration process that is understood by the youth. Nonetheless, institutions have not provided the youth with all the needed support to sail through the business registration processes. Thus, most youth in developing countries fail to start and operate enterprises, others collapse, and youth feel discouraged and demotivated towards participation in economic activities for self-employment and socio-economic transformation. Coupled with lack of information, youth end up abandoning youth interest groups (YIGs). The gap in institutional support limits the level of youth empowerment in community.

Based on the above, this study builds on these institutional barriers to explore the circumstances surrounding youth livelihood programme through a social entrepreneurship lens in Gulu district Acholi subregion. Other than aforementioned challenges, there are macro/global forces that challenge youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. These may include policies, pandemics, ICT, donor aspects, competition for jobs abroad that are in play today, and transboundary. However, I have not considered these in this study because the focus is on youth perceptions from a government-oriented programme, who operate at micro level in their communities. Youth enterprises primarily serve local market, utilise local services, thus macro factors may not necessarily have a direct bearing on them. Furthermore, the research considered youth in social entrepreneurship and operating under YIG interest groups for self-employment. Basing on this review of socio-economic, personal, institutional challenges to youth empowerment, it is fundamental to review the strategies for capacitating youth. This is the subject of the next subsection.

2.3 Optimisation benefits from social entrepreneurship interventions

Several strategies develop youth potentials towards productivity, entrepreneurship, and socio-economic empowerment. Building human and financial capitals, interpersonal skills, and social networks develops youth capacity. The presence of youth related entrepreneurship interventions would not necessarily empower the youth in community if the limitations highlighted above (socio-cultural factors, access to market opportunities, limited institutional support, and entrepreneurial weaknesses among others) are not managed. The presence of policies, programmes, resources may not necessarily transform the youth into change agents as stipulated in the empowerment theory. For this reason, to build the youth confidence, connectedness, interdependence, and foster their contribution toward positive development (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005), it is ideal to explore these possible ways

to enable youth optimally benefit from such interventions. There is interconnection among these measures, as presented below:

Human capital is fundamental for positive development. Strengthening human capital enables the young people to participate and contribute productively to development and stability of the society (Matsumoto, 2008; Midgley, 1997). Human capital is a very important community asset (Green & Haines, 2015). The sustainable livelihood framework presents human capital as skills, knowledge, ability to labour, good health and physical capability necessary for pursuing one's goals and aspirations (Krantz, 2001). Zimmerman (2000) prepositions emphasise building assets of the people and sustainable skilling to foster participation in decision-making. The education, sensitisation, training and skills development provided to the youth enhance their literacy levels, attitudes, potential, capacity and urge to participate in development programmes (Schoof, 2006). To Baxter, Chapman, DeJaeghere, Pekol, and Weiss (2014) education and training help youth to recognise, understand, appreciate and cope with various contextual factors that impact their lives. The training builds the competence and human capital to exploit available opportunities.

Scholars further argue that entrepreneurship training must comprise learning, earning and saving to build assets in the youth. Additionally, education changes the attitudes, promotes social cohesion which are essential for promoting human capital (Matsumoto, 2008). This is because the knowledge, motivation, skills facilitate attainment of the set goals. For young people to engage in active development process, they need 'tickets to work', (knowledge, skills, attitudes) which are only achieved through increased human capital development. A case in point is the Sawa World Model which focused on training for building confidence, leadership skills to recognise aspiring change makers and appreciating local solutions to end extreme poverty (Cushing, 2014). More so, the model provided practical skills in briquettes, radio presentation, news reporting and editing in districts of Kitgum and Gulu northern Uganda. The trained youth are inspired to train others, thus spreading the impact to the general population. Nevertheless, education for building human capital can form a basis for conflict prevention, and bonding among youth groups. Continuous education and training builds the skills and knowledge, abilities, mindset, confidence, and readiness to exploit the available opportunities for sustained life (Bakotić & Kružić, 2010; Cope, 2005; Ejiogu & Nwajiuba, 2012; Neck & Greene, 2011; Rae, 2010; Wood, 2011). As a result, investing in the youth will boost human

capital (self-confidence, motivation, capacity) and this capacitates youth to maximise benefit from current and future social entrepreneurship related programmes/interventions.

Building interpersonal skills of the youth (Midgley, 1997) lifts their social competency. Interpersonal skills are capabilities for effective communication, connection, cooperation with other people or groups (Wokorach, 2020). Youth require these skills to develop teams, cohesion and share productive ideas for social entrepreneurship. Social competency shapes resilience among the youth thus making them participate meaningfully in entrepreneurship and decision making process on matters which affect them (Oliver, Collin, Burns, & Nicholas, 2006). Interpersonal skills are important life skills which foster youth transition into productive employment and financial resilience (Baxter et al., 2014). Resilience motivates youth to take risk, become secure, assertive and benefit from current and future youth related social entrepreneurship interventions. Interpersonal skills build the group culture that is a powerful tool for social competency and entrepreneurial intentions in developing countries.

Entrepreneurial intentions is considered as the decision to become an entrepreneur and create a new business through deliberate and consciousness, which requires time, considerable planning and high degree of cognitive planning (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016; F. Wilson et al., 2007). Studies among Korean university students indicated that social competencies do not influence directly entrepreneurial intentions (Choi & Sung, 2017). Interpersonal skills enable the youth to integrate thoughts, feelings, perceptions, values, morale, and actions, which enables them to achieve social, economic, and personal goals. These skills include communication, teambuilding, conflict resolution, and lobbying and opportunity recognition. Other supplementary skills are learning, appreciating, bargaining and recognising relevant social cues, interpreting them, participating in decision-making and appropriately responding to interpersonal problems (Bekkers et al., 2008; Elias et al., 1994). Therefore, entrepreneurship programmes capitalise on these skills to achieve social and economic development.

The young people work collaboratively to improve on their knowledge and understanding of the world around them (Oliver, et al., 2006). As this study concentrated on YIGs, where collaboration is key, literature has it that group interests override personal needs. According to Hofstede cited in Ozaralli and Rivenburgh (2016) argued that although group loyalty and cohesion is rewarded, individual decision making and deviance in opinion and behaviour is typically discouraged. To this effect, they further contend that since individualistic cultures are supportive and tolerant of self-reliance, individual decision making, diverse thinking and

independent action suitable for youth entrepreneurship, it is candid to claim that individualism may facilitate the intention for entrepreneurial action. Resultantly, personality traits such as innovativeness and competitiveness are shaped in individualistic cultures, which foster innovation. Nonetheless, YLP supports youth in groups with diverse ideas but performing the same business activity.

On the contrary, collective cultures enable young people to obtain and collate information on a range of social and economic issues thus increasing their capacities to understand and manage their own needs and those of others. Effective communication is an important element of interpersonal skills, it facilitates flow of information among groups (Shanahan & Elliott, 2009). Information flow builds youth capacity optimally benefit from current and future youth-related social entrepreneurial interventions.

Other studies emphasise developing financial capital of the youth as one of the best ways to make youth benefit from youth related social entrepreneurship interventions. The poor youth generally lack access to financial capital (Green & Haines, 2015) to sustaining their ventures. Financial capital denotes the capital base in form of cash, credit, savings, deposits, basic infrastructure, and production equipment and technologies meant for improving livelihoods. It is agreed that providing microcredit, market information, increasing family income, can assist the youth to accumulate capital for investment in employment-generating activities thus economic empowerment (Ondoro & Omena, 2012). To develop financial capital, there is need for intensive training to build youth competences for proper utilisation and sustainability of the resources (Kiesner, 2009; Matsumoto, 2008; Valerio, Parton, & Robb, 2014). Though the youth may possess the skills, knowledge and competency needed, microfinance would enable them to practically utilise these skills and take advantage of the developing entrepreneurial opportunities and activities. Developing youth entrepreneurship policies through a multi-stakeholder approach facilitates motivations, opportunity recognition, and financial skills acquisition (Schoof, 2006) for success entrepreneurship and empowerment

Governments design policies, programmes meant to finance youth entrepreneurship and empowerment (Charles & Jameson-Charles, 2014; Kwesiga et al., 2019). However, the extent to which the youth effectively and efficiently utilise the microcredit towards building financial base remains a big question. Aggressive marketing campaigns about funding programmes provide youth an opportunity to mobilise, think, and develop business ideas (Sambo, 2015). To develop the financial capital, there is need for training, financial literacy, mentorship, and

sensitisation on the proper use of the microcredit, management of finance, and identification of the entrepreneurial opportunities. This would enable the youth to optimally benefit from the current and future youth-related social entrepreneurship interventions.

Youth social networks (Midgley, 1997) provide conducive environment towards youth economic empowerment. The youth need to work together towards achieving better welfare. The critical social theory of youth empowerment provides one of the keys to youth empowerment process as enhancement of the positive social bonding, and adaptation to group dynamics (Jennings, et al., 2006). To benefit from social entrepreneurship programmes is the development of networks, their characteristics and network-related capacities and skills of the youth (Stanton-Salazar, 2011). Most developing countries' youth programmes emphasise youth groups or group businesses to take the benefit of working together (Sikenyi, 2017). According to Bassani (2007), developing social networks strengthens social capital, which is as a result of developed social relationships. These promote trust, loyalty, self-confidence, self-efficacy, security, and a sense of belongingness among youth groups.

Networks are further developed through extension services, which build motivation, skills and knowledge base of the people thus increasing productivity (Mugabi et al., 2018). Networks are believed to play a big role in encouraging trust, commitment, and active involvement in social entrepreneurship programmes, hence development of well-being (Oliver, et al., 2006). Teamwork as a tenet of social networks demands greater flexibility, respect, tolerance, and greater positivity for effective youth entrepreneurship for social change (Pérez, Enríquez, Cuadras, Ledezma, & Vega, 2015). It is imperative to note that, needs assessment becomes easy where youth networks are strong. Needs assessment further reignites teamwork, interpersonal skills, personal responsibility, sense of ownership, and enhances monitoring of youth projects (Azman, Halim, Liu, & Komoo, 2011; Molyneux, Jones, & Samuels, 2016; Njuki, Kaaria, & Chetsike, 2013; Waithera & Wanyoike, 2015). In summary, youth networks can foster commitment, personal initiative, thus taking advantage of opportunities in entrepreneurial training, financing, land, market, and extensive services consequently augmenting youth abilities in empowerment struggles.

2.4. Inherent gaps and conclusion

The literature on entrepreneurship development schemes and programmes meant to promote social welfare was considered. However, there are inherent gaps conceptually,

methodologically, and contextually. Conducting studies on youth requires clear understanding of the nature of youth. Nonetheless, the concept has multiple meanings, and it is confusing since definitions depends on the society, challenges, programme, purpose and situation at hand. The variance in the definition creates a gap on which aspect (e.g., age bracket, transition) to consider while situating the enterprises and challenges. Different youth programmes and researchers, based on different age bracket, for example, Namatovu et al, (2012), considered 15-35 years and 18-30 years while conducting same study in both Kenya and Uganda respectively.

Most studies emphasise youth entrepreneurship and empowerment in general without any mention on social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, most studies consider youth perceptions on government interventions than linking them to social entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, this study takes a different angle by focusing on social entrepreneurship and socio-economic empowerment. The lenses of positive youth development (PYD) framework, which stresses the tenets for purposeful youth, ecological assets provide an entry point and an incentive to this research. Most of the writings on social entrepreneurship stem from western world and Asia, leaving a gap in Uganda most especially northern Uganda.

Most interventions in the literature present funding and entrepreneurial training as key for youth enterprise development/livelihood promotion. However, this study goes beyond this and stresses other considerations for youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. Additionally, most studies are silent on how the youth can take control of their lives amidst challenging environment like Northern Uganda. Likewise, personal challenges the youth face specifically in war affected areas ignored in most of the literature reviewed, and some challenges faced during the war overlap to post-conflict, and present situation. The overlap poses a challenge to the study to distinguish such challenges.

Most literature reviewed in this chapter focused on only operational youth enterprises, the current study concentrated on cases of both failed and successful enterprises for balanced inquiry. Although studies emphasised youth enterprise development, the cases, quantitative and qualitative propositions fail to define youth interest groups (YIGs) instead regard them as youth enterprises. My study took exploratory studies with a qualitative lens to gather data from different youth including both educated, uneducated mostly in informal enterprises to incorporate pluralistic views, with the intent to investigate empowerment at organisation and

community. Therefore, youth perceptions on YLP as social entrepreneurship are fundamental in examining socio-economic empowerment.

Some studies express empowerment in terms of income generation and employment, but youth perceive other socio-economic empowerment manifestation in form of opportunities created, technical and business skills gained, income generated, employment created, self-reliance, participation in decision-making and social cohesion, and all these are taken consideration in this study. The manifestation is possible with a clear understanding of the youth livelihood challenges. To achieve socio-economic empowerment, changes in entrepreneurial attitudes, institutional support, socio-cultural factors, and market opportunities must be put into consideration. Most of the studies reviewed do not demonstrate government programmes as social entrepreneurship; yet, individuals, third sector, governments and other stakeholders with a social mission can apply social entrepreneurship. This study stands out uniquely through considering government responsibility and role in promoting youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. The study considers government-funded youth entrepreneurship programmes as key factor promoting youth social entrepreneurship.

Youth participation in SE is geared towards social change. Literature points to youth entrepreneurship in Africa, and other parts of the world with limited studies in northern Uganda, thus, this study's contribution to the body of knowledge in the area. The youth perspectives towards entrepreneurial interventions in Gulu district, Northern Uganda need to be incorporated in the body of literature. Most studies focus on youth entrepreneurship not social entrepreneurship, and methodologically employ structured interviews, questionnaire techniques in obtaining primary data. This study takes a unique angle of appreciating multiple realities through a purely qualitative lens. All youth studies were purposed towards addressing youth unemployment and poverty and enhancing their potential towards socio-economic development. My research emulates such purpose to explore the nature of youth enterprises, youth challenges, drivers towards such ventures and explore the avenues for building youth assets through multidisciplinary strategies.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Empirical studies necessitate strategies for generating answers to the research questions. Therefore, this chapter provides research methods, procedures, rules and principles for conducting this study. The ways for systematically solving the problem under study are outlined. It provides the discussion and processes of inquiry involved in the study. Methodology involves determining how the researchers think about the study, decision making about the study, positioning, engaging firstly with participants, and analysing and interpreting data collected (Mills, 2014). The chapter presents the practical procedures (methods) used to generate, analyse, and report data, and way (research methodology) to investigate knowledge and obtained about the social world, for example, what can be known (ontology), how we know what we can know (epistemology) (Adam, Khan, Raeside, & White, 2007; Greener, 2008; Terrell, 2012). This chapter tackles motivation for the study design, epistemological, ontological stances, and research process. Although research methodology is diverse, the chapter explains why and how methodological decisions were considered inevitable for integration into the study and their contribution to trustworthiness of findings. I begin with philosophical worldviews, study design, study area, study population, selection of sample, research methods and tools of data collection, and the type of data analysis. Ethical considerations pertinent to the study both as policy requirements of University Research Board, and Government of Uganda, and quality assurance measure are as well presented. I conclude the chapter with a discussion on the challenges and limitations to the study, and strategies undertaken to reduce the effect on research quality.

3.1 Philosophical Worldviews

The philosophy informs the research through guiding data collection, analysis, presentation, and interpretation. Guba (1990) cited in Creswell (2014) defines worldviews as set of beliefs that guide the action. I chose the constructionism, also called social constructionism or interpretivism to understand multiple meanings, experiences, and in the natural setting (Creswell, 2014; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020). Under this philosophy, those who experience reality construct it (Mills & Birks, 2014). Therefore, the youth under YIGs understand operations of their projects, what they perceive as nature of enterprises, challenges, and how they define success or failure and how best they can be capacitated. Youth

perspectives and lived experiences (emic) from youth themselves was very crucial in generating meanings. Participants constructing reality helped to answer the research question and generating multiple realities. Philosophical ideas hidden in research influence research practice, identify defects in knowledge, and influence the final product of the research (Creswell, 2014; Mills & Birks, 2014).. The philosophy is sometimes referred to as research paradigm, meaning patterns of beliefs, values, practices that regulate inquiry within a particular discipline through providing lenses, frames, directions, and processes through which investigation is accomplished (Weaver & Olson, 2006). They are divided along the ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology.

The worldview adopted recognised qualitative approach to data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing (Creswell, 2014; Mills & Birks, 2014). Hennink et al. (2020) posit that qualitative research involves understanding study population from the researcher's perspective, and participants own perspective (*Verstehen*). Snape and Spencer (2003:7), cited in Hennink et al. (2020) define *verstehen* as 'studying people lived experiences which occur in a specific historical and social context'. However, institutional barriers and SEIs are etic interventions.

Weber (1864-1920) (as cited in Hennink et al., 2020) posits the importance of study population's perspective on research issues. In this study, youth perceptions were understood from their own perspectives, in their own context, and the description in subsequent chapters is in their own words and concepts. The paradigm provided space for voice, concerns and practices of research participants (Cole, 2006). As Creswell (2014, p.8) puts it, 'social constructionists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of experiences, means directed towards certain objects, or things'. Therefore, there were many realities attached to youth socio-economic empowerment as experienced by different youth themselves, and other categories of people in the region, thus establishing the ontology of multiple realities as compared to positivism (Creswell, 2007, 2013, 2014). Perceptions on YLP as social entrepreneurship for socio-economic empowerment called for such philosophy. Therefore, multiple realities called for multiple methods to research. In qualitative research, researchers must consider values, prejudices biases, views and feelings (axiology) brought into the study. Therefore, social constructionism and pragmatic view plurals informed the research design for the study.

3.2 Research Design

Before engaging in any type of research it is important to understand the clear purpose of the research design (Jongman, 2020). According to Neuman (2013), the purpose of social science research can be exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, and case study, of a social phenomenon of human behaviour. To investigate the role of social entrepreneurship on youth SEE in Gulu district, a combination of exploratory design and case study approach were considered most relevant. Research design provides a blueprint for answering research questions (Creswell, 2013; J. H. Wilson & Joye, 2016). Therefore, it is a plan used to gather, analyse, and interpret the data required to explore the YLP as social entrepreneurship for youth SEE. The exploratory design employs qualitative approaches to gain in-depth understanding, knowledge, experiences, perceptions, and meaning from the youth organised in youth interest groups.

Exploratory design

Exploratory studies aim at generating in-depth information, answering questions of ‘why’ ‘how’ people experience a certain phenomenon (Kgomotso, 2020). An Exploratory study is normally conducted when the researcher wants to encounter an already known issue or would wish to familiarise with subject under investigation (Babbie, 2017; De Vos, Delport, Fouché, & Strydom, 2011). In this study, YLP was a known new initiative providing opportunity for deeper understanding into youth perspectives and perceptions on social entrepreneurship and empowerment. By the time of the research, youth perspectives on YLP as social entrepreneurship were scanty. An exploratory study employed as a first phase of fieldwork launched a foundation for case study. Accordingly, there is in-depth and lengthy periods of data collection to increase validity of the concept being developed (Brink & Wood, 1998). With this design, clarifications and understanding help to describe the process, or yield beginning theories that explain a given phenomenon. Exploratory research involved high-level flexibility, and open-ended qualitative questions to ensure intensive qualitative interviewing. To Stebbins (2001), exploratory involves putting oneself deliberately in place repeatedly to as to gain insight into the research problem. Stebbins continues to write:

Social science exploration is a broad-ranging, purposive, systematic, prearranged undertaking designed to maximize the discovery of generalisations leading to description and understanding of an area of social or psychological life. Such exploration is, depending on the standpoint taken, a distinctive way of conducting science—a scientific process—a special methodological approach (as contrasted

with confirmation), and a pervasive personal orientation of the explorer (Stebbins, 2001, p.3).

The science of knowing (epistemology) is through qualitative inquiry (Babbie, 2017). My study adopted various qualitative methods to explore youth perspectives, experiences, on the YLP as social entrepreneurship for youth socio-economic empowerment. I considered exploratory research appropriate since there is limited empirical understanding on youth socio-economic empowerment from the social entrepreneurial perspective. Moreover, studies, especially in the context of Gulu district, Acholi subregion, have not comprehensively explored the contribution of YLP as social entrepreneurship on empowerment of youth under youth interest groups. YLP being new a programme was appropriate for deeply understanding on how youth understood enterprise formation, contribution, and challenges and what was considered as capacity building in their own language. The researcher in this case went as a ‘miner’ to gain in-depth understanding.

Kvale (1996b) uses the metaphor of the researcher as a ‘miner’ or ‘traveller’, in qualitative research the researcher experiences reality him/herself, therefore there is no separation between what the traveller is going to tell and the actual reality. Seixas, Smith, and Mitton (2018) refer to researcher as a composite sketch artist who depicts reality basing on the reports witnessed. The explored information revealed cases of success and failure thus, calling for application of qualitative case study research, explained in the next paragraph.

Case study

In this research, case study was appropriate for in-depth and multifaceted understanding of a subject matter in its real-life context. Taking a case study of successful and failed youth interest groups under government oriented YLP facilitated intensive interaction with the youth in their own environments and capturing multiple realities. The cases strengthened the knowledge from exploratory studies. YLP provided a practical case for youth entrepreneurship organised under YIGs. Understanding what exists is important in social science research (Neuman, 2013). In this study, the case study sought a deeper understanding on what the contribution of YLP on youth empowerment was, and how best youth can be made to benefit from entrepreneurial interventions. The case study involves an in-depth analysis of programme, youth activity, complex phenomena, event, processes or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014). Detailed description of specific cases is fundamental in generating meaningful data (Kothari, 2004). According to Yin (2003, p.13), ‘a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a

contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident’.

The study adopted the single case as opposed to multiple case study designs basing on its suitability and convenience in representing ‘critical test of a significant theory’ (Yin, 2003). My decision to employ case study was also influenced by Adams, Khan, Raeside, and White (2007) who posit that a case study is important in analysing organisations. Indeed, youth interest groups are organised under youth livelihood programme, thus easy to access and investigate. To Adams et al. (2007) a case study is an in-depth study that examines questions on present and past, as they affect one or more entities (organization, group, department, or person). From this single case, the study considered both successful and failed youth interest groups based on youth perceptions, and reports. Case A in Laban village, Awach Sub- County provided a case for a motivating and successful enterprise with unique lessons/stories. Case B Youth Piggery Project presented a case of failed youth projects despite receiving funding like any other YIG.

The study established subjective perspectives, thus gaining deeper understanding on why some projects failed while others succeeded, and what youth perceived as social economic empowerment. However, there was participant selection, where I placed more priority on meanings of respondents in their natural environment (Creswell & Clark, 2011; Kgomotso, 2020). An attempt to portray how youth respond to social entrepreneurship through youth livelihood programmes in Gulu District demands that one goes beyond using statistical definitions of the situation. Thus, justifying the need for these designs which supported the idea that there are multiple realities and many truths, and provided opportunity for voice, concerns, artifacts, and practices of research participants (Cole, 2006; Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2014). Participants’ views, perspectives and opinions built the story communicated in this report in a manner particular to the social entrepreneurial interventions in own social environments.

3.3 Research approach

In this study, the thrust was to understand youth perceptions about YLP as social entrepreneurship fostering youth socio-economic empowerment in Gulu District, northern Uganda. Therefore, the qualitative approach adopted emphasises the intellectual and critical engagement with the data and goes beyond mere anecdote and reportage (Hackley, 2003). The qualitative research sought insights built on a careful and well-informed reading of social

entrepreneurship on a given social context of youth. The approach clarified youth perceptions and experiences in their implementation of entrepreneurial interventions and their YIGs. The approach commensurate with the desire to comprehend why youth chose IGAs, and reasons for applying for the funding, and what they considered as enterprise formation, benefits, and limitations faced. The approach provides information used to construct reality. To Creswell (2014), research is about reconstructing reality, hence accounting for the application of constructionism as opposed to positivism perspective. The design necessitated more time that is why the field exercise involved back and forth studies (2018-2021), field site visits, observation, and careful involvement of the youth to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

The choice of the different qualitative methods was premised on the belief that narrow views of one method can be misleading, requiring researchers to adopt an approach that is complex, multifaceted and dynamic to understand holistically the phenomena under study (Greene, Caracelli, and Graham 1989, Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009 cited in Mugumya, 2013). Combining methods and empirical materials, researchers hope to generate rich in-depth understanding about the subject matter. Studies indicate that triangulation of methods enhances both theory testing and theory building through extension, and contradiction of findings (Creswell, 2009; Denzin, 2012; Foss & Ellefsen, 2002; Grafton, Lillis, & Mahama, 2011). To Grafton et al. (2011) the use of only one method would mean missed opportunities. Triangulation at the heart of study advocates for a combination of strategies and methods or investigators to neutralise any biases (Thurmond, 2001). Therefore, it enhances rigour and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The different qualitative methods complement each other and leads to multiple realities (Creswell, 1994, 2009). Thus, the findings I generated from focus group discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews with youth were compared with results from key informant interviews, quarterly reports, cases, field observations to arrive at clear conclusions. Throughout the data collection process, emerging findings were compared after successful interviews, FGDs, or observations with the help of two research assistants. The insights from one method would inform subsequent data collection activities and processes, thus, accounted for the back-and-forth data collection phases and choice of exploratory and case study designs.

3.4 My reflexivity and positionality within the study

Recognising reflexives and positions was a key aspect in this study. The strong attachments a person develops with subjects leads to the idea of social science than reality (Dean, 2017). Therefore, social science requires us to account for ‘our humanness’ (Dean, 2017, p.1), and ‘self-awareness’, and this is what has been termed as reflexivity. To stand on the shoulders of giants, we apply reflexivity to understand our relations with those giants, and foundations on which we base our claims, knowledge, and reasoning. Etymologically, the root of word ‘reflexive’ means ‘to bend back from oneself’(Finlay, 2003). Thus, reflexivity refers to the ways through which we analyse our positionality, and the conditions of a given social situation (Etherington, 2004). Reflexivity denotes linking issues of knowledge to our being, oneself, possibilities of self-consciousness, self-awareness, thoughtfulness and analysis of intersubjective dynamics between research and researched (Finlay, 2003; May & Perry, 2017). In addition, critical reflection means how a researcher’s own values, socio-economic, education backgrounds, assumptions, worldview, positioning and behaviour affect the research process (Parahoo 2006; Creswell, 2007 in Mugumya, 2013). Researchers recognise that they are part of the social world under investigation.

Positionality on the other hand means people are made up of a myriad of different features such as sister, student, professor, teacher, social worker among others (Homes, 2020; Thurairajah, 2019). Positionality implies the social, historical and political locations of the researcher and how they influence his/her orientations (Homes, 2020; Thurairajah, 2019). These locations affect our interaction with participants, data collection process during the fieldwork. The position of the researcher denotes the bridge between philosophy, methodology and application of these methods (Mills, 2014). Positionality not only shapes research work but influences interpretation, understanding, and consequently belief in truthfulness and validity of the others’ research (Homes, 2020). Basing on these explanations, reflexivity and positionality are essential in this study, since my experiences, and social locations could have a bearing on the outcome of the research. Therefore, awareness and care about the positionalities are very important in qualitative research.

As I was going through financial hardships as a young orphan growing up with old parents (guardians), I understood and developed awareness of the roles and duties that surround being a youth and living in an impoverished background. Meeting basic needs was only easy when one practised petty business, garden work and working as a porter at construction site. This

made me to understand that young people if capacitated can be self-reliant and sustain their lives. With such philosophies in mind and abject poverty in the backyard of society, I asked myself how best the youth could contribute to socio-economic development. Furthermore, the commerce, economics and entrepreneurship education subjects pursued at ordinary and advanced level (High school), and Diploma Studies (Business Education) provided revelations that indeed youth potentials can be exploited and transformed into socio-economic development. At my undergraduate (Public Administration) level, courses in community development, public policy and microenterprise development outlined programmes, policies, and strategies for community empowerment, self-employment and these are among the landmarks that cannot be under looked in so far as significantly shaping professional and academic career, research interests, beliefs and worldviews.

My first job as business education teacher in Acholi subregion, northern Uganda exposed me to many children and youth from different backgrounds. Born and raised during the civil war, I imagined youth in this subregion were different from other parts of region and realised social entrepreneurship education and training approach goes beyond academics but building an inspired and productive generation, in what Zimmerman (2000) calls 'building assets'. Similarly, part-time volunteering work in a local NGO dealing in training, funding, and counselling LRA returnees, and teenagers' mothers in northern Uganda, provided an additional zeal for appreciating youth empowerment. Interaction with them, discussion, became a revelation that youth views, opinions and perceptions can easily be tapped when their voices are heard, recorded, and interpreted. This exposure and constant interaction with war generation in Northern Uganda always aroused my research interests in youth related discipline.

Master of Arts in International Peace Studies exposed me to the concept of social entrepreneurship and sustainable development in conflict situations. With such orientation, I got motivated to develop it into a research project at an advanced level of the doctorate. With many years of interaction with children at high school, youth at university, and other rural youth from northern Uganda, I developed strong conviction that youth demanded audience, thus my position on this research study. In one of the training workshops organised by Save the Children International youth wondered why many times researchers come with already determined answers (ideally meaning structured/closed-ended questions). Similarly, during PhD reconnaissance, one rural youth asked, 'why do you force us to tell you what you want to

hear, allow us to express ourselves'? This signified that investigating youth perceptions goes beyond numerical data to qualitative research. Consequently, having read, interacted, listened, and experienced many entrepreneurship interventions meant for youth employment, there was need to explore YLP as social entrepreneurship for youth socio-economic empowerment. Therefore, the pronouncement of SIDA scholarship programme under the theme 'Strengthening Social Science Research for National Development' provided opportunity to meet my expectations of conducting this study through qualitative lens.

Such experiences influenced my decisions on the choice of research idea, study site, and research questions. I avoided biases through keeping track of my emotions, experiences and evolution of positionalities in memo, what Thurairajah (2019) calls a reflective journal. Honesty was maintained, and I listened not only to my voice but also to participants' voices during interviews, discussions and returned to youth groups to collect more data while asking the same questions. As a teaching staff, I went to the field with a fair understanding of the youth situation in not only Uganda but also Africa at large. However, my knowledge of the youth conditions did not affect or bias the study because I maintained an outsider and information seeker position. Instead, my knowledge of the youth provided analytical utility for greater understanding of the context in northern Uganda.

I acknowledged personal positions (like having conducted training with local NGOs) that could have potential to influence the research and allowed the participants to reflect on their own roles. Finally, I was cautious of the nature of the questions to ask, built rapport at the interviews to attain quality interview. Multiplicity of voices ensured a balance of perspectives from all the participants most especially during FGDs. However, it is completely difficult to detach one's feelings, prejudices from the subject matter. The supervisors' guidance and judgement were sought to ensure accuracy of the instruments, questions, and findings.

3.5 Mapping the Research Site

The section does not only describe the geographical location of the study area, but it also provides a reconnaissance, that is, what I did and the outcomes of the exercise. I visited the research site in 2017 to get familiar with it, activities done by the youth, and the various locations in the district. During the proposal development stage, I took the initiative to test the research idea, with the guidance of supervisors; I had to map the research site. The essence was to be acquainted with the social, economic, cultural, and political environment of the area.

During the mapping, I contacted youth interest groups, youth leaders for permission and scheduling meetings to develop my research idea. I conducted one mock interview and FGD in the Unyama subcounty and Gulu city (by the time of data collection it was a municipality). I held a meeting with a group of educated youth who were involved in social entrepreneurial activities of empowering and mentoring other youth. I toured the whole district, visited several youth projects, and held mock interviews with individual youth using questions emerging reviewed literature. The following were the outcomes of the exercise:

Firstly, the research idea was wide because it captured all youth benefiting from government and NGO social entrepreneurial interventions. Additionally, my initial idea included peacebuilding as dependent variable. I narrowed it to only youth benefiting from YLP as current programme specifically for youth wealth creation and self-employment. Furthermore, the objective on effects of LRA on youth socio-economic empowerment was found to be irrelevant at the material time, thus eliminated from the study. Additionally, my earlier perception pointed to operational youth projects, it is at this stage I discovered that most youth groups had failed and dissolved. This had an influence on interview and FGDs guiding questions. Fourthly, I developed a conviction to carry out purely qualitative studies to gain in-depth understanding of meanings from the youth's perspectives on YLP as social entrepreneurship. Lastly, discussions guided in the designing of researchable idea, suitable methods, and tools. I understood youth operations, and how to locate them during reconnaissance and data collection processes. Generally, the exercise facilitated proposal development, and eased subsequent data collection.

3.6 Study Area

The study was conducted in Gulu district Acholi subregion, northern Uganda. Northern Uganda is one of the four political and historical regions, called provinces of Uganda since independence in 1962. The state institutions for planning purposes always use Central, Eastern, Western and Northern regions. Uganda is a landlocked country bordered by Kenya to the east, Democratic Republic of Congo to the west, South Sudan in the north, Tanzania to the south, and Rwanda to the southwest. It has a land surface 241,500.7 square kilometres, a land cover of 199,807.3 square kilometres, water and swamps covering 41,743.2 square kilometres. Gulu district is bordered by Lamwo District to the north, Pader District to the east, Omoro District to the south, Nwoya District to the southwest, and Amuru District to the west. All these districts

were initially part of Gulu district before they were granted district status in 2000s. The LRA conflict affected all the districts in Acholi subregion.

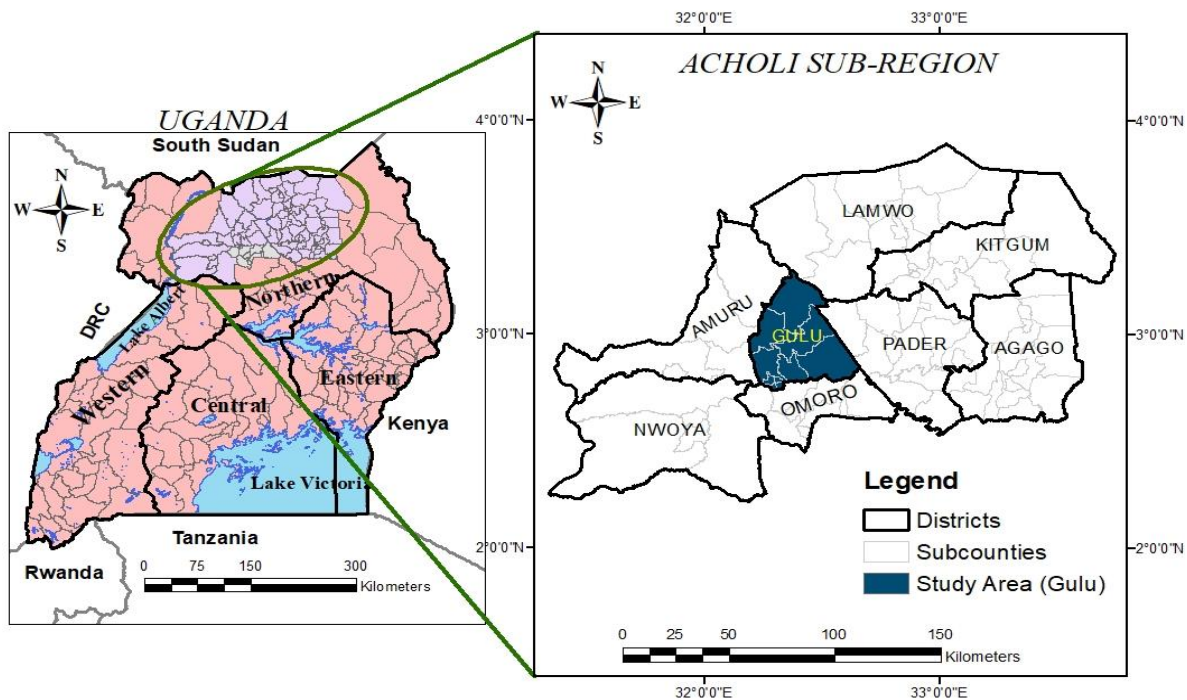
The coordinates of the district are 02 45N, 32 00E. It has a population of 275,613 with 48.8% and 51.2% for male and female population respectively, and the youth (18-30 years) form 67,048 (25.2%) of the population (UBOS, 2017). This district is composed of one county i.e., Aswa county (with six sub-counties)¹² and Gulu city¹³ divided into Gulu East (Laroo- Pece) and Gulu west (Layibi-Bardege) divisions. The city is the commercial and administrative hub of the subregion.

The district is dominated by crop growing with minimal cattle keeping, trading, service sector and growing manufacturing sector due to prevailing peace. The changes in the dynamics of economic activities were caused by the two decades of war. The district is centrally placed and one of the oldest administrative districts in northern Uganda. It has a large youthful population and is so dominant in northern Uganda. The much suffering from the conflict and its centrality in attracting youth from other neighbouring districts provides basis for choice of the study. The district had over 102 YIGs funded under the livelihood programme (Gulu YLP Focal Point Office, 2018) to pave way for self-employment and socio-economic development. The study considered both urban and rural youth income generating activities.

¹² More two subcounties have been created to make eight

¹³ During data collection exercise, it was called Gulu Municipality with four divisions of Pece, Laroo, Layibi and Bardege till 1st July 2020 when it was transformed into a city.

Figure 3.1 The Map of Acholi sub-region indicating the study area



Source: Developed by Author using UBOS Shape Files, 2020

3.7 Study Population

Population means an aggregate of all objects, members that conform to a set of specifications (Pilot, 1999). The population were the youth organised under income generation activities (referred to as YIGs). The subjects in research make up what is regarded as population. Although population may have everyday common and technical meaning, in social science research it has to be precisely defined. By definition, I exclude those individuals, and objects of no interest in the study. In this study, the youth as the study population were drawn from the 1,977 (updated) YLP beneficiaries (MoGLSD, 2021).

The research specifically considered youth benefiting from YLP, the choice of youth in Gulu District in Acholi subregion premises on the conflict situation as they at times regarded as war generation. YLP is a current programme in line with sustainable development goals (SDGs) and is geared towards alleviating youth unemployment and poverty. The youth who are the sole beneficiaries of the programmes were a target of change to be transformed as agents of change. Therefore, the entrepreneurial intervention intended to create an enabling environment for engagement in social entrepreneurship for youth empowerment.

I drew a list of beneficiaries from the district and municipal YLP focal persons, and contacts made. The study involved both rural and urban, male, and female youth since the programme was all-inclusive. The study considered both active and failed YIGs which had existed since 2015, leaving out the new groups of 2019/2020¹⁴. The duration was fundamental in examining perceptions on the benefits, and limitations in the YIG operations compared to the new groups that had just received the funding, and, with less activity to report. Therefore, the choice of the subjects under study was justifiable.

3.8 Sampling

In qualitative studies, sampling is continuous until sufficient data is gathered. Thus, participants were selected through naturalistic /qualitative/nonprobability sampling. The research could not study the entire YIGs in the area; therefore, key participants were involved to represent a large population. There was need to select a subset of the population of interest for purposes of making observations and obtaining information and other inquiry about the subject (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Sampling ensures collection of data from resourceful persons in addition to saving costs in terms of money and time involved in interviewing and studying the entire youth population. Sampling is closely related to generalisation of findings. For this study, it was not possible to interview all the youth population benefiting from YLP; therefore, sampling was critical in selecting primary participants. The broad strategies to selecting a sample for qualitative studies include judgemental, convenience, and theoretical sampling (Marshall, 1996). There are overlaps among these approaches; it is thus difficult to employ one in isolation.

Purposive sampling was employed to maximise the variation in the perspectives of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Youth enterprises were identified, and it was decided that the sample should include youth leaders, district officials implementing YLP, YIG leaders, YIGs and third sector in social entrepreneurship. Both male and female participants were selected from both rural and urban settings. These were assumed to be knowledgeable, experienced, and had rich insights about the subject matter. Purposeful sampling is one of the nonprobability sampling strategies used in qualitative inquiry. According to Marshall (1996), it is important to choose a sample since studying the whole population becomes practically impossible, inefficient and rarely ethical. Sampling is influenced by the nature of subject understand and research question.

¹⁴ These were new and were still preparing their business activities and had less to report when it comes to gains and challenges.

In the case of this study, I adopted purposeful sampling also known as purposive, judgemental or selective sampling throughout the study. This strategy means selecting research participants due to their knowledge, productivity, willingness ability and availability to answer the research question (Kgomotso, 2020; Marshall, 1996; Neuman, 2013). In qualitative research, values, beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives are not evenly distributed; yet qualitative research aims at generating understanding about the complex issues. The questions of why and how can only be answered by knowledgeable and experienced people, thus, randomising is impossible, Marshall explains:

Qualitative researchers recognise that some informants are 'richer' than others are and that these people are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher. Choosing someone at random to answer a qualitative question would be analogous to randomly asking a passer-by how to repair a broken-down car, rather than asking a garage mechanic—the former might have a good stab, but asking the latter is likely to be more productive (Marshall, 1996, p.523).

The recruited participants met the selection criteria and possessed in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation. Purposive sampling is flexible, iterative and generates needed data that answers the research questions. It assists us to navigate the terrain that keeps moving and shifting as we attempt to research about it (Burawoy, 2009). I used more than one method of recruitment to avoid engaging participants from same social networks or group (such as failed project, nature of enterprise, area, or gender).

After gaining permission from district authorities for participants to take part in the study, I purposively selected YIGs, key informants such as district and subcounty/division officials, youth leaders, expert and professionals in youth development and empowerment (YDE) working with third sector. I obtained a list of beneficiaries from the YLP focal persons from which samples were drawn. These officers were key in the implementation of the YLP project, thus had experience, knowledge, and familiarity with the context. Most district officials had worked with the youth since the initiation of the programme, and other youth projects both during war and post conflict northern Uganda. Their special experiences, positions, role in the entrepreneurship programme qualified them as 'key informant sample' (Marshall, 1996). These understood the youth dynamics, livelihood challenges, and youth entrepreneurial interventions in Gulu district. The officers introduced me to a volunteer in the community development office, who guided me to various youth projects in the research area. It became very easy to connect to subcounty officials; youth project leaders, 'gate keepers' (youth councillors) at district, municipal, subcounty levels and parish levels. Candidates used social knowledge, and

recommended potential participants for my study, what is called snowballing/chain sampling (Creswell, 2014; Hennink et al., 2020; Marshall, 1996). The participants were asked to refer to another participant to the research team, thus easing accessibility to youth interest groups in other research areas.

Youth interest groups were purposively sampled due to the nature of their enterprises, and organisation under YLP. Homogeneity existed because youth operated under one umbrella of YLP, with same goal of wealth creation and self-employment (Hennink et al., 2020; MoGLSD, 2013). The activities, participants, and levels of performance of YIGs met the criteria for inclusion in the study. For example, youth should have been in group for more than one year. The parameters for the selection of respondents included being several a YIG under the YLP. For instance, project A dealing in produce in Awach subcounty provided a case for successful groups whereas piggery project B in Unyama subcounty provided case for failed youth groups, in what Marshal refers as 'critical case samples'. The two cases were, however, not the only sample. More youth groups were visited, interviewed, and observations made.

More still key informants provided more understanding about the research problem and recommended as other key officials to be interviewed. During the interview with district official, he/she referred me to collaborating NGOs and institutions which provided additional information. Although the study considered a government programme, professionals from third sector were chosen because of their prior involvement and experience on youth entrepreneurship and empowerment, and knowledge of youth dynamics in northern Uganda. Their views were important most especially in understanding youth challenges and ways to capacitate the youth (objectives three and four). The process of sampling continued as data collection exercise went on.

Hennink et al. (2020) emphasise inductive refinement of the sample to make research more flexible, iterative and generate more insights. Concerning this, during data collection, I learnt more from participants and key informants, which lead to identification of new participants, and generation of more information. A case in point was that during interview with district youth leader, I learnt of a YIG which had extremely succeeded within one year and received additional funding. Had it not been such interaction with the leader, probably, I would have missed rich information from such successful project since there was no literature/report on their successes. According to Guest et al., (2012:45) cited in Hennink et al. (2020), including groups and types of cases not originally specified in the study design enriches the research.

Inductive refinement is one unique feature of qualitative studies and a strength of sampling process. Qualitative researchers do not always know the sample size beforehand, the sample changes depending on time and context until saturation is achieved (Holloway, 1997). Therefore, a new sample could be selected to examine and elaborate on the emerging theme (like communication, family mentorship) from the data. Saturation was attained where there were many repetitions, no new information, themes, and theories, emerged from the participants, and data (Mason, 2010). The in-depth interviews, FGDs, field observations and case studies of successful and failed enterprise (Project A Dealers and Project B) went on until data saturation was reached or no new information was generated (Holloway, 1997).

My study thus, had twelve focus group discussions, eleven key informant interviews and six in-depth interviews to give a wide range of perspectives. The blending of district focal persons/officials, with development experts, youth leaders and YIGs has given this study rich and deep understanding of the contribution of social entrepreneurship on youth socio-economic empowerment. The table (attached appendix A) provides the distribution of participants:

3.9 Data Collection Procedure and Plan

The qualitative nature of the study involved multiple methods of data collection. The implementation of this study followed several successive, mutual, and integrated stages. This involved planning and execution of key activities, decisions, and strategies in an iterative way. The research process was mutually reinforcing, more than one method could be used while administering another. The study involved many phases of data collection. At each stage, the entry point was a local youth councillor or youth chairperson, who linked us to the chairperson local council one (LCI) or opinion leader for clearance and recognition as new people in area.

The first phase was pre-field visit in 2017, and involved tour of the study area, getting used to the sites, contacting YIG leaders, youth political leaders and capturing the overall picture of observable socio-economic characteristics of study population. The stage was exploratory in nature to dig deep understanding into subject. The activity took place in both rural and urban settings lasted for four days was undertaken with the company of academic advisor. Informal conversations with youth groups, YIG leaders, and youth associations were conducted. Similarly, I contacted district officials in charge of implementing youth programmes to be permitted towards accessing youth projects.

Whatever was relevant to the inquiry was noted through field notes. Additionally, the exercise provided an opportunity to rethink about the research idea, study objectives and the topic to be able to re-design the study problem and methodology. Furthermore, the stage was to familiarise with the field activities, YIGs and environment. During this exercise, two youth enterprises were visited within sub counties of Unyama and Pece-Laroo divisions respectively. I interacted with one group of youth leaders who were familiar and working towards youth transformation. I established that some questions were applicable at this material time; for instance, a question on effects of LRA on youth was dropped since most youth were babies during civil war. Furthermore, the definition on age bracket (18-35 years) for the youth was revised to 18-30 years. Initially I had thought all youth groups were operational, it is at this stage that failed projects were included in the study questions.

The stage guided on design of statement of the problems, research questions, and tools. During this exercise, participants demanded for opportunity to express their views, opinions and ideas about livelihood challenges, enterprises, and effectiveness of social entrepreneurial interventions. One participant complained, “Why do you force us to tell you what you want to hear allow us to express ourselves” In all FGDs youth demanded for a platform to express their views. This led to discovery of more issues and called for purely qualitative approaches to generate more insightful data. To fulfil respondents’ demands on more space for expressing their views, and perspectives, phase two involved more qualitative approaches, collect data from respondents. The suggestions, views, observations, from respondents guided design of tools. At this stage, qualitative research was thought to be most appropriate. Throughout the study, issues raised were respected, recorded, and incorporated in this final thesis.

The second stage involved identification, recruitment, and training of the research guides and assistants in 2018. These assisted in interpretation of questions into local language and taking notes during interviews. The assistants were trained on rapport building, behaviour during interviews, notetaking, translations, and transcription during fieldwork. The research guides and assistants were familiar with youth, youth projects and their environment. They were recruited basing on locality and administered in both rural and urban setting respectively. All the research assistants had worked with local NGOs empowering the youth, while others had volunteered with CDO office, hence had prior knowledge on youth dynamics in Acholi subregion. Where the respondents could not read and write, the research assistants were to interpret each question in local language for ease of understanding and quick response. At this

stage, I also made appointments with various YIGs to prepare their members for focus group discussions, interviews, and administration of questions.

Thirdly, mobilising youth leaders and YIGs for focus group discussions took place 2018/2019. I conducted focus group discussions with youth councils since most of them were involved in mobilising youth for the livelihood programme. Open questions were asked and responses, observations, field notes, and photography recorded. While administering the interviews some respondents directed us to tour projects sites such as piggery and poultry houses, animal traction, stores, and retail shops for observation. Nevertheless, where members were not willing or present to be interviewed face-to face, telephone conversation applied. Most respondents were accessed at community level such as homes, trading centres, sub counties and project sites. This stage provided more data, and emerging themes led to inductive refinement of sample for subsequent stage. The phase led to identification of questions for key informants, and cases for the case study.

The fourth phase involved more qualitative data collection and project field sites for observations. The dominant data collection methods here involved in-depth interviews with key YIG leaders¹⁵, focus group discussions with youth councils, and YIG members in sub counties and divisions of Bungatira, Unyama, Awach, Pece, Paicho, and Layibi. This activity too place in a maximum of two months. The emergency of new issues from the data called for another phase to generate more insights for the study. At this stage, cases studies were identified for investigation.

The fifth phase involved more FGDs, key informant interviews, and more site visits in sub counties of Patiko, Palaro, Paicho, Unyama and Pece to fill the gaps. The successful and failed projects were revisited to collect data on the new developments/changes. Nevertheless, youth projects in Bardege division were non-existent because municipal officials had diverted the money and government had halted funding to youth projects. The last phase was gap filling to verify the findings and fill emerging gaps from draft thesis and supervisor's comments. However, with covid-19 pandemic and reduction of research fund, the activity was delayed, sometimes; I opted for clarification through telephone interviews. With the relaxation on travel restrictions, access to funds, emergency of gaps in the study, another follow-up exercise was conducted in Omel parish Paicho subcounty in 2021. The entire field data collection was back

¹⁵ In this study, I used YIG leaders interchangeable with YIG managers/chairpersons because different youth groups referred to their leaders differently.

and forth and lasted from December 2018-March 2021. Nonetheless, the qualitative studies involved analysis while collecting more data to fill the emerging gaps until saturation.

3.10 Data Collection Methods

The sections present the sources of data, and the various methods employed to gather data from these sources.

Sources of primary and secondary data

Data was generated from primary than secondary sources. Primary data is original information, that is, data collected for the first time (Kothari, 1985). Such data are collected for specific research problem at hand and when primary data is collected, new data are added to the existing social knowledge (Hox & Boeije, 2005). It is data collected directly from first-hand experience from primary respondents, participants, and field observations. This was collected through in-depth interviews, KIIs, focus group discussions, case studies, and field observations. Data collection followed objectives of the study; however, emerging issues were also incorporated in the process. This involved preparation and revision of the research tools to generate meaningful data. Secondary data are materials researched, created, and published by other researchers/parties for reuse. These are data collected and published or unpublished in the past for other purpose. Secondary data were obtained from YLP focal office reports, YIG records and YLP programme documents on interventions to backup primary sources. However, secondary data comprised a small portion of the study. These materials were reviewed to generate data in relation to benefits and livelihood challenges. Document review qualitative method was employed to obtain secondary data and supplement on field methods.

The qualitative methods were applied to collect data, gain more description, and exploration on youth perceptions on social entrepreneurship. Qualitative methodologies fall under the constructivism paradigm, meaning collecting and analysing non-numeric data aimed at a deeper understanding of a given phenomenon and lived experiences. Inductive projects use this paradigm and ask questions that are descriptive or interpretative (Morse, 2010). For purposes of this study, qualitative methods were employed to generate both primary and secondary data. Qualitative approach is a naturalist model ideal in social work and social sciences generally. The methods helped to deeply capture opinions, ideas and empirical thoughts about the gains, nature of youth entrepreneurship and limitations faced by the youth on the interventions. The approach gave participants an opportunity to openly discuss and engage in their experiences as

beneficiaries of the programme, owners, and operators of youth enterprises. To ensure trustworthiness, I triangulated methods that included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews, field visits, observations, and document reviews. Other than documents most qualitative techniques generated first-hand information (T. J. Ellis & Levy, 2012). These are further explained in the subsequent sections. The methods are presented below:

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Key informants provided rich information for this study on nature of enterprises, and livelihood challenges. Interviews involve verbal interchanges, either face to face, telephone, in order to elicit information, beliefs or opinions from interviewees (Burns, 1997). This is a technique used to gain more understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations. Although Burns (1997) recognises telephone interviews, I employed face-to face interviews to capture participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about youth socio-economic empowerment. The method also captured the nonverbal communication and rapport building. The key informants were very important in exploring SEE and YSEE because of their expertise and knowledgeability.

This method was employed when collecting information from district and youth leaders, and YLP focal persons. In total, eleven KIIs were conducted with Community Development Officers, district YLP focal persons, Municipal/city YLP focal person, District Youth Chairperson, Municipal Youth chairperson, and youth councillors. All these were directly involved in the implementation of the youth livelihood programme in the district. Most of them were involved in evaluating youth applications, training, and monitoring of youth activities (MoGLSD, 2013). Interview guides with open questions were designed and used to solicit opinions from the informants (see attached appendix E). The questions were open-ended since more questions arose from discussions, observations, and interactions. Most of the interviews took a period ranging from 50-90 minutes of discussion; some of these experts (YLP focal person, Youth district chairperson) were interviewed on two separate occasions.

Qualitative research interview helped to understand the SE from the interviewee's point of view, as it unfolds the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world under youth livelihood programme (Kvale, 1996a). Kvale and other scholars consider an interview to be a moral endeavour which allows more probing on complex questions and responses for

in-depth information on issues of socio-economic challenges, effectiveness of entrepreneurial interventions and strategies for enhancing youth entrepreneurship and empowerment (Neuman, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Indeed, key Informants were experts and very well informed about youth affairs and socio-economic challenges faced by youth in Gulu district, Acholi sub region. Similarly, most officials worked with youth programmes, had prior experience in youth projects, or were youth political representatives, with more than three to five years of interaction with youth. A case in point, one key informant had worked in a project involving youth entrepreneurial training in the whole of northern Uganda. Tapping into such experiences enriched this study. Most youth leaders, district and municipal officials had participated in YIG formation, training, and monitoring, thus conversant with youth group dynamics.

Surprisingly, most youth political leaders were in one way or the other members of YIGs, as members or executives, and thus had rich information and knowledge on the operations of YIGs as both leaders and entrepreneurs. Reference was made to youth projects that were in position to provide testimonies, on successes registered and failure in their projects. Engaging key informants was, however, expensive in terms of time and cost since most government officials were busy and opted for evening appointment at hotels, in addition to long time of waiting. Some technocrats would only recommend site visits to successful projects while ignoring failed YIGs.

In-depth Interviews (IIs)

In-depth interviews are a common method of data collection in qualitative inquiry. This is dialogue between participant and researcher, guided by a flexible interview tool with supplementary questions, comments and probes (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). This method uncovered information about an issue that had already come up (such as finance mismanagement), thus, six in-depth interviews formed this exercise. The participants were specifically drawn from members of youth enterprises. Issues that emerged during FGDs, KIIs and individual interviews, were probed and discussed during this process. I adopted semi-structured interviews to gather information from the key stakeholders who had personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about own enterprises they headed (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

I chose in-depth interview as a primary qualitative method as it allowed exploration of their project experiences including enterprise formation, challenges they faced, benefits (if any), and their views on youth capacity building. Most of the interviewees were executive members of YIGs, or influential figures¹⁶ in youth projects. The method is flexible thus helped me to modify questions and allowed participants to freely share their experiences on the subject matter. I had lengthy interviews with YIG project leaders from both failed enterprises and active ventures. Most of these youth were busy in their ventures, or had paid employment elsewhere thus, affecting the quality of the interviews. Nonetheless, interviews took more than 1 hour, and these YIG leaders were able to clarify issues raised from other methods. Interview guides provided opportunity for probing and emerging questions from responses (see attached as appendix F). Most of the interview were conducted after work (evenings or during lunch breaks) for convenience, while other executives from failed YIGs were inaccessible for interviews. This necessitated employing another approach which was youth project centred such as FGDs, and field observations.

Focus Group Discussions with YIGs

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with YIG members in both failed and operational groups. I employed FGDs on youth groups especially those that were organised under specific projects. Focus group discussion guides provide questions that elicited views, experiences, and perspectives of participants (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Priority was given to YIGs which had operated for more than one year and had stories or rich information related to their entrepreneurial activities. Under this approach, two researcher assistants participated in translating from Luo¹⁷ to English (forward translation), English to Luo (back translation), while the other took notes and photographs. Language differences called for translation as an interpretive act; however, meaning may be lost since some nouns such as social entrepreneurship were hard to translate to Luo language (Van Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2010). I thus, engaged more Luo language experts to maintain the meanings.

¹⁶ The interviewee was either chairperson, secretary for finance or publicity of a youth interest group. These comprised the executive of the group. In come youth such as School Road carpentry and joinery, the youth leader preferred to be called manager. The reason being, the leader started the enterprise before YLP and only in admitted new members when government funding started the requirement of 15-member team.

¹⁷ Luo is the commonest local language spoken among Acholi people of northern Uganda. The interviews were conducted in English as official language; nonetheless, some youths were illiterate thus necessitating translation into local language. The researcher is not a native of the region, thus could not interact freely and interview all youth

Additionally, some English words sounded like English even if translators and participants spoke in Lwo. For example, words like “brick” ‘taxi’ ‘radio’ “motorcycle” were pronounced and written like “*brik*”, “*takci*” “radio” “*piki piki*”, while some words such as social entrepreneurship were not commonly spoken in northern Uganda, this posed a challenge to the research team. Studies by Omona and Groce (2021) on translation and research outcomes in northern Uganda highlighted such challenges of compound nouns, universalised words, and two-word nouns. Prior to each FGD, I explained to RAs the intended meanings and the context to avoid missing the message. The use of two assistants at a FGD ensured the message was captured as conveyed. Regarding language proficiency, the RAs were bilingual, knowledgeable and familiar with youth and concepts within the study, hence, back translation possible (Chen & Boore, 2009). For example, RA1 had a Degree in Business Education, had conducted various entrepreneurial trainings with NGOs, while RA2 had volunteered in NUSAF programme and had experience with working with communities.

I discussed possible wordings and subtle meaning differences before and after FGDs. At the end of each FGDs, we compared notes, and rectified lost meanings. Since social entrepreneurship involves social networking, the method collected group views and perspectives on the subject under investigation. Each FGD comprised six to ten participants and twelve FGDs were conducted. Where the number exceeded 12 participants, a separate interview was conducted with few members. Ten FGDs took place with YIGs while two were conducted with municipal and district youth councils. These were conducted from back and forth, from time to time in what is termed as rapid ethnography (Vindrola-Padros, 2021). Some of the participants were initially interviewed during the mock interviews. A copy of the FGD guide is attached as indicated on appendices C and D.

In each discussion, a group chairperson or publicity secretary assisted in mobilising the members for the FGD as a maintained the role of moderator. This ensured ownership and smooth running of the activity. A flexible FGD guide containing research questions directed the exercise with more questions arising from the discussion. Most of the discussions were conducted at subcounty or parish premises, neutral grounds mostly under mango trees, while others were carried out at YIG project sites, and homes. Youth leaders mobilised participants and converged that at a point neutral to all members. Only two FGDs with youth leaders were

held in the central places such as Sports view Gardens Gulu City and municipal halls¹⁸. More ideas were explored, and participants reacted to each other, hence validating interview and KIIs results. Where some YIG members dominated discussions, and/or others fearing to speak, care was taken to engage all the members through a one-by-one response, I prefer to call it roundtable discussion.

In some focus group discussions in Awach Subcounty, I discovered some participants were completely uninformed about the group activities, such as financial and administrative issues. Most discussions took more than 1 hour and 30 minutes due to youth motivation to participating in the discussion. In March 2020, social distancing was introduced because of COVID-19 pandemic, and this affected the quality of the audios during conversations, translation, and transcribing. However, the approach required refreshments, and some demanded for transport refund due to distance and busy schedules. It took more than 10 minutes for the members to open most especially with stagnating and collapsed YIGs due to fear of fund recovery. Hence, the process was expensive in terms of high costs on training, travel, supervision, and time consuming (Neuman, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Additionally, most YIG executive members assumed responsibility of answering all the questions since they controlled the entire project procedures, and knew much information on funding, income, procurement, production, and administration. However, opportunity was given to all the members to speak out their views. Most members requested for field visits to different project sites to ascertain project activities and correlate the discussion views with progress on the ground. Although this study was not action research, field visits were fundamental in observing the economic activities at hand and youth participation.

Non-Participant Observation

During the study, I undertook field visits to YIG project sites to establish the nature and different enterprise activities and functions performed by youth. Although it was passive observation, I was able to determine the activities undertaken, the energies applied by the youth and roles performed by each member in the enterprises. This tour around business sites in Omel, Layibi, and Bungatira subcounties provided evidence of the status of youth business ventures. Those which were or had failed such as Loyoboo and I could easily observe without

¹⁸ By the time of FGDs in 2019 and 2020, it was municipal hall, now that municipality was elevated to city status, the name is bound to change to city hall.

difficulties. Similarly, personal behaviour/traits were ascertained during the interactive process (Kumar, 2014). While I was more of a direct observer, I also participated in some of the activities as I observed the process of seedling dressing, furniture and mould making, animal traction, and produce stores at Custom Corner Layibi-Pece division Gulu city, Awach and Paicho sub counties respectively.

Through observation, it is possible for researchers to ‘describe what goes on, who or what is involved, when or how things happen, how they occur and why things happen as they do in particular situations’ (Jorgensen, 1989). With this field experience, I was able to experience actual reality from projects, and reconstructed pieces (Kvale, 1996b; Seixas et al., 2018). To enhance the naturalness of processes, I ensured that the YIG leaders took lead in guiding the entire exercise, thus permitting me to conveniently observe, take notes, while the research assistants captured the photographs of the major activities (as shown in chapter 4,5, and 6). The exercise captured the reality of the activities, validated and corroborated data from interview results, and reports.

While on the project site, I established rapport for subsequent interviews and captured empirical views, perspectives as regards the subject matter. However, it was tiresome since most youth projects were remotely located especially in the subcounty of Paicho, Awach, Patiko and Palaro. More time was required, and it was not possible to visit more than two projects in a day. In some instances, some youth demanded guidance on how to improve on project performance mistaking the research team for technical monitoring team from district. Other participants demanded for an entrance fee before accessing their projects. This consumed more time, and cost than the planned activities, and budget estimates for the field. The observation guide is attached as appendix G.

Case study method

The study focused on youth beneficiaries from the government-oriented youth entrepreneurship intervention known as YLP. The study considered views, perspectives, and experiences of both successful and failed projects (YIGs). Although I conducted interviews with many youth enterprises, there are specific cases selected to represent other YIGs. The case studies were pilot pioneer groups under YLP. Furthermore, the choice was due to their unique performance, product line, prior operations, and location. More still, in almost all key informant interviews, I was referred to either project A-produce dealers, or piggery project B for a

successful and failed project respectively. These provided insights which were rich for this study, however, information from other youth income generating activities (YIGAs) as well contributed to the research.

Case one: Piggery project B- in Unyama Subcounty

The journey of piggery project B started with YLP pronouncement of the funding. However, the group existed before the entrepreneurship intervention as a saving activity (*Boli cup*). The selection of group came with prior interview with CDO later turned into (Senior Administrative Secretary). Project B was in Loyoboo Village, Unyama subcounty, along Gulu-Kitgum highway, 12 km from Gulu town. The project fell between Angaya and Oding parishes separated by the highway. Loyoboo derived their name from history, when the settlers travelling from Karamoja got tired, thirsty, and drunk water from the Unyama stream and commended the water was very nice, better than green vegetable (boo). Thus, the village turned to be named after that statement as Loyoboo. A transect walk in the area established that the economic activity is crop growing mostly subsistence crops of sorghum, cassava, cowpeas, and beans, plus cattle keeping is on a very small scale. The place was generally covered with green vegetation with tall green grass and tree species locally known as *Olwedo*, *Yaa*, *Oduku*, and *Kano* in swampy places. Other people sold firewood and charcoal along the highway to earn a living and meet their basic needs.

Facts of the case

Following the wave of peace in 2006 after the signing of cessation of hostilities agreement between government Uganda and LRA, both government and third sector initiated a number of programmes to promote post conflict recovery in the region. Youth were trained and encouraged to form small informal saving groups and participate in economic activities to earn a living. The available resources were insufficient for individual youth innovation but group projects. It would be one way of bringing people together and re-establish the livelihoods, and socio-economic transformation. The number of programmes had a youth component including but not limited to NUSAF, UWEP, Skilling Uganda, YVCF, PRDP, NUREP, and ALREP. However, there was lack of a youth-specific programme meant for economic revitalisation, employment and self-employment creation. In 2013/2014 government introduced YLP to cater for specific needs of the youth... as described in chapter one. Youth were to form groups of

10-15 members, apply for revolving fund, and operating any of the listed projects as adopted from YLP programme document. This fund was a loan to be refunded in less than a year.

Like many youths in other parts of Uganda, youth in Gulu District actively formed YIGs to benefit from the programme. I transect walked to Gulu District, Unyama subcounty to have a feel of one of the YIGs in the district. Case B being a pioneer/pilot group purposively became the point of reference. The project derived its name from Loyoboo explained above, and *Utem Gum* meaning 'let us try our luck'. The youth wanted to try luck because they believed government projects very competitive, politicised and difficult to win stiff competition.

The group started in 2015 after gaining training on business skills, horticulture, personal awareness, life skills and VSLA methodology from Technoserve (NGO). YLP found youth already organised, they only transformed the group from the informal group formed under Technoserve to a legally registered project under YLP. They met the legal requirements for setting up a piggery project, after securing two (2) acres of land from parents (chairperson's parents). The CDO and SAS approved the YIG and recommended them for funding at district and national level. The group composed of 15 members with age ranges of 18-25 years. The youth contributed labour, construction materials, heaping potatoes and commitment, while as the government offered shillings 6,300,000¹⁹ as budgeted by the youth. They used money to buy six piglets, that is, five females, and one male (boar). The balance catered for construction, feeding, tools and equipment such as wheelbarrow, and feeding troughs. The piglets grew up and were unmanageable by a single person. By the time of my visit, only the chairperson was managing the project with only two sow pigs, consequently, in 2018 the YIG group failed. Why then did the project that started strong end in failure? The reasons for failure are presented in chapter six of the findings.

Case two: Project A Produce Dealers

Project A stood out as the only successful YIG in Gulu district and Acholi subregion in general. The group formed in 2016 as an informal village savings and loan association (VSLA), locally known as '*bol i cup*'. In 2017, they received funding from YLP when they were 15 members, however, at the time of the interview they were only ten members. It all started with an interview with district youth chairperson, and district probation/YLP focal officer, who

¹⁹ This is equivalent to USD 1,726 at the time of conducting the interview at the project site in Unyama subcounty, Gulu district.

revealed, referred, and recommended a discussion with this successful YIG. I obtained contacts, and scheduled appointment with them. We set off for fieldwork, in Awach subcounty. The project was in Awach subcounty about 19 kilometres from Gulu town, east of Gulu district. Following Gulu-Kitgum highway, we passed Paicho trading centre at Oguru Primary School, we turned left to Awach trading centre, and then to Laban village in Pukony Parish (now Pukony subcounty). We found an eagerly waiting youth group at their project store. At the beginning of the interview, I inquired on the meaning of business name. The chairperson explained that project name was derived from their village name ‘*Laban*’, and *oruu ki tam*, meant ‘*you have woken up with an idea*’.

Although, the youth started with challenges (like any other business venture) in their activities such as transport means, price fluctuation, limited members’ commitment, and competition from other produce dealers, success stories could be observed and imagined on their faces. One of the greatest achievements was refunding the revolving loan within the stipulated time (one year) and receiving an additional fund of shs, 8000,000²⁰. The group received shillings 7,000,000²¹ in 2017, engaged in produce business mainly, maize, soybeans, and sesame grains. By the time of FGD, the group had repaid UGX 2, 3000,000²², all the evidence of bank deposits were displayed. What makes the group unique is that the district appreciated their success and timely repayment of revolving fund and loaned them twice (exclusive feature) project). The factors regarding performance of the Laban Produce business are presented and discussed in detailed presentations in chapters four and five. The choice of the case is worthwhile decision for this study.

Documentary Review

Identifying and analysing documents was a crucial and an ongoing process during this study. The documents reviewed provided data on YIG names, progress, some challenges, and officials’ meeting proceedings. Documentary research is a method means reading or examining documents and other textual resources related to YIGs performance (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Documentary review involved exploring the analytical constructs about entrepreneurial interventions, and projects supported under YLP, the challenges faced by the youth, and success stories documented. This is a qualitative method of studying the text, documents,

²⁰ This is equivalent to USD 2,171.7

²¹ This is equivalent to USD 1.917.8

²² Equivalent to USD 630.13

conversations, and reports about the phenomenon under investigation. Gibson and Brown (2009:5) define document research as “process of using documents as a means of social investigation, and which allows researchers to detailed insights, people’s lives, and to the workings of organisations” The process involves using pre-existing data to answer questions than those intended by those who prepared the documents (Schutt, 2011 cited in Mugumya, 2013). Such information is useful in understanding how institutions, programme implementers perceive youth problems and entrepreneurial strategies (Mugumya, 2013).

While websites and international agency reports provided important information on youth challenges in general, the local documents were physical hard copies identified during the KIIs with district level actors. These documents mainly included the quarterly reports documenting success stories from youth projects supported under YLP. Others included resolutions from stakeholder meetings, youth enterprise records, and the YLP programme document 2013, YLP funding criteria 2014 prepared by the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development. The reports provided more insights into nature of youth enterprises, progress of respective youth groups, and strategies for ensured success. The review of the programme document and other guidelines also facilitated deeper understanding on the relationship between national and local contexts of youth entrepreneurial programme design, interpretation, and implementations. Some reports revealed the limitations that disabled intervention effectiveness and recommendations. The document review checklist was used to collect more in-depth data on the subject under investigation; however, it was not conscientiously followed, as it was flexible enough to suit the contexts. Nonetheless, not much data was gathered through this method since many reports were repetitive, duplicative and some officials opted for face-to-face interviews than availing the reports.

3.11 Data Management and Analysis

Data analysis involves extracting meaning from the collected data. Qualitative data were collected through written field notes, audio, and video recordings, nevertheless, the data is meaningless until is analysed. Bhattacharjee (2012, p. 113) observes, “qualitative analysis is the analysis of data such as text data from interview transcripts. The emphasis is sense making and understanding the phenomenon, rather than predicting and explaining”. In qualitative research, the researcher is a ‘miner’, ‘traveller’, and composite sketch artist who experiences and reconstructs reality (Kvale, 1996b; Seixas et al., 2018). This reality could be constructed through qualitative data analysis. This means analysis consists of reflecting, linking, seeking

explanations and contemplating (Kgomotso, 2020). Therefore, the analysis involved creating categories, subthemes, and themes. The process involved generating meanings from the raw data, and this is presented in the subsequent chapters. Data management strategies started before, and throughout the study and until completion of the thesis. Good data requires proper data capture, storage, and management. The section presents how data was collected, cleaned, recorded, processed, coded, analysed, and reported.

Analysis transforms structures and generates meaning to the mass of data collected. The volume of information is reduced, significant information determined from irrelevant ones, and patterns and trends determined to communicate what came out from the data (de Vos et al., 2005:333). The process of data collection and data analysis are intertwined; thus, analysis is ongoing and throughout the study. The process requires creative and investigative mind-set basing on ethically enlightened and participant-in-text attitude and analytical strategies. Triangulation of methods was employed to ensure rigour, credibility, and quality of case study approach. The processing and analysis of qualitative data started during reconnaissance, data collection and continued throughout thesis writing.

The data from interviews, FGDs, observation and other memos from field notes were recorded, processed, transcribed, cleaned, coded, categorised and translated to bring about clear understanding (Soltanifar & Ansari, 2016). The audios, videos, and field notes were entered, transcribed into written form, cleaned, and stored in computer software applications like Microsoft-word file named after each interview, for example, FGD-BUNGL 001, depicting Focus Group Discussion one in Bungatira Subcounty, Laliya Parish. Every interview was typed at the end of each day, edited, cleaned, and entered in a bigger file. The grammatical errors, incomplete sentences, irrelevant phrases, and ideas were cleaned and/or erased from document. Where a very vital issue (such community radio programme, sports and drama, parental inspiration) emerged during discussion or observation, it was recorded in a notebook and written in a memo to inform the next stage of inquiry. The process ensured that pertinent issues could not miss out during FGDs, KIIs and Observations. This ensured internal consistence, informed the study conclusions, and thus reiterated identification of important clues for data analysis. Thematic-content qualitative analysis informed this study.

Thematic-content Analysis

Thematic-content analysis was used to identify, analyse, and report the patterns across the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic method led to emergence of most prominent themes while content analysis focused on frequency of themes from mostly secondary information. The themes were arranged according to the study objectives. The approach followed Braun and Clarke (2006) six phases that is:

(i) Familiarising with the data. The step involved transcribing, reading, rereading, and editing the transcripts. The initial ideas were recorded in a notebook, sometimes in Microsoft office word. Where interviews were done in local language, the RAs translated the audios into English. The research assistants had knowledge of both languages, crosschecked transcripts to maintain meaningful data (Chen & Boore, 2009; Van Nes et al., 2010). Although, data collection was done by myself, I listened to the audios, read, re-read through the transcripts to ensure completeness. I read all the transcripts trying to gain understanding of what happened at each stage. Where the services of the research assistant were sought on translation, another person was consulted to listen to audio and confirm the write up. The phase embraced marking the preliminary codes and getting to know the data better.

(ii) Generating initial codes. The stage entails open coding; thus, I began assigning codes (such as A-achievements, CH for challenges, SN-strategies) to the data. These are descriptions of what was said, seen or heard during the interviews and/or field observations (such as ‘I feel happy’, ‘we were told to do so’, and ‘their money’). However, there was no clear difference between phase 1 and 2, since they all involve reading, rereading, and familiarising with data to code.

(iii) Searching for themes. The phase involves combining codes and potential themes; relevant data is gathered for each potential theme. The codes are collated into broader themes. For example, ‘bribery’, ‘kickbacks’, ‘asking something before approval’, were combined into a single theme ‘corruption’ which was later became bureaucracy. A codebook/ map was drawn, while others were written on sticky notes, manuscript notebook, this assisted in visualising relationship among codes and themes, and some themes may be subthemes of others.

(iv) Reviewing theme. After generating a codebook or thematic ‘map’ of analysis, themes that are relevant to the codes extracts (i) and data (ii) are checked, and rechecked. The phase entails reading through codes, transcripts to explore if they support themes. The iterative process that

reveals the contradictions, missing themes or broad themes could be subdivided into other themes. The misplaced codes were aligned to the respective themes. The purpose is to ensure coherence among themes.

(v) Defining and naming themes. The phase involved an ongoing analysis of refining story behind each theme. Describing what is interesting about each theme, and gathering clear definitions and names of each theme, where themes were diverse, subthemes were created, a case in point, ‘socio-cultural factors’ were split into ‘parental responsibility’ social injustice’ ‘cultural rigidity’ thus, defining the essence of each theme.

(vi) Producing the report. The step entails writing up the account of what have been done; it provides the final opportunity of analysis. There is selection of vivid and clear extracts to provide information the audience is interested in. In the subsequent chapters, I present the themes and the quotations about what the participants said during interactions. Similarly, frameworks, photography, and graphs, are used to demonstrate what was observed, all information provided related to the overall research question of this study. I observed that these stages are not sequential, their differences are artificial, and therefore, they are inseparable. Even at stage one a major theme was identified during open coding. Both computer-based and manual qualitative analysis guided the process.

Computer-based Qualitative Data Analysis (CQDA)

Computer-based qualitative data Analysis (CQDA) software ATLAS.ti Version 7.5.7 software assisted with management and coding of qualitative data. All transcripts recorded with participant IDs were combined in one hermeneutic unit (HU) or project containing primary documents. This data entry approach facilitated identification of patterns, relationships, and eased data management, in a single hermeneutic unit. The CQDA made it easy to code, categorise, and create networks in addition to searching for patterns. The patterns included enterprise characterisation, and benefits accruing from interventions, challenges and best strategies for youth capacity building as presented in findings chapters.

To enhance coherence, themes with emerging codes were presented in codebook and frameworks. Both deductive and inductive data analysis approaches were employed to create coding schemes and carry out analysis (Bernard, 2002). Deductively, I identified and developed codes based upon research questions derived from theory and previous research literature to guide data analysis. The approach derived many times the word ‘youth challenge’

manifested through poverty, unemployment, discrimination, socio-cultural factors among others. The search was conducted as the first step to understand how participants described youth livelihood challenges. However, I found, that deductive coding was not sufficiently capturing the depth on subject matter, and priori concepts had own meaning. The youth used different languages to describe livelihood challenges, nature of enterprises, benefits from and strategies for optimising benefit, thus calling for an inductive approach.

Furthermore, to ground findings using youth voices, I undertook inductive data analysis to identify themes and patterns emerging entirely from narratives. Initial coding gathered many codes (over 100 codes). This involved open coding where hidden key ideas/concepts were identified from contextual data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These are sometimes called in vivo codes, where emphasis was put on actual spoken words by participants (Manning, 2017). Both open and in vivo coding followed manual and computer-based coding approaches.

The analysis involved both manual and computer-basing coding. Manually, I wrote any codes identified during fieldwork, translation, and transcription in a manuscript book. On the other hand, computer-basing codes were generated through software ATLAS.ti. The different patterns or expression of feelings, views, experiences, and perspectives were named, closely examined, and compared for similarity and distinctions. This was followed by assembling categories to establish relationship among open codes. This technique is called axial coding. There was further selective coding to collapse these codes into subthemes and major themes. The themes were reviewed, recorded, and linked when appropriate. This phase builds a story from the categories to form a major theme. Where a code qualified to be a theme or subtheme, it was maintained. These were further collapsed to form one major theme of 'economic vulnerability' as presented in the framework in chapter six. The process was iterative until I was able to observe that saturation was attained.

Open, axial, and selective coding are interrelated; they complement each other if relevant information is to be extracted. The codes representing views from key informants, FGDs, observations and interviews were grouped into recurrent issues emerging from exercise and presented in the following chapters. The occurrences of various codes, patterns were determined using the content analysis, in some instances graphs and tables, and code frequencies are drawn to demonstrate the frequencies. The coded protocols were analysed to generate interpretations about the subject matter (Schilling, 2006). A codebook was prepared

and maintained to guide the major themes with descriptions and quotations. Direct quotations were used to enrich discussions, descriptions, and explanations in this research.

3.12 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness determines the value and quality of the inquiry's findings. It supports the rigour and consistency in qualitative studies by showing that it is conducted in a systematic and careful manner (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The quality criteria and norms in qualitative research are credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These criteria are vital in assessing the truth and quality of data (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2013) as discussed below.

Credibility

Credibility pertains the accuracy in identifying and prescription about the subject during data collection process (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2013; Kgomotso, 2020). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) cited in Korstjens and Moser (2018) credibility is an equivalent to internal validity in quantitative studies; it tackles the aspect of truth-value, and correct interpretations. Several techniques such as prolonged engagement, probing, paraphrasing, summarising, and clarification were applied to make sure that subject presented was understood. To ensure that participants understood, the questions were interpreted in the Luo language where necessary to clarify to participants. The life events were identified, and data is described from the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, I took several months of creating, maintaining, observing, and conducting interviews with participants. I piloted, tested, and retested questions on two YIGs in an interval of one week and the findings were compared for stability.

Besides, method triangulation, (FGDs, KIIs, in-depth interviews, case studies and field notes) were applied to similar YIGs and results compared. Regular meetings and discussion with supervisor (s) ensured accuracy and relevance of each question. The identified issues were incorporated in the tools and made easier for the respondents. The tools were edited and reduced in volume and improved in the quality. Overlaps on challenges faced by youth and factors limiting youth participation in programmes were rectified to form broad questions on challenges faced by youth. For example, a question on effects of LRA on youth was redundant, and thus, erased from the tools. While developing the codes, concepts, and categories, I constantly read, re-read, and revisited the data, until final insights emerged. I spent more time engaging research participants to correct accurate data. Participants were encouraged to clarify

further, what could not be clear, such explanations ensured truthfulness in the findings. Throughout the data collection process, there was comparison of emerging findings from successive FGDs, interviews, observations, and key informant interviews. Insights generated were incorporated in the subsequent data collection activities and included in the thesis. The prolonged engagement, triangulation, persistent observations enhanced credibility.

Dependability

Dependability is about the stability (consistency) of findings over time. It is concerned with participants' evaluation of findings, interpretation, and recommendations of the study so that all are supported by data as received from participants of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability focuses on descriptions of research methods, such as recruitment of participants, mode of interviews, guides, and analysis (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). At each stage there are complete notes on decisions made during the research process, meetings with research assistants, and any activity that occurred. Data collection and analysis are clearly described and presented in this chapter. All the research steps were documented, reported, and both soft and hard copy records are kept throughout the study. Therefore, it is very easy to conduct an audit trail following the notes, and steps recorded.

Confirmability

To Lincoln and Guba (1985) confirmability is degree to which findings of the study could be authenticated by other researchers (i.e., the neutrality). This is establishing that data, and interpretations of study findings are clearly derived from the data, not figments of researchers' imaginations. Therefore, interpretation in this study is not based on own preferences and viewpoints but study needs. Evidence is kept that the experiences and ideas of the informants belong to them. Reflective journals are kept to guard against subjectivity throughout the process of data collection and analysis. The research process was logical, documented and thus easy to audit. All audio-taped evidence and transcripts are kept and crosschecked over time to provide that perspectives of participants are true.

In this research, I accounted for the changes in conditions of phenomenon, steps, design and there was continuous refinement in setting (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2013; Kgomotso, 2020). Where changes occurred, they are revealed, for instance this study, which was initially planned to employ mixed methods, converted to qualitative inquiry due to the nature of problem, nature of participants (YIGs) and the setting. Where new insights emerged, more follow up questions

were administered, in what is referred to as inductive refinement (Hennink et al., 2020). All this was done in consultation with supervisors. The methodological dimensions of the study (as previously described) are clearly presented on sampling, writing field notes, field photos, and meeting with research teams.

Transferability

According to Lincoln and Guba (2004), this is extent to which the findings of the research can be applied in other settings and with other participants. It addresses the aspect of whether the findings can be applicable in other situations what is termed as generalisability. Thick description of the participants and research process is fundamental in achieving transferability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For this study, I have provided an account of the study area and its setting, study population, sample, sampling strategy, saturation, inclusion and exclusion criteria, description of participants (see appendix A), interview questions (attached as appendices) and excerpts from the interview guides. More so, there was triangulation of methods (focus discussion, KIIs, observations, case studies) to answer intriguing issues and capture practical considerations (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Wicks & Whiteford, 2006). The use of more than one method augment and verify one another thus enhancing trustworthiness.

The use of peer-reviewed literature can make the findings transferred in different context of research studies related to youth social entrepreneurship and empowerment. The tools and field notes were translated by two research assistants one after the other to ensure quality of findings. The research team were very careful when administering questions to subjects; I tried as much as possible to avoid biases during data collection, analysis, and thesis writing. I become a researcher who is ready to learn from the participants.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

The research involved contact with human beings, thus, the need to seek for ethical approval to meet international ethical standards. There are several issues to be addressed in this study; these included issues of confidentiality, objectivity, informed consent, and protecting the respondents/participants from the repercussions of their comments being reported. Ethics protect both the researcher and the respondents from risks of undue intrusion, forgery and consent (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013).

Care was taken in selecting people to be approached, clarity of information about what is to be covered, and we were alert on any signs of discomfort during engagement. During interaction with respondents, changes in behaviours should be noticed and carefully handled to avoid hurting the participants (Ritchie et al., 2013). The study conformed to the ethical standards set up by Makerere University Directorate of Research and Graduate Training, and Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). Therefore, this study adopted different measures to ensure that this research was conducted in an ethical manner. This research received approval from Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (MAKSS REC) of Makerere University under protocol MAKSS REC 06.19.302 (see attached as appendix H). The work presented to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), received feedback, comments addressed, and proposal forwarded for further approval from higher body. The study, thereafter, obtained ethical clearance from UNCST a body mandated to authorise research-involving humans. The study was cleared after thorough review of the proposal; comments addressed and is under protocol number SS5112 (see attached as appendix I).

The clearance eased accessibility and permission to the field, after presenting approval documents, and thorough explanation, the local authorities such as (Municipal Town clerk²³, District Administrative Office) provided clearance letters to ease movement in the field in rural and urban settings. At each stage, the gatekeepers (e.g., youth councillors, chairpersons,) were fundamental in entering the community, and guiding me to the chairperson local councils and other opinions leaders for permission. Generally, the study conformed to the following ethical principles as highlighted in the Belmont Report of 1978 about protection of human subjects (Hennink et al., 2020).

Voluntary participation

Self-determination characterises the data collection process. The right to or not to participate were honoured at each stage of data collection. No one was coerced or lured to engage in the study. Permission was sought from district and subcounty officials, and other village leaders. All the individuals personally agreed to contribute to this study.

²³ After 1st July 2020, the title changed from Gulu Municipality to now Gulu City. This means the structures and titles on youth entrepreneurship and empowerment programmes also changed, most especially in city.

Informed consent

Clear explanation about the purpose of the study was provided to the respondents/participants, and those willing to participate consented. Sufficient information was provided to participants to attract informed decision-making on participation. The interviewees were availed with consent forms before any interview was conducted. All the participants were aged 18 years and above, and of sound mind. Those willing to participate consented both verbally, and others signed the consent forms (see appendix A).

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and respect were promised and ensured throughout the study. The anonymity of youth, district officials and other participants was ensured throughout the study. The identities of the participants were protected however, most youth leaders permitted the use of title such as councillor, chairperson, and manager. Anonymity was guaranteed with the use of pseudonyms such as IDI01 YIG-P meaning in-depth interview one youth interest group manager Pece division. All photographs in the write-up have covered faces. Protection of participant identities is very important in research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Terrell, 2012). Interviews and discussions were conducted in confidential places without non-participants listening to conversations. In Bungatira subcounty, an elderly man who wanted to sit near and listening to the discussions was requested to leave. Data records are kept securely in lockable cupboard, while soft copies are pass-worded. Both raw and processed data will be kept in Makerere University Repository for a period not exceeding five years. The purpose is, if there is need for crosschecking some data, need for further analysis for a different purpose, data can easily be accessed. No one has access to audios, and transcripts so as protect identities and organisations of the participants giving information. No raw data shall be disclosed to the public, all audios and field are shelved in a safe place, and transcripts have a security code. These will be erased three years after graduation, and only final report will be presented to the public.

Minimisation of harm

The researcher and research assistants maintained high-level dignity, consideration, and integrity. We ensured smartness, punctuality, and used unbiased language during interviews. All interviews were carried out at neutral and convenient venues, and at times the participants' homes and IGA sites to save their time. We were culturally sensitive; Acholi culture was

respected, such as, greetings, sharing food since some homesteads served local dishes to the research team before any interview. Before any focus group discussion, ground rules were explained to the members, and acceptance sought, a facilitator chosen to guide the exercise. All the FGDs were successfully conducted without disagreement, and conflicts. Additionally, where participants were interviewed at the project sites during working hours, I compensated their earnings for the lost time. IRB does not consider this as payment but compensation to participants (Hennink et al., 2020). In some situations, FGDs were conducted in a central point involving participant movements thus necessitating transport costs/refund. Throughout the data collection process, care was taken to avoid social emotions. Overall, the research promoted the credibility of the respondents and emphasised the importance of this study to the participants and community. The participants understood their role in the study and appreciated the value of the research.

3.14 Challenges

Some participants refused to participate in the FGDs and IDIs for fear of arrests due to fund recovery failure. This limited on the amount of data collected, thus necessitating employing and conducting more interview. The research focused on YLP beneficiaries who were obliged to refund the revolving fund they had borrowed. Many youth activities failed to realised returns on investment (ROI) hence increasing the number of defaulters. Therefore, many youths were scared of interacting with people they called ‘foreigners’ (who they mistook to be government agents). This was mostly experienced among failed projects in Unyama subcounty and municipality (now city). They were in hiding; others had switched off or changed the phone contacts while others could not receive calls. Distrust and suspicion surrounded most youth due to collapsed entities and failure to raise cash for refund. Most youth were mobile and very volatile, inaccessible for interviews as some claimed they were in Oyam, Masaka, and Kampala districts in northern and central Uganda and while some youth alleged to have gone as far as South Sudan. More still, many youths seemed tired with research in this region. Being a war affected and post-conflict area, many organisations and scholars had conducted research in the region thus some respondents were reluctant to participating in the study stating that they are fatigued by research. Nonetheless, some youths were interviewed on phone while others opted to be interviewed at their homes after ascertaining that the team was composed of academic researchers not government officials.

Methodologically, some FGDs could attract as many participants as possible including those who were above the defined age. This made it difficult to capture all perspectives, views and engaging all of them. More time was wasted convincing such people to leave the interview venue.

The unnecessary demands characterised most of the field activities. The post-conflict Nongovernmental Organisation (NGOs) research accustomed most of the participants with cash leading to dependence syndrome. Some respondents demanded for cash as the case with some NGOs that have made them used to cash. The same demand was made on us, and this failure meant missing interviewing some respondents. This delayed quality data collection and the duration of data collection. The subjects asked for compensation in form of transport refund, time, and meeting other basic needs. Although refreshments were provided during FGDs and interviews with participants, some participants complained and demanded for cash payments in lieu to meet other personal necessities.

The study took part in a region where the researcher was not conversant with local language. During some discussions, sometimes research assistants mistranslated the questions that could have affected the response quality. Therefore, language barrier especially among the illiterate youth that made it difficult to collect data in its original form. Whereas some research assistants knew both the local language and English, some found it difficult to translate some concepts for example social entrepreneurship, empowerment, social change, differentiate between investigate and research, among others. Different research assistants were employed to translate and interpret both local language and English. Furthermore, the questions were simplified making it easy for participants to understand and answer. Some responses were explained to the audience to verify their authenticity. Most of the FGDs had youth who were literate making it easy to direct the colleagues during the discussion.

Although the study considered youth of (18-30 years), another challenge was representation of the youth that is, clearly defining the age limits to include the actual youth as per definition in the constitution. In some instances, youth were underage with 16 years and 17 years beneficiaries of entrepreneurship interventions and others were above thirty years (30 years). It was impossible to disregard them from interviews and discussion since they were members of the YIGs, and never availed national identity cards. Most of them joined the groups when they fell under the definition in or had formed the groups before the YLP and only incorporated new members. Some YIG leaders were both political leaders and beneficiaries of social

entrepreneurial interventions; therefore, there was a conflict of interest. Other overaged youth who were key decision makers, made it difficult to ignore their views, opinions during this research.

Much time was spent on educating and providing business and conflict management counsel thus consuming more time which would have been spent on generating data. Although, the study was not Action Research (AR), most youth complained, consulted, and presented their operational challenges during interviews. The youth groups regarded the research team as specialists and extension professionals and demanded for answers on the performance of their business activities. After every interview, the youth asked questions regarding marketing, savings, recordkeeping, financial management and other business practices. Professionally, I was caught up in between researcher and entrepreneurship educator, as many youths expected answers from us thus delaying most discussions. This experience cemented the relationship with the participants and became a point of reference for other group discussions and field visits. Further still, the district officials requested and emphasised guiding the youth groups during the interviews, and field visits.

3.15 Conclusion

The chapter has elucidated the study's design in detail. The study recognises multiple realities and sources of knowledge. Taking an interpretivism lens, the study employed the exploratory and case study in qualitative research in which participants' views were deeply considered. The qualitative approaches unearthed the opinions, views and perspectives and facts from the participants. The study was carried out in Gulu district, Acholi sub region northern, Uganda with youth aged 18-30 years purposively selected YLP from Youth Interest Groups.

Through purposive sampling six youth leaders were selected for in-depth interviews, and twelve FGDs, eleven KIIs were conducted with district officials, youth political leaders and other experts in the field of youth development, and two FGDs with youth council were held. The two case studies of Laban Youth Produce dealers and Loyoboo "A" Utem Gum Piggery project represented successful and failed youth projects respectively.

Ethical procedures involved seeking for ethical clearance from the UNCST through MakSSREC, and this guided in respecting humans involved in the study. Throughout the study the participants' identities are protected, respect, anonymity, voluntary participation, and confidentiality upheld. All the data sets are protected with passwords and notes, questionnaires

are locked to guard against access from authorised people. This chapter guides subsequent presentation of results and discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR: NATURE OF YOUTH ENTERPRISES

4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the nature of enterprises operated by the youth within YLP social entrepreneurship intervention. The nature was divided into categories of enterprises and entrepreneurial motivation, and the benefit derived from these enterprises. An exploration of youth conceptualisations, views, and perspectives on entrepreneurs, should primarily begin with an examination, categories of enterprises, and enterprise formation. Through situating enterprises and their formation, it is possible to recognise the personal entrepreneurial motivations, sustainability of youth enterprises, and perceived benefits. In particular, the participants talked a lot on category of enterprises, and how they were formed, and motivations for choice. As demonstrated in this chapter, youth in this study found themselves at the forefront to set up enterprises for survival. Therefore, the second section focuses on the benefits from the intervention.

During data collection, I interacted with a great number of youths who were either operating or had operated IGAs under the YLP funding. The ‘had operated’ means those youth projects which failed immediately after receiving funding. Therefore, the findings presented were generated from both successful and failed enterprises. The themes developed from generated participants’ information and dataset. These themes include enterprise categories, enterprise formation, entrepreneurial motivation and sustainability presented thematically. Before presenting the emerging themes, I start with summary of participants’ socio-demographic features to guide the discussion.

4.1 Demographic composition of youth interest groups

To understand the nature and composition of YIGs, I first focused on youth demographic characteristics. These were primary participants as members of youth interest groups and participated in focus group discussions. The demographics provides an opportunity for examining the factors for formation, how youth define the benefits from their interventions. This presentation provides a guide on the kind of youth who comprised YIGs. Table 4.1 below provides the demographic features of the youth.

Table 4.1: Demographic composition in youth interest groups

Description	Category	Number of participants
Gender	Male	52
	Female	22
Age	18-20	12
	21-23	15
	24-26	22
	27-30	19
	Others	6
Education	None	1
	Primary	35
	Ordinary (UCE) level	30
	Advanced (UACE) level	4
	Tertiary (certificate/diploma)	3
	Degree	1
Marital status	Married	47
	Single	26
	Divorced	
	Widow/widower	
	Others	1
Location	Rural	56
	Urban	18
Family background	Well-to-do family	1
	Middle class	2
	Peasant	71

Source: *Field Data 2019/2020*

Table 4.1 above, indicates that male youth dominated most of the youth interest groups with compared to female youth. This was attributed to distant marriages, cultural limitation on participation. Majority of youth in YIGs were aged 26 years to 30 years. These were regarded

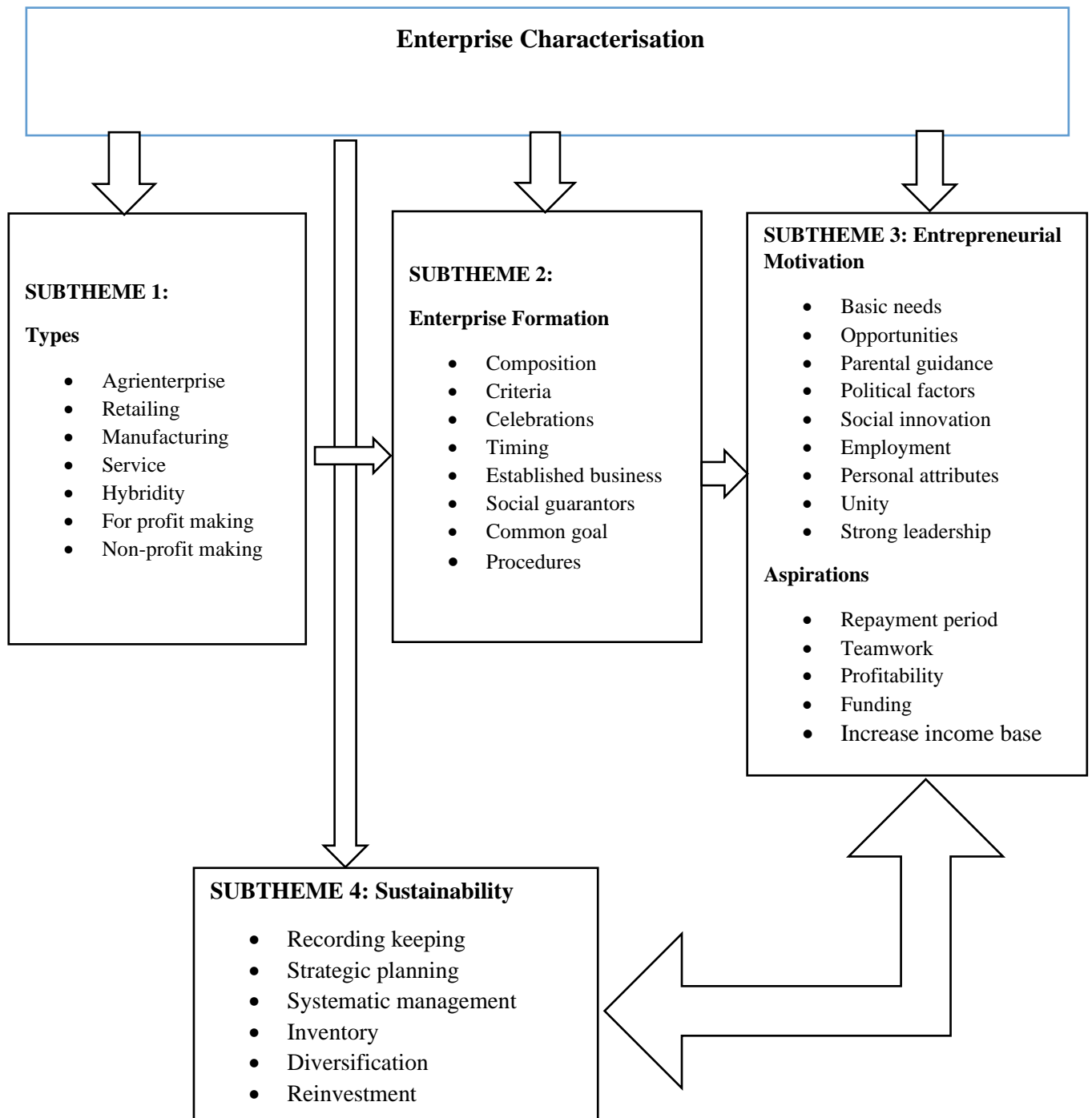
as mature youth who had married and had multiple responsibilities. Most youth enterprises comprised mostly primary level of education, however, some youth had not completed primary seven (they indicated primary four, six, five). In addition, very few had completed UCE and UACE-high school and a small number had complete post-secondary education. This implies that university graduates were not engaged in YIGs. The deficiencies in education were attributed to LRA war which hindered society from exposing their children quality education. The war handicapped most parents from skills, knowledge and exposing us to quality education (FGD PAT010, 2020). A key informant corroborated this:

During the war, a parent (s) lost lives leaving the young ones to head the families. These families cannot afford to continue with studies, they marry before maturing, and problems at home continue. The young couples produce children at a young age and cannot pay fees and other basic needs for them... (KII 3DYC, District Youth Chairperson, 2019).

The above assertion indicates that war limited most youth from engaging in studies, a large population remained uneducated. Literature posits that youth born in poor families are likely to fail to study (Machell et al., 2016) More than a half of the youth were married with multiple marital obligations and responsibilities. Rural youth formed the larger portion of the youth in the youth enterprises compared to their urban counterparts. The dominance in rural youth was because of participation in agriculture related ventures which depended on land resources. Majority of the youth were from peasant family background where subsistence activities dominated. This composition indicated that YIGs were diverse, with different characteristics in one enterprise.

4.2 The Categories of Youth Enterprises

To understand social entrepreneurship in Gulu district, Acholi subregion, it was imperative to investigate the enterprises operated by the youth. The participants were asked the kind of enterprises they operated and the drivers towards such projects. Although, there were set guidelines on the composition of enterprises, findings provided youth views as per their choices and empirical views. The perspectives analysed are presented in the framework below. These are further illustrated in the subsequent sections.



Source: *Field Notes, 2019-2020*

Categories of enterprise

When asked about the type of enterprises, all participants described the enterprises youth dealt in since the inception of government funding in 2013/2014. Some of these enterprises started earlier before YLP, YLP fund supported their social entrepreneurial interventions to expand on scale of operation. Majority of youth belonged to agrienterprises, followed by retail trade and manufacturing and very few belonged to service sector. The youth stated that most government funding targeted agriculture related enterprise at the expense of other ventures. These are presented in figure 4.1 below:



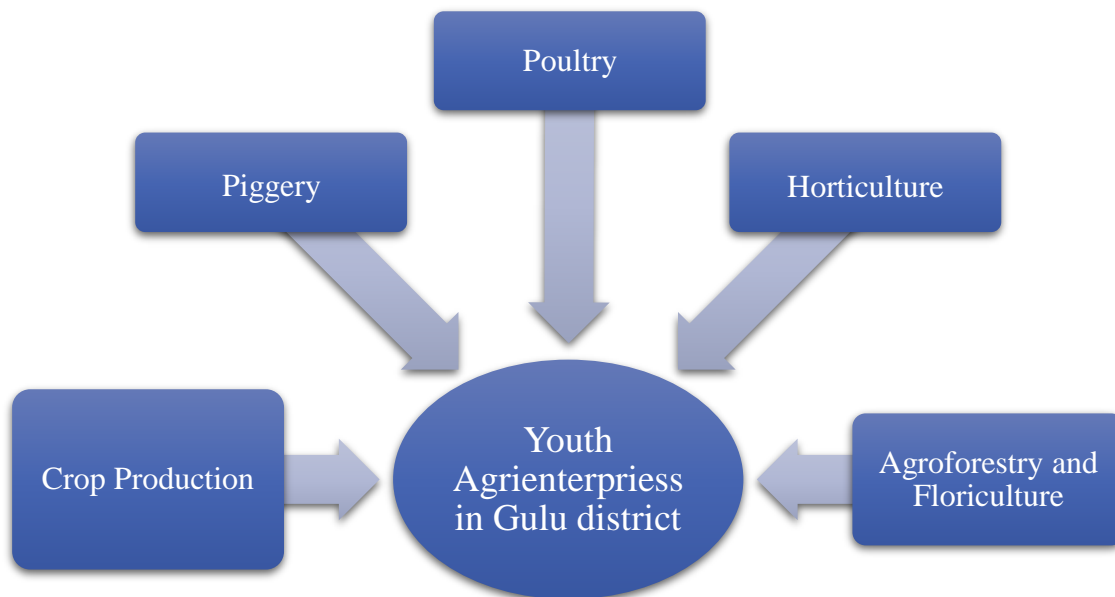
Figure 4.1 Categories of youth enterprises

Field data 2019/2020

As shown above most of youth were engaging in agrienterprises. Most participants in both rural and urban settings reported to have operated agriculture-related venture. Service enterprise was mostly reported in urban settings due to nature of infrastructure and social amenities. The surprising finding is that one *boda boda* service business comprised female more than male youth. Although more females belonged to this venture, male operated the motorcycles and reported proceeds from the business. Most of these females were either wives to male members or sisters, thus justifying for the composition. Insights from interviews and field observations revealed that all youth enterprises operated on a very small scale (micro enterprises). Further presentation and discussion of these enterprises is thematically shown in the following:

Agrienterprises

The findings indicated that agrienterprises were practised both in urban and rural settings. Sub counties of Unyama, Patiko, and Paicho recorded most agricultural projects under the youth interest groups (YIGs). Agrienterprises registered more males than females. These were operated on a very small scale. The commonly types of agrienterprises by the youth in both urban and rural settings are shown in the illustration below.



Many youths initially engaged in agrienterprises such as horticulture, crop production, piggery, poultry and agroforestry with fish farming. The youth revealed that in 2016, almost all groups were directed to engage in either piggery or poultry, ox-plough cultivation/animal traction

despite the lack of technical skills in modern agriculture practices. The reason was that YLP documents had more livelihood investment options in agripreneurship (MoGLSD 2013:22). Although, YLP programme document provided many options from SD and LS, youth Gulu district officials directed youth to deal in either piggery or poultry projects. The programme document presented livelihood support options in agriculture:

- ✓ Dairy production
- ✓ High value crops
- ✓ Improved goats
- ✓ Piggery/egg production
- ✓ Integrated farming
- ✓ Animal traction
- ✓ Apiary production
- ✓ Agroforestry
- ✓ Value addition and marketing
- ✓ Post-harvesting handling

Source: *YLP Programme document, 2014.*

Furthermore, district business lists included specific agricultural ventures, though some youth went ahead to diversify. Other underlying factors for dominance of agrienterprises will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

During data collection, I observed some poultry and piggery houses mostly in Unyama, Palaro, Patiko sub counties, and municipality divisions of Pece. Some had animals and poultry, while many others were empty structures that were reported to have housed animals or birds. In addition, rural youth engaged in growing of varieties of crops such as beans, sesame, and soya beans, maize and vegetables, however, crop production was at a low scale due to effects of drought and price changes thus affecting the returns on investment and motivation to increase production. The cattle kept by the youth were for traction and cultivation; thus, discussed under service business. Furthermore, animal traction was only reported in rural settings due to land availability and accessibility for tilling compared to the urban setting. The youth kept animals for ox-plough cultivation not for dairy or beef production despite the demand for milk and beef in the region.

During another FGD at a youth project, it was observed that one group operated mixed farm with horticulture, floriculture, and fish farming. I experienced and observed fishponds, a variety of fruits (guava, avocado, mangoes, paw paws), flowers, and nurse beds sitting on

one-two acres at Custom Corner, Layibi Division, Gulu City (refer to next page). The participants revealed that they had operated the business since 2007 and applied for youth livelihood funds to expand the business to sizeable margins and introduced innovations. During the focus group discussion, the group chairperson revealed:

We started in 2007 with 20 members; we are dealing in aquaculture, nursery bed, and advisory services like training, and guidance to fellow youth. We welcome tertiary institutions, and secondary schools like *Kati Kati* secondary schools come for aquaculture research. Now we are 12 members that is four women and eight men. Previously we only had nursery bed, but after receiving funding in 2015/2016, we started aquaculture and thereafter floriculture (FGD CUS007, 2019).

The above indicates that the IGA started earlier before the entrepreneurship interventions. Therefore, this suggest that YLP funding only supplemented the existing activities, thus expanding the enterprise operations. The following pictures demonstrated the project activities at above mentioned youth project.



Plate 4.1: Youth participating in integrated farming project at Kum Atimo

The above observations, demonstrate that the IGA is combination of different agriculture activities targeting the market in the region. The youth demonstrated zeal, hardwork and commitment towards the success of the enterprises. Studies in Malawi concur with finding stressing present majority (35.6 per cent) youth engaging in agriculture compared to other

ventures, with 87.2 per cent having positive perception on agriculture and agribusiness (Zidana et al., 2020). The finding challenges the misconceptions that the youth do not engage in agripreneurship. The above photos exhibit youth engagements in agripreneurship, with remarkable nursery beds, fruit trees, fish farming and flowers. This signifies a well-organised, innovative, and diversified enterprise that does not attract income but as well conserves that environment, attracts local students for field studies and learning in addition to promoting ecotourism²⁴. Nonetheless, very few youths in Gulu district demonstrated positivity towards agrienterprises.

The agrarian nature of their entrepreneurship conforms to the livelihood support components stipulated by the Ministry working documents (MoGLSD, 2013). Although the funding was available for start-up costs and expansion, most of agrienterprises are labourious, technical, susceptible to weather changes, and pests and diseases. Furthermore, the land question remains key in Acholiland because of displacement during the war, thus the ‘war generation’ lack the land ownership and utilisation rights. Therefore, most youth operate on hired small acres or donated by some family members, which is contested sometimes by other family members. This accounts for the collapse of most piggery and poultry projects as participants provided reasons for the collapse of most of these agrienterprises ventures (discussed in subsequent chapter six).

Produce Business

Additionally, the youth often reported produce buying and selling as one of the lucrative and profitable ventures, they engaged in. The youth reported that this business venture had potential market and RON and quick gains compared to crop production. This enterprise was most reported in Awach, Paicho, Palaro and Unyama Sub counties. The respondents revealed that it was very easy to pay back borrowed funds since the business lifecycle takes a shorter period to generate income. The business was commonly reported in rural areas since it was very easy to access produce at a cheaper cost especially during harvest season. The youth purchased agricultural products such as beans, maize, soya beans, sesame, groundnuts, but sorghum and millet were least reported. One of the youths YIG visited had over 25 sacks of maize, sesame; beans produce each of at approximately 102 kilogrammes in the stores. The participants agreed that there were better chances of earning more money in produce business than poultry and

²⁴ I observed the place was forested with beautiful flowers, butterflies, so some local people would visit the place for touring. The members charged entrance fee (undisclosed), as a source of income.

piggery projects. Poultry and piggery projects are labourious and expensive as they require regular vaccination, feeding, and have longer gestation periods. The participants revealed that produce takes shorter period in the enterprise and was more rewarding than livestock and service enterprises. Remarkably, the group had generated profit, repaid the loan and received more revolving funds for business expansion. The excited group secretary affirmed:

We received shillings (UGX) 7,000,000 (\$ 1,892) in 2017; refunded it, in May 2018 we applied and got additional funding of shillings 8,000,000 (\$ 2,162.6), which we have started refunding so far at UGX 2,300,000 (\$622). We deal in produce business i.e., beans, soya beans, maize, sim sim, we are 10 members (FGD AWA 006, male participant, 2019).

A key informant corroborated this:

We have an excellent group in Awach subcounty, who are performing well with their produce business. The enterprise has paid back the money within one year. As district, we encouraged them to apply for more funding. Opportunities in produce business are rewarding only that some youth in this sub region are lazy and want free things. You can get time and visit their stores (KII 2FP, 2019).

From such excerpts, I undertook a visit to project site, and confirmed such revelations. The business was valued and flourishing as observed in store and records provided. One of the project members owns retail shop near the store making it easy for suppliers/ farmers to deliver products at any time of the day. With self-determination, the member mentioned:

We are dealing in produce buying and selling as you can see. We deal in maize, beans, soya beans, and sim sim. As an individual, I also have my retail shop. We are also cultivating for members, we used to cultivate for money before livelihood programme (FGD AWA 006, IGA Member Awach Subcounty, 2019).

From this revelation, I undertook a task to enter the store and counted the sacks of the produce. The photograph below presents the stock at hand owned by the enterprise.



Source: *Field Photo, 2019*

Plate 4.2: The produce store at Laban Youth Produce Dealers, Awach Subcounty

From the discussions and illustrations, it is clear that youth dealing in produce enterprise were well placed to make more gains out the venture, and able to payback compared to those in crop production and livestock. An increase in the price of stock motivates the youth to sell and buy more from the farmers. However, the business requires strong network with farmers, large produce dealers and regular working capital to meet the market demands.

Youth engagement in manufacturing enterprises

The findings indicated that youth engaged in manufacturing ventures at a micro level. More youth in urban setting were engaged in this enterprise compared to youth in rural setting. In this study, manufacturing meant youth enterprises transforming raw materials into finished products, such as bread and cake making, tailoring and weaving, carpentry and joinery and any other forms. The manufacturing businesses were found to be on a very small scale and informal in nature, particularly making cakes on order and small bread and pancakes (locally known as *Lagalagala*) for sale in trading centres, and market centres. Youth in municipality and peri-urban were mostly engaged in this venture since busy population provided available market. Participants did not own premises such as workplaces but baked from their homes to save direct costs on rent, electricity. A participant in FGD explained; “We deal in Bakery through making cakes at members’ homes and selling in the trading centre and Gulu City. At times, we receive orders from customers and make cakes for them...” (FGD, BUNGL 001, 2019).

The excerpt shows that youth produce on a very small scale for small market, at reduced costs. The activity was not a stand-alone business, but part of activities performed by the group to generate more income and sustain the enterprise. The youth acknowledged that bakery, as part of confectionery manufacturing and value addition, fetched more income than primary products. Similarly, value addition enhances quality, demand and competitive advantage, hence more profitable than raw products (Kiharason, Isutsa, & Ngonda, 2017).

Other participants were engaged in carpentry and joinery specially making doors, windows, beds, art and crafts, on both orders and open sales. In addition to generating income, the youth gained life skills for employment and improved social welfare. The pictures below show the youth engaged at a carpentry shop at School Road Youth Livelihood Carpentry and Joinery Project, Pece-Laroo division:



Plate 4.3: Youth making furniture School Road Youth Carpentry and Joinery, Gulu City

Source: *Field Data, 2019/2020*

From the illustration above, it was observed that the youth identified the nature of enterprise and engaged in production of furniture for sale. However, there were few groups in carpentry and joinery and the argument was the nature of start-up capital required, time, skills needed and the nature of the market. Nonetheless, the participants suggested need for more training on innovation, quality standards to capture a larger market. Similarly, few brick laying businesses in the area could be because of absence of land ownership rights among the youth, others assumed respect for the environment. The issues of land access and ownership are common challenges to most African youth as evidenced in Ethiopia (Bezu & Holden, 2014). Resource

ownership determines the size, and type of enterprise and mode of operation of youth enterprises in specific areas.

Youth operating and participating in service enterprises

Other transcripts indicate that youth were engaging in service businesses. Only four groups were observed dealing in service-oriented enterprises. The mentioned enterprises are presented visually.



Source: *Interviews, 2019/2020*

These included beautification centres such as salons, barbershops, while others claimed to have operated events management and tourism, roofing, motorcycle repairs, milling, animal traction (also known as ox-plough cultivation), informal saving and credit (VSLA) categorised as service businesses. Although transport business was not among preferred investment options for funding (MoGLSD, 2013, pp.12), one YIG ventured in *boda boda* service (motorcycle taxi) as well to generate quick cash for repayment and sustain other main projects initially funded. The participants indicated that they diverted the resources to buy a motorcycle to generate quick finance and refund the YLP loan. Indeed, one key informant concurred with this stressing that the *boda boda* group had performed well.

There is a group that borrowed the money to operate a produce business but realised it was not profitable here in municipality, so they decided to divert money to buy the motorcycle for transport. I can assure you the group is doing well; they have bought another second hand motorcycle and they have started repaying YLP funds. They promised to pay the entire amount by the end of this year (KII 8CDM, 2019).

The above imply that youth opt for ventures that generate quick cash. Transport category of service social enterprise was mostly operated by urban youth since the market share is largely located in towns/centres. Most youth revealed that service ventures were associated with high operational costs on rent, electricity, taxes, water and other factor inputs thus reducing the rate of return on investment. During an in-depth interview, a YIG leader lamented:

We received funding in 2017, started this barber shop, it's now two years we have not made any profit, we pay UGX 250,000 (\$66) rent per month, we pay for electricity and water bills, and municipal people come for license fees every year... sometimes we make UGX10,000-20,000 (\$2.7-5.4) in a day depending on the season... we hope to breakeven... So that we are able to pay, back the borrowed money... (IDI 02YIG-L, 2019).

The above quotation imply that the business is costly and demands working capital which youth do not possess. Daily expenses consume the available funding, thus leading to losses. The limited number of youths in service sector imply the skills and professionalism gap, limited capital investment and high operational costs. However, the extract is an interesting case of youth ventures driven by passion yet stagnated by high factor costs. It may be that these young entrepreneurs considered the increasing population in the towns as business opportunities such as market. Traditionally, entrepreneurship is about the capacity and willingness to scan the environment, identify opportunities and manage a business venture along with risks in order to make profits (Schoof, 2006; Schumpeter, 1934). Therefore, these youth are opportunity oriented since they view the increasing population as a dividend that can be transformed into monetary returns.

Retailing youth enterprises

My findings revealed that retailing enterprises were also operated by youth. The venture was recorded more in rural sub counties than urban areas. The business venture involved purchasing manufactured/industrial goods such as soap, sugar, stationery, maize flour and general merchandise for resale. This falls under trading business because there is no value addition, it is only buying finished products for resale. Other than manufactured goods, some youth in municipality stocked charcoal near the kiosks as 'side businesses' (businesses alongside the main business). This observed retail store in Pece Division Gulu municipality was operating on a very small scale. One retail shop was located in a trading centre in a remote subcounty of Palaro, and it was one of the biggest merchandise enterprises in the area. Initially, the youth received funding for produce buying and selling but diverted the resources to retailing for

continuity and sustainability. The participants' argument was that produce business was seasonal, unreliable; thus, the youth opted for the shop keeping so that they were able to sustain operation and earnings throughout the year. It was further reported that retailing ventures generated quick and daily revenue compared to produce business. The participants further contended that the prices of merchandise are stable compared to agricultural products' prices. More still, the proceeds from the retail shop could be used to purchase more of produce during harvest.

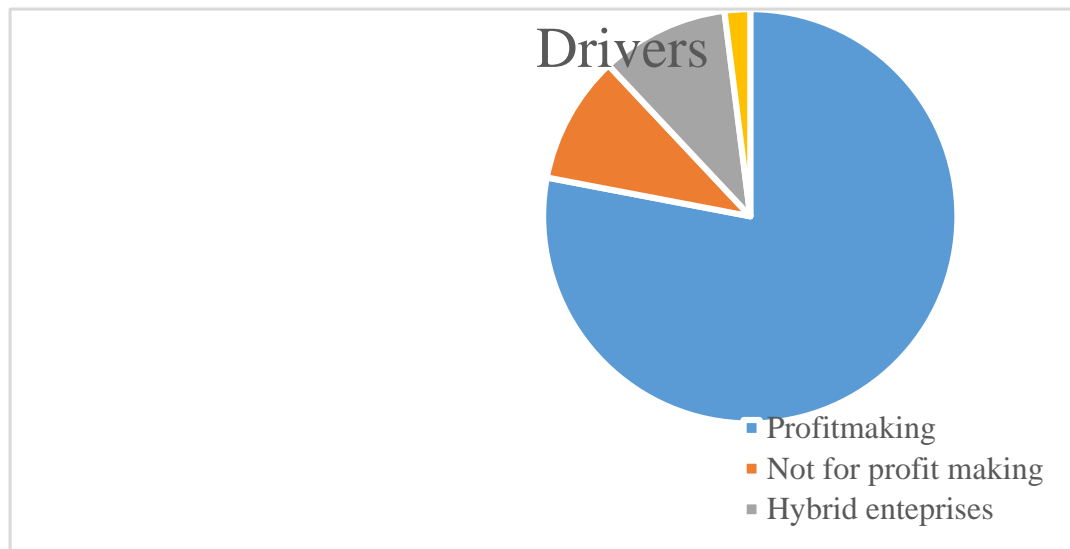
We started this shop because our cash was idle for some time as we wait for harvest, so we decided to operate a retail shop, so we keep the money in use, and we are able to get what to pay back. Then, during harvest, we pick money from shop to buy produce (In-depth Interview, IDI02YIG-PAL, Palaro Subcounty, 2019).

Diversification is key to keep the cash working. District officials interviewed seemed to agree on the idea of diverting the funding, though they required youth to inform the YLP focal office through formal writing. Such would enable the officials assess the viability of the new venture and reasons for diverting before endorsing the new business idea. In addition, it assists the team to monitor and supervise the youth projects, since the technical staff are obliged to follow up and offer extension services. The above enterprises were started by the youth with major drives, thus the need for investigating the purpose of the enterprises.

What drives these youth enterprises?

The question was posed on what drives the youth to engage in these enterprises. The purpose of this question was to explore youth goals and entrepreneurial drives towards the certain enterprises. The youth were to indicate their entrepreneurial philosophies of the projects. The findings generated code frequencies were classified as profit making (n=45), not-for profit making (n=10), hybrid enterprises (n=10) and other reasons (n=5). The participants' views are further portrayed in the figure 4.2 below:

Figure 4.2 The philosophy of youth enterprise formation



Source: *Field data, 2019/2020*

The above illustration present that many youths were driven by profits only. Youth considered their business operations as profit making ventures meant for income and wealth creation for social change. Many youths overemphasised money making in almost all the discussions and interviews. Those who operated hybrid and not-for-profit making were very few and other reasons had other drivers for their operation. The other reasons highlighted included sense of belonging, invited by a friend/leader, identity, and self-employment other than profit alone. This thus suggests that the strong urge for profit making was very critical among youth when engaging in youth entrepreneurship and livelihood activities. The high need for profits affects the social value orientation embedded in social entrepreneurship and empowerment theory (Santos, 2012; Zimmerman, 2000). Nonetheless, youth were discouraged from investment when ventures failed to realise more profits/money in a shortest possible time. The youth left their enterprises after failing to meet the profit expectations.

Those who had the hybrid strategy continued to strive in their enterprises. The participants agreed that they operated ventures to make money (profits) and meet basic needs thus improving their welfare, and welfare of others. Therefore, the successful enterprises were hybrid social enterprises that is enterprises aimed at making profits and meeting social welfare needs. They reinvested their profits to expand the scale of operation and spread the social impact. Therefore, these youth understood themselves as social entrepreneurs. Throughout interviews, youth stated the purpose of engaging in the activities as to generating more cash and live better lives. The YIGs formed after the pronouncement YLP had their understanding

of social enterprise as for profit only. On the contrary, the IGAs started before the YLP were premised on socio-economic transformation than moneymaking. Participant P5 agreed with this statement as she elaborated; “I participated because of the need for cash to meet my needs and have a better life such as better clothes, shelter, pay fees for my children, medical...” (FGD PEC009, Female Participant, 2019). Another participant added; “We are operating to meet basic needs and make money so that we sustain a better life...” The idea of sustainability implies that these youth appreciated the value of social innovation, opportunity recognition and the social mission they were to play in causing social change.

During the second interview with a key informant, he corroborated the above assertion:

The aim of government is to capacitate the youth transform themselves. If you read the YLP document, you will realise fighting youth unemployment is the top agenda. Therefore, when we give them funds, we want them to change their living standards. But you know youth of today like money so much, they want to get rich very quick, not future progress (KII 2FP, 2019).

On contrary, another participant noted:

For me I (sic) joined this group to get money and become rich, when the project delayed giving me money (profits) and heard of repayment, I left the group I am now free... I do not see any benefit from this entrepreneurship funding (FGD AWA002 Male participant, 2019).

Such an assertion suggests limited youth understanding of purpose of entrepreneurial interventions and general principles of social entrepreneurship, and empowerment. While others emphasised moneymaking and social change, the pioneer beneficiaries of the YLP had their interests in quick cash ventures without clear vision. This indicates that most youth engaged in business to earn income and become wealthy in a shortest time against the social entrepreneurial principles of social value creation, empowerment and contribution (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Santos, 2012). They could not distinguish between commercial entrepreneurial ventures and social enterprises, yet the YLP is a social entrepreneurial programme for harnessing youth socio-economic potential through supporting youth enterprises (MoGLSD, 2013). As such, the projects operated without deep-rooted philosophy, as many youths confessed that they had no guiding principles in their activities other than the call to form groups and receive cash.

The youth who operated the income generating activities with a clear purpose were able to understand what they do and strive for success and focus on social change. The views

originated from youth whose businesses were still operational and successful irrespective of the level of profitability. Well-formulated theory of change is fundamental in defining the direction of a youth enterprise; it enhances hard work, determination, vision, mission and success with hybrid orientation (Dees, 1998; Praszkie & Nowak, 2011). High level social innovation is vital in actuating social missions such as increased income, inclusiveness, self-sustenance and social welfare (Orobia, 2013). The next question is how the enterprises were formed as regards to the procedures and other guidelines.

4.3 Youth Enterprise Formation

The main purpose of the question on enterprise formation was to ascertain the criteria, when the youth formed, or started the group projects, nature of youth supported and factors for formation of these enterprises. The goal was to understand how youth formed the enterprises, guiding principles and other considerations for entrepreneurial growth.

Criteria for formation

The findings captured the criteria for YIG formation. The revelations from district stakeholders showed bureaucratic procedures to be followed before accessing the entrepreneurial support. The District Technical Planning Committee (DTPC) member revealed that the criteria for group formation was well laid down, stipulating the number of members (10-15), nature of business, the number of forms to fill, age composition (18-30) and residence as highlighted in the YLP programme document (MoGLSD, 2013). Further exploration presented that the youth needed to pick interest forms, fill with proposed project names. The Community Development Officer (CDO) facilitated the process, called for the meeting with Local Council (LCs) and youth councillors to verify the residence, family members in a group (not permitted), and assessed the enterprise performance (if necessary). More forms were filled including the business plans and constitution, and the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) sat and approved the project. Once the business proposal was approved, the YIG members opened bank accounts and money (fund) deposited. The CDOs and youth subcounty chairpersons played an important role in sensitisation and informing the youth on the rationale of the fund, and procedures for accessing the forming the enterprises. It became easy for those who already had a mission to incorporate new members and meet the bureaucratic requirements.

The time of enterprise formation

The participants provided the period when the enterprises were formed. Most enterprises formed immediately after pronouncement of youth livelihood programme while others existed before. There were variations in responses; some youth formed groups immediately when the programmes were initiated in 2013/2014 while others were operational as early as 2007 and 2009. Many groups formed in 2016 at the height of the youth livelihood programme. The nature of enterprise and date of formation are illustrated in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2 The categories of youth enterprises and date of formation in Gulu district

S/N	Name of project	Category of youth enterprise	Date of formation	Type of project
1	School Road carpentry and joinery YLP project	Manufacturing	2009	Carpentry and joinery
2.	Patalira Kica Ber Nen-kityena Youth Group	Agrienterprise	2017	Piggery
3.	Loyo Boo A. Utem Gum Youth Project	Agrienterprise	2015	Piggery
4.	Ribe ber Mold and concrete manufacturing	Manufacturing/construction	2008	Mold and concrete making
5.	Coopil Mi Pal Lacwec Ox-cultivation	Service	2016	Animal traction
6.	Kum Atimo Farm	Agrienterprise	2007	Floriculture/aquaculture/nursery bed
7.	Agonga Youth Empowerment	Agriculture	2018	Vegetable growing
8.	Layik Youth piggery project	Diversified	2016	Piggery/cake making
9.	Gumperom Youth livelihood project	Trading	2016	Produce business
10.	Laban Youth produce buying and selling	Trading	2016	Produce business
11.	Bed ki gen Poultry project	Agrienterprise	2016	Poultry
12.	Dwong ci kiyapi Youth group	Service/Agrienterprise	2017	Ox-cultivation, VSLA, and crop production.
13.	Corner ward kacel watwero piggery	Agrienterprise	2014	Piggery

Source: *Primary Data 2019/2020*

The above finding captured during interviews and documents (reports) imply that group were formed at different times. Those formed before YLP indicated that they had formed

immediately after school to generate self-employment and apply their skills, while others were trained by the NGOs. Others formed to meet the requirement for accessing government funding, that is why many YIGs were established in 2016 at the peak of the presidential elections in Uganda.

The nature of youth supported

The youth were required to be in groups of 10-15 members, 30 per cent of whom were supposed to be females. The explanation for the minimum and maximum numbers related to easing work, share skills and knowledge, maximise resource utilisation and ensure cooperation among members. However, most youth enterprises never followed the set criteria set by government, The 30 per cent female composition meant to achieve gender component and ensure inclusion of females in decision-making. This is in line with sustainable development goal five (Goal 5) on gender equality in all development spheres, and Uganda's national development plans (NPA, 2020; UN, 2018). The findings indicated that the required age was 18-30 years at the time of joining the groups. The interviewed youth revealed that the groups composed of poor, unemployed, marginalised and uneducated youth. Some groups had youth who were 17 years and less than 30 per cent female composition.

The documents reviewed is in agreement with primary findings confirming the targeted population such as youth with disability, single parent youth, YLWHA and uneducated. Others include youth living in slums, city streets, high-risk, and impoverished communities, youth who have completed secondary schools, or tertiary institutions. Special consideration was accorded to female youth (30 per cent participation), and Special Interest Groups youth with disabilities, and University Graduates. The study established that the PWDs had a special fund, and female youth were engaged in knitting, and hairdressing and lame and deaf male youth were supported in motor vehicle mechanics. One youth living with disabilities acknowledged receipt of a special grant:

We received a special grant under YLP. We are operating sweater knitting as females only. Even us who are with a disability we can do better once we are facilitated. I am happy in government remembered us, but my members are not serious with work (In-depth interview, YIG-PWD, 2019).

Although the programmes targeted poor and unemployed youth, groups under YLP were not limited to the former, all the youth regardless of economic status were active members. One political youth leader confirmed this assertion on composition and selection of members:

Yes, I am aware, the YLP targets youth of age 18-30 years, both male and female, they do not segregate it, and the YLP is a kind of CDD model. Once you have self-interest in benefiting from YLP they just give you whether you are a youth from rich family or not, the project does not just go into those details (KII 3DYC, 2019).

Further exploration revealed that youth enterprises existed before the YLP with a limited number of members; some were operating the VSLA locally known as '*Bol i cup*'. Some NGOs had initially supported youth groups, while others had organised themselves to save for specific purpose like communal cultivation. Membership had dropped from the mandatory 15 members to between three to ten members. Group formation was easy for those who had existing groups or running business activities, because those already had a vision, commitment and only recruited new members to meet the membership.

It was easy to form the enterprise, before we started as VSLA, cultivating for others and ourselves for money, and we were few members but when we heard of youth livelihood fund, we recruited more members to make the required 15 members, but we are now 12 members... (FGD AWA 006, Male Participant, 2019).

A female participant corroborated:

We had our informal group prior to YLP; we already had our idea and business of savings running. We had our strong leader, unity and trust among members. As members, we already knew each other before; therefore, when the funding opportunity came, we had our own contributions in our activity (FGD AWA 006, 2019).

The above assertion signifies the importance of well-established groups, social capital and self-driven persons on the success of groups. In addition, government programmes and development partners require the youth to form groups before accessing the funding. Similarly, the YLP standard operating procedures stipulated that youth should be in groups as a requirement to benefit from the funds (10-15 members). Working in groups enhances social capital; connectedness, and cohesion, eases work citizen participation, peer mentorship and learning, and contribution. These tenets are in agreement with the theoretical framework of this study (Damon, 2004; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). The study finding is in line with studies which emphasised teamwork in stimulating youth enterprises performance in Kenya (Mwangi & Namusonge, 2015), learning, creativity, best business performance and business innovation in enterprises (Perdomo-Ortiz et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2011). However, these studies were more on well-established/formal entities with systemic total quality management and human resource practices than informal youth projects that were the focus of my study. The youth with own contributions, well-established structures, values, culture, and

strong leadership are well placed and prepared to benefit from any entrepreneurship interventions.

Factors precipitating formation of youth enterprises

The question on the purpose of forming the group elicited several different responses with words and phrases such as ‘celebrations’, ‘*Ki waciwa ni watim komeno*’²⁵ and ‘*Jami ma mite pi kwo*’²⁶ appearing most frequently. Most of the youth revealed forming enterprises when they heard about the entrepreneurial funding programme. Many participants reported that the pronouncement of the funding opportunity motivated them to form the groups to benefit from the funding. Information sharing and effective communication encouraged many youths organise themselves, and form income generating activities. Those who received the communication spread it to fellow youth and stimulated them to form interest groups so as to benefits from entrepreneurial interventions. I further established that most youth enterprises formed in 2014-2016, when information about the programmes was spread all over the region. Therefore, the available cash lured the youth into enterprise formation. Many youths were told by their local political leaders to form enterprises to have a share of the government fund and meet their basic needs. The statement ‘we were told to do so’ yielded a book chapter published as; Kitambo. E (2021). We Were Told To Do So. In Shiino and Karusigarira (Eds.), *Youth in Struggles: Unemployment, Politics and Culture in Contemporary Africa*, Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA), Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), ISBN: 978-4-86337-345-7 (see appendix J).

The study established, however, that there were youth who had common goals of improving standards of living (such as education, medical, feeding, education for their children and feeding) thus operated the IGAs before the YLP was introduced. These had social entrepreneurship values of social innovation, social mission, sustainability and social impact. The key informants attributed group formation to the poverty levels in the community forcing many youths to rush to secure start-up capital for self-employment. The motivation to improve on their and other proper functioning led to establishment of enterprises. These perspectives, views originated from the youth who had already established businesses ideas, with marital obligations or common interests of causing an impact in society.

²⁵ Literally meaning, we were told to do so

²⁶ Basic needs

Additionally, youth operated saving groups to prepare for important days such as Christmas, Uhuru²⁷ and New Year's Day celebrations. The role of annual celebrations in bringing youth together was a surprising finding. There is a very strong importance attached to celebrations among the youth which induced them to mobilise themselves for self-help projects and resource mobilisation. Therefore, when the YLP set in, other members were incorporated to meet the required membership target.

We would cultivate for money so that we have cash to enjoy on Christmas days, you know here when people prepare for big days, so we formed a VSLA group to generate money for such celebrations. Our group already existed before the youth livelihood programme, (FGD AWA 006, male participant, 2019).

The above vignette demonstrates the value attached to common goal of personal enjoyment. These are regarded as a form of happiness, cooperation, respect and joy in community. Most of the youth grew up confined in IDP camps (Vorhölter, 2014; Whyte & Acio, 2017), thus never had opportunity to enjoy. When silence of guns, it provides them an opportunity to organise themselves for personal fulfilment (Namuggala, 2017). Thus, when a group has a social mission, it becomes very easy to organise the members and take advantage of the available opportunity. Opportunities are recognised and exploited for employment creation and social change.

The sense of identity is very vital when it comes to group formation. Government entrepreneurship programmes exploit such self-organised groups to champion the youth entrepreneurship and development agenda. Existing business ideas have a sociological orientation that sustains group cohesion, teambuilding, reduces conflicts and cements relations among the youth (Okhomina, 2010). While Okhomina stresses sociological influences such as level of education and supportive environment, this study finds annual festivities as most promoters of positive identity stressed in the Positive Youth Development Approach (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Damon, 2004; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005). My study appreciates the extent to which supporting environment contributed to formation of youth enterprises. The educated youth influenced most youth to form enterprises. Although Okhomina's study failed to locate celebrations in the sociological orientation, this study considers the influence of annual celebrations on the youth socialisation and establishment of youth enterprises. The Acholi

²⁷ Uhuru is Independence Day celebrations held every 9th October in Uganda. It is one of most important national days celebrated. People in northern Uganda prepare and celebrate such day than any other regions of Uganda.

cultural values prioritise annual celebrations as source of identity and socialisations. This identity has been lost during the war and life in camps (Vorhölter, 2014) youth enterprises form the basis for reorganisation and regaining their identity.

Although the study focused on a government programme, some youth revealed that they had prior organisation initiated and supported by NGOs and CBOs. The third sector influenced many youths in Acholi subregion northern Uganda towards engaging in income generating activities. Many youths reported to have been trained, inspired, and organised by local and international NGOs even before government interventions were implemented. All the groups that were still operational admitted that they operated before YLP due to the prior guidance from the third sector. More than a half of those interviewed reported to have ever enjoyed services from NGO's entrepreneurial programmes before YLP. The notably mentioned NGOs included Save the Children International, Technoserve²⁸, Bosco-Uganda²⁹, and DYNAMIC to mention but a few. The participants emphasised that, when the YLP was introduced, they maintained VSLAs formed under the guidance of third sector. They only recruited new members to meet the minimum membership standards set by the government.

I posed a question on whether youth had ever benefited from NGOs; majority indicated that they had received benefits from some NGOs which were promoting youth entrepreneurship.

Yes, we were training by Technoserve in saving, marketing, and financial management. The training equipped me with skills on how I can start my own business. The trainers emphasised that we should not only look at generating quick cash but improving our lives. The problems were, I was the only one trained in our enterprise, so my members lacked such skills too, that is why I struggled managing the project alone (IDI 04-YIG-UN, 2019).

The above interview findings signify that most youth projects were formed by NGOs before YLP; therefore, the third sector interventions played a big role in YIG formation. The third sector inculcated social entrepreneurship principles of empowerment, social innovation, and social inclusiveness. Therefore, the NGO/CBO factor play a great role in aiding group formation for under the YLP interventions. Entrepreneurship training was the most reported support provided to youth. Some youth indicated having received start-up kits in form of tools, and some cash from NGOs. The study corroborates similar studies in East Africa, Ghana and

²⁸ I conducted interview with Programme Manager. Deals with youth entrepreneurship training, financing, value addition and marketing to youth and farmers.

²⁹ Interviewed Project Manager of this organisation. Their activities included agricultural training to youth, cooperation, providing soft loans to youth engaging in agriculture.

Zambia, which appreciated and recognised NGO/CBOs in organising and cultivating entrepreneurial competences among the young generation (Mallett et al., 2016; Namatovu et al., 2016). Third sector understand the needs of users, are close to the community that the public sector wants to reach, and this assisted the government in organising and accessing youth groups.

Political influence on youth enterprise formation

The politics played a significant role towards enterprise formation most especially in 2014 and 2016. The participants stressed that campaign periods 2014-2016 had impact on group formation throughout the region. The political contenders exploited the YLP strategy to attract youth support. The participants indicated that most pioneer groups (2014, 2015, and 2016) were politically driven. The youth were encouraged to form groups and utilised the available government funding. More programme announcements and programme procedures largely accounted for enterprise formation with the cash incentive taking the central stage. During FGD with youth political leaders, all members unanimously agreed that politics played the biggest role in encouraging and influencing youth to form groups and start enterprises.

I am one of the pioneer beneficiaries, we are the pilot groups, what made us to come for this money was political, you get people moving around publicising that government is giving out free money... you people go and pick, its free money. When they tell you that there is free money somewhere you team up, go, and get the money. This factor contributed to formation of pioneer groups (FGD DYC, Male Youth Councillor, 2019).

Another participant mentioned:

Most groups were politically driven, since the leaders were planning to get more votes, they could tell us ...please go and get money I am there for you in case of any problem, and we went for the money and fully supported them during 2016 elections. That is why some of the groups including ours collapsed because they were political not enterprising (FGD DYC, Participant KA, 2019).

The political timing and publicity played a big role in enterprise formation, as many youths understood the political message and hoped to enjoy free cash, thus limiting the initiative to utilise the fund productively for sustainable entrepreneurship development. Although the study considered the procedural and technical aspects in group formation, the power of politics in influencing the entrepreneurial matters in both formal and informal youth entrepreneurship was inevitable (Autio & Fu, 2015). Additionally, studies on government funded projects in Kenya concur with my findings contending that influential politicians manipulate allocation of

funds/projects through the Sacred Cow Model with the aim of gaining mileage from supporters (Asaka et al., 2012; Kamau & Mohamed, 2015). Politicians garner support from the masses.

However, studies on youth programmes in Uganda and Ghana recognise politicians in community engagement and popularising the programmes and ensuring transparent (Bonye & Aasoglenang, 2013; Ejang, 2020). To me, this recognition perhaps is due to colonial history where both countries were British colonies and community recognises political structures. Nonetheless, youth are mere recipients of the programmes without participation on design and implementation (Kwesiga et al., 2019; McGowan et al., 2015), and this affects the outcome of the intervention. The main intention of the funding was to promote entrepreneurship, self-employment, enhance skills, hence social change than the politically communicated messages. With such political propaganda, some youth failed to stand the risk to start and sustain viable projects since they mistook the programme as rewards for votes. Political institutions have a direct impact on the youth entrepreneurial interventions, and their functionality.

4.4 Entrepreneurial motivations and youth aspirations

In seeking to investigate the entrepreneurial motivations, I first explored factors for youth participation in entrepreneurships. Moreso, I considered personal entrepreneurial competences that defined the behaviours and aspirations of the youth. My findings revealed many motivational factors for start-up or joining the group that ranged from finance to personal entrepreneurial competences (PECs). Often several factors combined in stories and in complex ways and changed from time to time to express entrepreneurial impetuses. The stories from various youth interest groups illustrated altering motives.

The financial motivation

The most predominant is the availability of the funding by stakeholders. In this study, I prefer to conceptualise it as 'financial motivation'. Many youths confessed that material and financial support motivated them to form groups, start and operate or expand enterprises. The presence of funding opportunities aroused the spirits of the youth, including those with no entrepreneurial acumen. The finance was a motivating factor for many youths to form groups and take advantage of the opportunity. Most of confessions from participants pointed at youth livelihood fund as a motivating factor to enterprise formation. The introduction of the funding opportunity attracted many youths towards starting up enterprises for exploitation (FGD PAIS 005, 2019). Furthermore, the urge for financial benefit propelled most youth to join groups

and enjoy the financial benefit. The ‘free money’ message was easily conceived and memorised among the beneficiaries. The opportunity orientation of character of many youths forced them to rush for funds. Indeed, youth social entrepreneurs recognise and exploit available opportunities for growth. Nonetheless, some youth simply rushed for finance without clear social mission, and this portrays greed for cash than entrepreneurial intentions. Besides finance, other factors as well motivated youth to engage in the YIGs.

Social motivation driving youth participation in enterprises

Participants further indicated that they were motivated by need for change, since they faced several the livelihood challenges. The respondents specified that the problems they face motivated them to cooperate and start up the enterprises. The livelihood challenges of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, underpayment, underemployment catalysed most youth to start income generating projects. A YIG leader stated:

When I finished school I had no job, and no means to meet my needs, so I asked my father for some money, and started this (pointed at the shelter) small carpentry place, I kept doing repairs, beds, chairs, and a got training on roofing. Thereafter, I started getting some simple jobs to roofing, furniture repair. When YLP was introduced, I got poor boys and girls like me including those who were already doing work with me, formed a group and applied for funding. Atleast this business has helped many of us to be busy (In-depth interview, IDI 01YIG-P, 2019).

The need to earn a living and meeting the basic needs motivates the people to started income generating activities. Motivation influence an individual’s decision to pursue opportunities from the ecosystem and act on these opportunities for success enterprises (Wokorach, 2020). This subscribes to the school of thought of converting challenges into business opportunities, as many youth problems force youth to form enterprises for survival (Yoosuf & Premaratne, 2017). The explanation also indicated that some youth who had their personal businesses, recruited other members after the entrepreneurial intervention to meet their needs as well. By converting social problems into opportunities, youth are acting on social mission of finding novel solutions to such problems, and this is what describes them as social entrepreneurs. Asset building embedded in the Zimmerman theory plays an important role in achieving the social mission. The passion for business and need for achievement and social change motivated them to start the enterprises.

However, the participants indicated that the group project decision-making powers laid in the hands of the initiator and initial owner of the enterprise. Some of the projects visited had initial

owners who previously operated carpentry workshop and metal fabrications solely. The resilience in the chief architects of the ventures to sustain the projects motivates other youth towards meeting the welfare. The ability to recognise social problems and advance solutions is a motivating factor towards entrepreneurship (Hansen et al., 2011). What is not clear in this study is whether these youth clearly recognised and understood their social problems before forming the enterprises.

Enterprise leadership a precursor for youth entrepreneurship

Additionally, youth pointed to strong leadership from a member (s) who ignited them to joining the enterprise prior to funding opportunities. I observed such trait in rural groups whose leaders were either university graduates, diploma, or certificate of education, and had operated an enterprise or with leadership experience. The presence of strong and educated leaders inspired some members:

We have strong leadership i.e., our leaders are transparent, respectful and committed. We also keep records. Our chairperson is educated, dedicated, and can mobilise us very well. Members are committed towards a common cause of poverty (FGD BUNGL 001, Female Participant, Bungatira Subcounty, 2019).

The presence of visionary membership in projects is driving force for stimulating commitment, bonding, flexibility, patience., unity and nurturing other members for sustainable social change. Furthermore, leaders come up with business ideas, analyse them, identify opportunities and persuade members to work hard and act upon opportunities (Wokorach, 2020). Effective leadership encourages social innovation among partners, thus sustaining the enterprises. The finding corroborates with Kamau and Mohamed (2015) finding stressing the efficacy of leadership in motivating team members and fostering project success in Kenya. This implies that the funding that fell in the hands of the existing young entrepreneurs with strong leaders was invested productively and succeed. Although the youth emphasised the importance of education on group formation, most municipal projects with many graduates collapsed denoting that education level may not be the ticket for effective leadership. Therefore, social transformation necessitates concerted effort from all the members, and this arouses the motivation of all members.

Although social entrepreneurship is driven by social motivation and opportunity orientation, finance attracts most youth. Entrepreneurial motivation connotes the need/factors that energises the behaviour and directs the youth towards a given goal (Vallerand, 2004).

McClelland (1961) noted that youth with higher motivation are more likely to be ready to set up own enterprises than those with low motivation to engage in activities or tasks that have a high degree of individual responsibility. To the contrary, the study established the greed for cash as a force behind forming enterprises. Therefore, inner drive was fundamental in the arousing the youth aspiration in exploiting the social entrepreneurship interventions. Intrinsic factors explode when the external environment prevails, thus, it was important to consider the family environment.

Family environment as a motivating factor to youth enterprise formation

The study established that family played a key role in the establishment of enterprises. My research revealed that some youth groups were coming from families where parents were entrepreneurs or had entrepreneurship knowledge. One of my interesting findings from three key informants and two focus group discussions portrayed parental leadership and motivation as driving forces towards youth entrepreneurship. The guidance and entrepreneurial environment provided by parents were conducive for fostering entrepreneurial qualities for example risk taking, hardworking, persistence, economic independence, commitment, and opportunity orientation. This was reported mostly in Awach and Patiko sub counties where parents got involved in guiding the youth on how to start, run, save, and expand the enterprise. In a more in-depth discussion, youth revealed that parents inspired them to follow their footsteps in operating a successful produce buying and selling business. Concerning this, with enthusiasm and morale the youth could not hide their excitement:

Our parents did a great work in our business, they guided us on how to use the money on produce buying and selling because they were doing same businesses. We were directed on where to buy produce, sell, the good dealers from town, and how to keep good records, parents even offered to buy for us products, so that we do not waste the money on lifestyle... (FGD AWA 006, YIG Secretary for Finance, 2019).

More still, some participants expressed the belief that they were inspired by fellow youth who were operating successful projects. I was able to engage in detailed discussion with the female youth who rejuvenated the group due to inspiration from successful neighbouring projects.

We are motivated because we looked at (the) another group that was performing well and succeeding so; we got motivated and formed ours. We were doing it before, brick making; we have just recovered 7.5 million, it is still on our account (FGD NYC Female Entrepreneur/councillor, 2019).

The above vignettes illustrate that the existence of enterprising family and community sharpen the entrepreneurial attitudes of the young generation, the environment in which children grow significantly affects their entrepreneurial abilities. This finding is consistent with a study by Sambo (2015) which found parents motivating and inspiring young ones thus influencing them towards participation in entrepreneurship. As pointed out by Le (1999) cited in Campanella et al. (2013) families provide the young ones with inspiration to follow the same entrepreneurial career like mother or father. A student with a father with an entrepreneurial experience is more likely to take the same career path as the parent.

Though literature emphasises graduate entrepreneurship, this study established that in one of youth projects non-graduates were as well inspired by parents. In the Theory of Entrepreneurial Success Components, Gibb and Ritche (1982) posits entrepreneurship as a social process; business ideas and ambitions emerge in a social condition. Consequently, class structure, family present lifestyle, experience and social issues, environment, and interaction can influence the youth's careers. The family members familiarise young ones with aspects of business management such as finance, accounting, and marketing in what scholars call 'financial socialisation' (Chowa & Despard, 2014). Family is thus, that first mentoring factor the entrepreneurial life of a child.

Furthermore, literature has portrayed that self-employed parents, family networks, family background/family size and enterprising youthful generations inspire and become role models and mentors for nascent young entrepreneurs and are usually inclined to encouraging entrepreneurship behaviour among the young ones (Cetindamar et al., 2012; Farrukh et al., 2017; Ibrahim & Soufani, 2002). However, studies by Sharma (2014) in India disregard the findings stating that there is no significant influence of family capital (financial, family size, and human) on youth entrepreneurship. This could be the capitalist mentality where individuals struggle on their own compared to study Acholi culture where 'our community' values still hold. Whereas only one group reported the impact of family members towards group success, involving the parents in youth empowerment programmes and other opportunities for the youth can enable the youth to generate more money, gain confidence and become prosperous in managing money. The youth need motivation through funding and other support mechanisms from family, government and friends to transform the dream business into reality (Olugbola, 2017). The diversity of the business ideas depends on the level of business knowledge and exposure of the child to the successful entrepreneurial parents. Nonetheless, access to start-up

capital and motivation are a great concern for many youths who are ready to take risks for the creation of new enterprises.

Youth aspirations for entrepreneurship

Connected to motivations for forming the enterprises, is the motivation to staying in the enterprise amidst challenges, what I am calling ‘aspirations’ in this study. I posed questions on what inspired the youth to stay in the group projects. The question on motivation to join and stay in the enterprise was relevant more on operational groups since I thought I would raise anger and frustration in projects that had collapsed. Seventy four percent of the participants indicated that they aspired to stay in the business, twenty six percent prefer leaving the groups and starting and concentrating own businesses. The frequently mentioned aspirations were the need for continuous improvement in social welfare and change, and more achievements, one female participant emphasised “the need to change, we needed to be better people” (FGD UNY003, 2019). Most interestingly, cooperation for access to opportunities and linkage with other groups took central stage in the discussions as well. Youth joyfully recognised working in groups as a precursor for winning material and nonmaterial support from agencies, NGOs, private sector, or any other government programme, expressed as “we achieve a lot as a group” (FGD AWA006, Male Participant, 2019).

Opportunity seeking youth argued that the government money requires repayment; therefore, maintaining their projects facilitates repayment and borrowing more money from government for project expansion. This would help them exploit opportunities and solve social problems and get more inspired youth to engage in entrepreneurship (Hansen et al., 2011). What was central in the discussion was high returns (profit) from the ventures. The youth expressed the interest in terms of returns on investment that is ploughed back for project growth and expansion. A successful youth interest group called Laban Youth Produce Traders that had received funding twice could not hide the excitement “Our interests in this business are high, we make profits, so we cannot leave this group since we are making a lot of money. We want to keep going on and on...we shall start many more businesses” (FGD AWA 006, 2019).

This quotation implies the role of returns on investment on members’ motivation, retention and expansion of the enterprise. The higher the profitability, the higher the interest in the business and the higher the project survival. The reinvestment of the profits into the venture require high-level financial discipline, and ensures large scale of operations, hence more benefits from the IGA. The youth (owners) are therefore able to meet their basic needs, improve of the quality

of life, build youth assets and strengthen their contribution and participation in decision-making (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). The youth aspire to sustain the project that generate much income and successfully achieves their goals. Similar studies hold the view that, its achievement rather than profit motive which inspires the youth to set up and maintain enterprise (Olugbola, 2017). However, this was not the case with the study population since most of them strived for profit making rather than social impact.

4.5 Sustainability of Youth Enterprises

Regarding sustainability, the intention was on how the YIGs were in position to maintain operations of their venture after the end of interventions. I posed questions on the plans for increasing sources of income, developing, and expanding the size and capital enterprises. All the respondents indicated the need to diversifying activities on their portfolio to widen the sources of income and continuous production. They pointed at starting “side businesses”. The frequently highlighted businesses were barbershops, buying motorcycles for *Boda Boda*, commercial farming and strengthen the VSLA for lending to members and non-members at appropriate interest rates. Some youth groups had already started diversifying to generate more money for repayment. Although some of these projects do not fall into the business proposals required by the funding agency, the risk was born to diversify sources of income to meet the stated repayment period. In an in-depth interview, one interviewee, who thus said, highlighted this:

We were given money to start a salon here, when we saw salon was not doing well yet district officials were demanding for money, we decided to use part of money to buy boda boda for daily cash. We even sell charcoal as you can see so that we make additional money. Though some members are less interested in this project, as chairperson and my committee, I have to look for ways to generate money to pay back, and we hope to expand to shop in future... (IDI 006-PV, YIG Chairperson, 2019).

In another FGD, a participant maintained:

We wish to do commercial farming, buy ox-plough and oxen, use them for cultivation, after harvest, we can use them to plough for other community members and we get more money. We also intend to buy motorcycle and give to young boys who will bring money daily or weekly, we save the money, buy more motorcycles, and give to other boys for more money (FGD AWA 006, Chairperson, Female Participant, 2019).

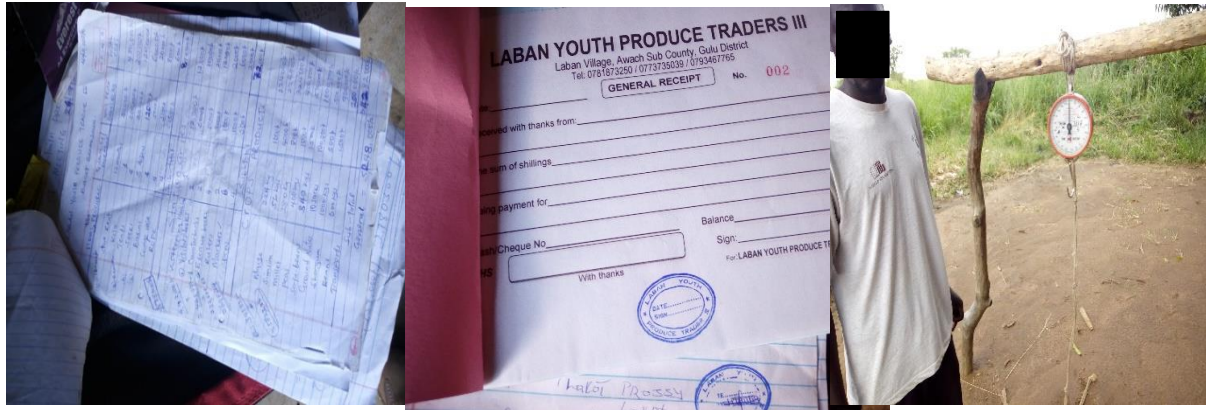
At custom corner village, Layibi-Bardege division, it was observed that youth were operating mixed farm, composed of fishpond, nursery beds, floriculture, and horticulture. These businesses were complementing each other, they started with fish farming, established nursery bed followed by other agrienterprises, thus, the group operated and earned income throughout the year. The above quotes and observations signify the role of risk taking and opportunity exploitation to widen income base for sustainable social enterprise. Hence, diversification was one of the interesting unintended findings. Opportunity orientation embedded in the description of nature of entrepreneurs explains the need for diversification. Past studies provide the reasons for this pluriactivity ranging from availability of opportunities, lack of a lucrative venture, business survival and seasonality of activities or pressure to recover the money in short time possible (Kodithuwakku & Rosa, 2002; Langevang et al., 2012). The factors motivate youth to work hard towards thus engagement on entrepreneurship activities.

More so, assertions demonstrate entrepreneurial competences of visionary, inner-direction, and opportunity orientation, which are prerequisites for successful ventures. The diversification does not only benefit the members but trickles down the benefits towards empowering other members. The study necessitated a thorough investigation into opportunity orientation on the sustainability of the enterprises. More youth demonstrated ambitious and wished to contribute to personal development, while others were only obliged by the repayment terms and conditions of the revolving funding, an indication that after repaying the loan the group project may disintegrate.

Inventory management was observed as another enterprise sustainability strategy. Some of the youth felt that keeping clear business records, stores management enabled them to ascertain the profits and losses, stock levels and daily returns. The respondents appreciated the importance of records in sustaining the business and reported that record keeping was one of the requirements for the funding. More so, the participants explained that they hold monthly meetings to plan, and discuss issues related to stock, sales, market and other business-related subjects. To honour information confidentiality, I was not able to access all the youth records; however, some groups consented and availed the records. The records accessed included budgets, records of purchases and sales, minutes of the meetings, deposit and withdraw slips and receipt books.

The study revealed that the youth maintained stores and workplaces to reduce on damages, theft and ensures easy access to materials. I observed proper organisations of stores, animal

traction, salons, shops, but not in most piggery and poultry projects. Some of the inventory management strategies I was authorised to publish are shown below:



Source: *Field photo, 2019*

Plate 4.4 Book keeping at Project A Produce Dealers, Awach Subcounty

The records and measurement scale are part of internal controls proving issues of accountability, organisational management, and financial management and production activities of the IGA. The finding agrees with Walukhu (2015) study on sustainability of projects in Kenya who explains that youth kept records on daily and weekly basis to ensure sustainability. Nonetheless, my study established that the information was recorded as it occurred, thus no established procedure was discovered. Most records lacked order and consistency such as dates, full names of debtors, implying lack of skills and experience in inventory management. Proper record keeping and understanding among group members ensures answerability, conscientiousness, trustworthiness, transparent and responsibility in projects (Srinivasan, 2010). This is in line with Kumar (2004) who emphasises financial prudence and soundness for the attainment of financial sustainability in enterprises.

Having an inventory connotes stock at hand in form of a record of raw materials, tools, equipment, work processes and products ready for say. Inventory facilities replenishment of the products, constant production, and supply, this is ascertained by proper recordkeeping. Despite crucial purpose on inventory management, most youth kept the records to adhere to the funding guidelines and training directives than the actual purpose. Proper financial records eases planning, budgeting, reporting, and communication among the business members.

Reinvestment for sustainability of youth enterprises

Further findings showed that youth had the urge for saving the interest and reinvesting it (profit) in the business. Ploughing back the profit as a form of financing for business growth and expansion. To some youth, small portion of income is used for consumption as they save a bigger portion for future consumption, as the YIG chairperson explained:

We are saving the interest so that we use it in our business, some part is consumed but part is kept and used in our business... we intend to start barber shop in this trading centre so that after harvest we can instead continue earning, than waiting for the season again (FGD AWA 006, 2019).

This observation was only for motivated and successful enterprises which sustained their business activities through ploughing the financial returns for business expansion. Self-sustaining business model is common with hybrid social enterprises which strive for sustainability (Faruk et al., 2016). The perseverance, focus and inner drive are necessary traits for the culture of saving. I see this as ‘strategic and systematic planning and management’ setting the stage for expansion. Surprisingly, a few youth projects recorded planning and management in their routine activities yet financial planning and management are influential on sustainability of youth funded projects (Walukhu, 2015). Nonetheless, from my observations and discussions with the youth I noted that a small number of the youth can demonstrate social entrepreneurship principles and save the income for business growth. Many youths were interested in quick cash, immediate benefits, regardless of the aspirations for the future.

In other interviews, youth felt maintaining cooperation would enable them to lobby from other private stakeholders, NGOs, and even other government programmes for project sustainability; however, this was ‘wishful thinking’. The cooperation stressed in the study concurs with what the proponents of PYD stress on the need for connection in creating a healthy, productive and engaged youth (Lerner et al., 2000). However, the scholars emphasised economic independence and caring which this study has not established. With effective inventory management and plough back the profits, some youths were able to expand the projects, some enterprises were stagnated by costs, nature of businesses operated and seasons thus affecting the hope for sustainability. Understanding locally informed constructs of success and growth is important in seeking for the youth perceptions on successful social entrepreneurship and aspirations for the future. Therefore, the responses were fundamental in understanding the sustainability strategies for the youth, which contributes benefits accrued.

The nature of entrepreneurial ventures positions the youth for socio-economic empowerment, thus necessitating the need for examining the benefits derived from these social entrepreneurial interventions. This is the subject of the subsequent section. These enterprises benefited the youth in several ways; these are presented and discussed in the following subsection.

4.6 Benefits from Social Entrepreneurship Interventions

The nature of youth enterprises entails the perceived benefits from youth enterprises. Therefore, this section presents results on the benefits of social entrepreneurial programmes on youth. The objective is to examine gains youth registered from participation in entrepreneurship interventions being implemented. In this section, I use words benefits, achievements and gains interchangeably. The achievement is considered in terms of entrepreneurial growth and development, income generation, employment, and other associated gains to the youth. The findings are categorised into sections of the services received by the youth from YLP, and benefits made. My intention here was to assess benefits accruing from both existing and failed YIGs. The findings from FGDs, interviews and observations are presented below. The themes emerging from the transcripts were categorised into themes as presented in framework 5.1

I began with a question on whether the youth think they had benefited accrued benefits from the above enterprises. When the youth were asked if they had benefited from the programmes, majority reported that they had received benefits while very few reported not benefiting from the interventions. There were surprising responses, participants from surviving youth projects acknowledged benefiting, while those from failed projects could not mention any benefit. However, all views emanated from YIGs which had received entrepreneurial funding from the intervention.

Majority of the youths indicated they had benefited from the empowerment programme in one way or the other. It is apparent from these perspectives that very many youths received finance and other services such as training they had gained from YLP. A small portion of participants believed they had not received the benefits because their enterprises had failed. This finding was confirmed during discussion and field visits, where I observed that most failed groups denied any benefit despite receiving financial support. The reasons for the failure are presented

in the next chapter. In one of the group discussions, all members harshly reported that they had not benefited at all from the interventions.

All our groups collapsed, we are suffering more than before, our chairperson and treasurer ran away with the money, we cannot say we have benefited, we are worse than before youth livelihood programme. YLP cash received has not changed our lives in anyway (FGD AWA002, male participant, Awach subcounty 2019).

The assertion above suggests few group leaders enjoyed the finance received, thus, majority members could not recognise the benefits. Among those who indicated benefiting from the intervention, youth indicated acquisition of microfinance/microcredit, access to information and training, confidence building. The programme was offering start-up capital a reason microfinance dominated. This indicated that the responses depended on the operation of the IGA, and the perception on cash receipts and involvement of the members in the project management processes. The varied views imply that the youth interpret benefits differently, since the study considered youth who were supported under the youth livelihood programme many youths saw cash as an immediate benefit. A section of youth who could not recognise any benefit signified the lack of value and clear understanding of achievements attached to the entrepreneurial interventions. Therefore, youth considered more material gains than immaterial gains. Other studies in Uganda, Kenya and Botswana agree with the finding on microcredit indicating that youth are usually provided with microfinance as start-up capital (Mpaata, Lubogoyi, & Kakumba, 2017; Wamoto, 2016; Williams & Hovorka, 2013). However, Youth Enterprise Development Fund in Kenya supported individual innovations contrary to YLP (under study) whose beneficiaries are YIGs than individuals. Financing is an important element in fostering youth enterprises and meeting expectations.

To examine whether youth registered gains from social entrepreneurial support had, the participants were asked a question on whether they think the interventions had met their socio-economic expectations. The responses were a YES or NO, and the intention was to lay a foundation for determining the achievements stemming from such enterprises. Only successful YIGs (two only) had their expectations met. The codes included *not yet*, *yes but somehow*, *no no no*, *somehow*, *no benefit*, and *we are suffering than before*. The key informants also scored the intervention less than 50 percent in meeting youth expectations. Those that indicated YES scored the intervention ranging from 85 percent to 100 percent. However, these views were from only two youth projects out of the ten YIGs.

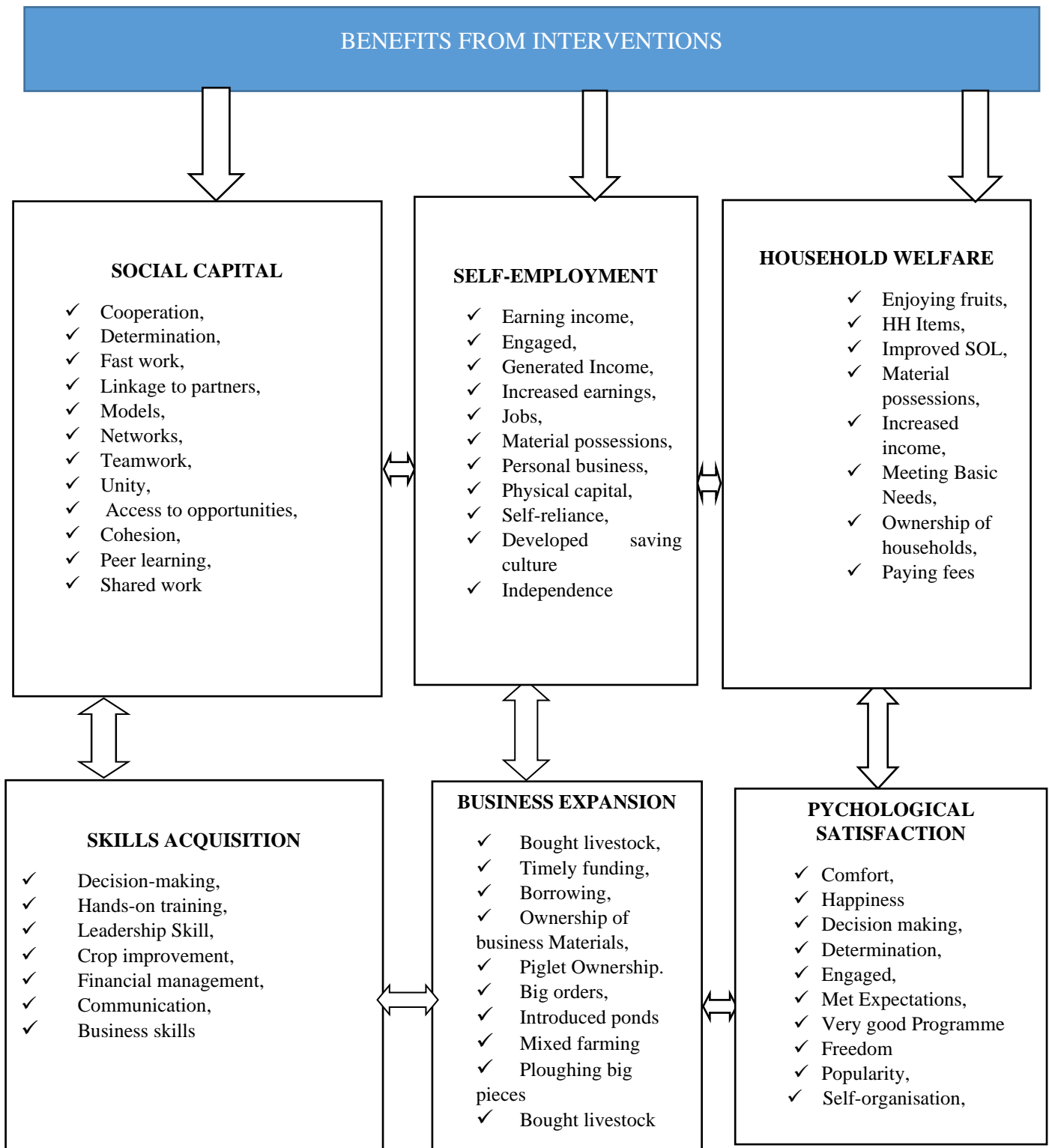
Those whose expectations were met were mostly of 26-30 years and married. I categorised these as 'mature youth' with many responsibilities and had gone through hardships. The marital obligations compelled these youth to work towards meeting family needs. These youth understood the role of social mission in promoting social impact in society. The informants kept referring to old youth and young youth (juniors).

The old youth (26-30 years) had many responsibilities, determination and were keen to exploit available opportunities compared to young ones (below 25 years) who had high expectations, very lazy, reluctant, and greedy for cash. Some youths were above thirty years, indicating that there were overaged youth benefiting from youth entrepreneurship programme contrary to the guidelines. These findings support earlier studies in South Africa which emphasised the role age plays in the determining youth's quality of life, understanding of benefit, decision making and physical and psychological ability (Bembridge, Graven, Hough, & Van Rooyen, 2008; Dagada, Nesamvuni, Van Rooyen, & Tshikolomo, 2013). This means special consideration should be put on age factor to maximise benefits from the interventions. With reference to this, I embarked on analysing and discussing the achievements born from the interventions.

The gains from the youth enterprises

I start by presenting and discussing responses thematically. These benefits are interlinked since there is no benefit standing in isolation. Social capital connects to self-employment, household welfare, and other benefits. From the services indicated above such as finance, training and information youth were expected to report achievements made from their projects. From smaller percentage of those who felt their expectations were met (YES), the participants were required to reveal the achievements. The interpretation and discussion of findings are subsequently presented. The participants presented both material and immaterial achievements. Self-employment dominated all the discussions. Youth interpretation of benefits depended on age, marital obligations, and sex of the participants. The graphical presentation below provides the emerging themes from transcripts.

Figure 4.3 Benefits derived from interventions



Source: *Field Interviews, 2019-2021*

The above presentation illustrates the linkage among the themes with their codes. All the reported benefits feed into each other. Social capital facilitates youth self-employment and thus

improved household welfare. The skills acquisition enhances business expansion thus, improving on income. All the gains feed into psychological satisfaction. These are further discussed in the subsequent subsections.

Promotion of Social Capital

Participants appreciated the cooperation and networking among themselves. This was possible because youth worked in interest groups. The interest here meant one must be willing to cooperate with others. Among the skills indicated above is networking skills. In this section, I present social capital as one of the great achievements mentioned by the youth. The participants contended that entrepreneurial intervention had brought the formerly scattered, desperate, and lonely youth together. The business activities had built cohesiveness, teamwork, and cooperation among the youth in groups in their respective communities. Through this networking, the youth said they were working together in teams as a community and sought for assistance from colleagues. Furthermore, the language of ‘our animals’, ‘our store’, ‘our motorcycle’, ‘our farm’ and ‘our business’ surfaced during interviews and discussions. The envisaged benefits of such social capital surfaced in codes including faster work, unity, cohesion, mentorship, skills transfer, and sustained determination. From the focus group discussion, one enthusiastic youth commented:

We have not only acquired skills, but also when we are together, we are able to support each other in case of a problem. I remember two weeks back when I had a sick child, members managed to support me with some money... and even visited, consoled me, I felt very happy (FGD CUS007 Male Participant, 2019).

In agreement with above participant, one respondent from another project went further and echoed this; “We still want to work together as a team even if we have paid off the loan of shs 8,700,700. We enjoy benefits of working in team such as sharing, reducing workload” (FGD PAIO 004 Female Participant, 2019). The Project chairperson substantiated “...when we are 4-5, sharing work is easy and we do much work while in a group than individuals”. Furthermore, youth mentioned that training opportunities from institutions such as Faculty of Agriculture and Environment Gulu University had prevailed because they were working in groups. The stakeholders emphasised more on the role of social capital towards accessing other opportunities. The technocrats and politicians posited that cooperation and working in groups has attracted opportunities for the youth. They claim that youth in groups attract both material and nonmaterial support:

Here are some youths in groups enjoying, after giving them money, we have also linked them to some partners such as Technoserve, Save the Children, Dynamic, then there is Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative (WPDI)... Gulu University has approached me that they want to collaborate with us and train the youth (KII 2FP, YLP Focal Point Person, 2019).

From the above quotations, it can be observed that social capital strengthens a sense of collective effort and responsibility for social change (Jennings et al., 2006). Social entrepreneurship facilitates connection, which strengthens innovation among the youth. With such collective action, youth exploit the available opportunities, resources, and enhance livelihoods (Bekkers et al., 2008). Worth noting is that social capital is ideal for collective bargaining to access opportunities, improve skills, beliefs, and confidence, which is difficult when operating as individuals (Sserwanga et al., 2014). These youths with strong social capital easily combat poverty, resolve conflicts and take advantage of available opportunities (Praszkie & Nowak, 2012). Combined effort among the youth generates ideas for improved livelihoods.

However, social networking works best where there is a healthy and conducive environment, tolerance for diversity, permitting effective participation. From personal insights, arousing the determination of lazy youth requires a lot of time, patience, mentorship, and capacity building if more benefits are to be realised from social capital. Nonetheless, such qualities may be lacking in most youth groups, and necessitates clear vision for the networks and groups. To the PYD, the youth can easily explore their surroundings, if they are connected, mentored, economically interdependent, confident, and competent (Lerner et al., 2000). The youth succeed in an enabling environment for them to be fully engaged in entrepreneurial ventures. The bonded youth succeed in mobilising resources and establishing income generating activities hence facilitating creating of their own employment opportunities.

Creation of Self-employment

Participants reflected Self-employment as a benefit they had registered from their projects. Almost a third of the participants indicated that they were employing themselves. The income generating activities were regarded as a source of employment for the members. Some youth had established operated and were managing their own enterprises. Participants reported that they now own the economic activities, are able to work for themselves and earn a living. The commonly observed enterprises were produced business, carpentry and joinery, barber shops, *Boda Boda* riding (motorcycle), horticulture and ox-plough cultivation (animal traction). The

established enterprises had created jobs for owners themselves and trickled down to other youth. The excited youth were optimistic of continuous reaping big from the ventures and employing themselves (i.e., own bosses) than looking for jobs. Through self-employment, they pointed out earning income, owning possessions (such as furniture, house utensils), meeting basic needs, and diversify income sources. One individual narrated these successes:

It has really changed my standard of living and have learnt saving, and out of saving I am able to start my own small business. I am now running my business without any problem. I am now busy working for myself. Right now, I am running my microbusiness such as selling small fish, sesame paste and other small items (FGD BUNGA008, Female Participant, 2019).

Another male participant complemented; “I am now operating my own farming business; growing tomatoes, onions, eggplants and I earn money on weekly, sometimes daily basis, which I never had before joining this programme... I am now busy at my own work”.

These revelations were also emphasised during FGD with Municipal Youth Council; “their own employment opportunities have been created. They now have jobs, they have even employed other youth as welders, Boda Boda riders, barber shop attendants”. This has reduced redundancy and crimes in the community (FGD MYC, Female Youth Councillor).

The findings of this study show how the interventions enhance the enterprise culture among the youth. It is imperative to note that self-employed youth are independent, ensure increased income, and enhance self-reliance. The sustainable youth enterprises create employment thus spreading the social impact (Wolk, 2008). In all YIGs, increase in income was least reported as some were struggling to recover the funds, while others had invested in livestock, carpentry, service sector which could take long to earn high returns on investment. Therefore, many benefits accrue from self-employment and entrepreneurship rather than income alone.

Sikenyi (2017) supports this study explaining that youth enterprise development fund in Kenya promoted employment and increased income among the youth although with challenges. Similar studies in Yemen confirm this finding presenting that social entrepreneurial interventions are a transformative force for youth employment creation (Abdou et al., 2010). The contribution of self-employment is evident in form of improved household welfare, which further cements concentration on their ventures. Indeed, self-employment enhances youth empowerment thus social development in society (Midgley, 1995). As the youth become self-employed, they regain their self-confidence and esteem.

Improvement in youth household Welfare

Social entrepreneurship recognises social value in society. The participants expressed the notion of ability to meet the basic needs as another achievement registered from the SE interventions. Participants notably mentioned meeting of physiological needs such as food, medical care, fees, cheap shelter, and clothing. More so, during the field visits I witnessed youth enjoying fresh fruits from their own horticulture venture. When, asked about the feeling, youth expressed enjoyment since they do not have to purchase from expensive markets. Other youth indicated that the little income earned catered for their standard of living compared to the previous life of misery. In relation to this, one participant expressed:

I am a single mother, coming here has helped me to get some food, soap and clothes for my two kids in addition to meeting my own needs. I am even able to pay fees and medical expenses for my babies. I cannot be a prostitute like my colleagues, I am very happy to be in this group, and hope to remain here (FGD PEC009, Female YIG member, Gulu City).

The expression was reiterated in the interview with district youth leader:

There are youth whose income has increased, their lives have changed, some even pay for their sisters and brothers at school, they can now afford food. You see such achievement is not for everyone. As leaders, we feel very happy when our youth start affording food on the plate than engaging in antisocial behaviours such as prostitution, theft, and others (KII 3DYC Youth leader, 2019).

The most interesting finding was that youth use part of proceeds from projects to meet the basic needs of the members who are unable to cater for them. In addition, in case of an emergency, part of the income is used to support the member. As youth meet their needs, they feel empowered socially and economically. Therefore, this implies that the programmes have enabled the youth to uplift standards of life and overcome the clumps of poverty and unemployment. The social mission pillar of social entrepreneurship forces youth to discover novel solution to ever increasing social needs, thereby improving on social value (Dees, 1998; Praszkiar & Nowak, 2012).

Similar information is reported in Bukenya et al. (2019) impact evaluation attesting increased expenditure on health and education among the youth and their families. Thus, youth used part of revolving loan and proceeds to meet these necessities. Receipts of cash transfers normally arouse their consumption which may deviate the main purpose of the funding and the programme (Bukuluki & Watson, 2012). However, youth's welfare is not yet up to the minimum standards since the scale of operation for most projects is still at a micro level, that

is, all youth ventures generate meagre profit/income. Therefore, more skills and finance are needed to improve on the enterprise performance, generate more income hence meeting more household needs.

Youth skills acquisition

A question was raised on the kind of skills acquired from interventions, and the question targeted both soft and technical (hard) skills if any. Youth stated gaining skills such as networking, financial management, leadership, and mobilisation in addition to carpentry, and agriculture related skills. Those who had prior training transferred hands-on skills from youth to others, and soft skills (business management) were provided by YLP focal office to YIG leaders.

The more skills related to financial management could have been because of training in financial management by the YLP technical team. To qualify this, the same question was posed during in-depth interviews and KIIs, and the findings revealed additional skills developed. The notably mentioned skills included soft as well as technical skills. The participants argued that the skills have been acquired through training, peer learning, coaching, observing, and participating in hands-on activities, and other group activities. At individual level analysis, the process of empowering involved working with others, learning decision making skills, managing resources resulting into critical awareness, sense of control and participatory behaviours (Zimmerman, 2000).

Practical/technical skills surfaced were pronounced more from only surviving youth projects than collapsed groups. Surprisingly, members of collapsed projects reported gaining skills in mobilisation and learnt lessons from leadership and financial management. The youths repeatedly talked of financial management, record keeping, leadership, decision-making, communication and visibly technical skills of crop improvement, floriculture, moulding and carpentry work. I am using 'visibly' because I observed those youth in horticulture farm, and carpentry workshop practically doing the work with the guidance of experienced ones. In one of the field visits, one confident youth pointed out:

I have benefited in such way that I have learnt how to do crop improvement, among us here there is a member who has studied agricultural crops; he has also made us members to learn some other activities. I have learnt how to dress tree seedlings, soil mixing, mulching, pruning, and fish farming (FGD CUS007, male participant, 2019).

The technical skills were learnt from practising in their economic activities as demonstrated in the pictures. The skilled and experienced youth guide the junior/unskilled ones.



Plate 4.5: Youth training fellow youth in project activities

From the above photos, the youth were observed preparing the seedlings and others were making furniture, and this demonstrated shared responsibility. The experienced ones guide the juniors, through practical activities. The skills were transferred from one member to the other, which sustains increased benefit and the project. This peer learning and training is most effective in skilling and empowering the youth for self-reliance, what is emphasised in theory as participatory behaviour.

The group leaders attested leadership skills:

I have gained extensive knowledge in leadership; that is why I am the chairperson. I am even the community-based facilitator who train farmers; I can confidently talk and speak in public. The skills I got have helped me to lead this group very well; I know how to handle conflicts among my members (FGD BUNGA008, Group Chairperson, 2019).

Similarly, a teenager mother expressed; “Coming here has helped me to acquire knowledge in business and running business individually. I have an idea of starting it soonest” (FGD BUNGA008, Female Participant, 2019).

Therefore, projects did not only benefit youth directly through cash but other skills as well. Hamilton and Hamilton (2012a) agree with my study When they stipulate that youth group enterprises are forms of work-based learning and youth apprenticeship. Interaction is essential in social learning and skills acquisition during the empowerment process. More still the entrepreneurial training in business planning, financial management, customer care, and quality

standards form the basis for learning (Alemu, 2017; Lemmon, 2012). However, these require enough time for all youth to gain the experience, hence sustainable skilling (O'Neill Berry et al., 2013).

Acquisition of skills builds one's potential to participate in the social, political and economic environment. Other studies link leadership skills to interpersonal skills as a result of interaction among the youth (Midgley, 1997). Skills prepare youth for opportunity recognition, and continuous innovation, learning, value orientation to participate in decision-making and challenge the status quo (Santos, 2012; Sserwanga et al., 2014; Zimmerman, 2000). As emphasised by empowerment theory, skilling the youth builds assets and links them to local resources. This enhances citizen participation, improves and sustains livelihoods (MacNeil, 2013). The skills enhance youth contribution towards positive development of youth themselves and society (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005). Effective skills acquisition necessitates collective effort, networking and togetherness thus strengthening social capital among the youth in society. Such skills and knowledge facilitate generation of new business ideas, introduction of new products thus expansion of the scale of operation.

Expansion of youth income generating activities

There was evidence of expanding youth enterprises in some groups. The overall response to this question was only restricted to already existing enterprises and only one new YIGA (n=9). The findings show that the youth had introduced new products and services, diversified the projects and expanded the scale of operation to incorporate other activities and capture larger market. The increase in funding assisted them to meet working capital requirements and enlarge production. The participants attested to utilising the funds to buy more inputs, stocks, plough big pieces of land and taking more orders from customers. I confirmed this confession at Laban Youth Produce Traders (produce business) store where the youth used funding profitably, repaid the funds and were given more finance (Shs 8,000,000-USD 2,162) which they spent on buying more produce. Through participant observation, I observed 25 sacks (100kg plus each) of produce, which I personally counted and confirmed (see photo in chapter five). In another personal interview with the chairperson of a carpentry and joinery YLP Project, this was pointed out:

These days we do not depend on money from customers to do work, since we got this funding, we can buy all the necessary timber, paint, and nails, so we go ahead and make furniture as we wait for customers to pay. In addition, we accept orders from big customers like schools since we have some capital with us unlike before

this intervention. (IDI 01YIG-P, School Road Carpentry and Joinery Youth Livelihood Project Chairperson).

Some participants expressed the belief that working in gardens or communal farming had become easy and cultivation was that time on large scale:

There is a very big change, we possess four ox-ploughs we are able to plough a big piece of land as compared to before when it was just metres we have also gathered in a small SACCO, so we are able to borrow, and do our own business (FGD PAIO 004, Female Participant, Omel Parish).

Turning to key informants, the issue of diversification and expansion was pronounced:

Youth are able to venture into other projects for example *Kum Atimo* Mixed Farm, began with fish farming, they have gone for horticulture, nursery beds, floriculture, - have been permitted and contracted by MAAIF and are supplying seedlings at good amount of money, and as such, they sustain their businesses (KII 11 MYC, Municipal Youth Chairperson, 2019).

The most interesting observation is that the initially established projects celebrated this achievement, an indication that those who had initial capital and the foundation, applied for the funding to expand the enterprises. This implies that the more cash injected in the venture, the larger the scale of operation, the production activities and replenishment levels are constantly maintained and improved. The reinvestment of profits promotes sustainability of youth enterprises and expanding the impact. Literature has it that business expansion is possible to old youth enterprises with accumulated experience compared to start-ups with no experience (Walukhu, 2015). The achievement was highly significant on produce, mould-concrete making, and carpentry businesses. This demonstrates the fundamental role of financial support and working capital in the sustainability and expansion of the business which is in agreement with similar studies on another youth venture capital fund in Uganda (Ahaibwe & Kasirye, 2015).

With provision of microfinance, youth are supposed to be enterprising to attain productivity, financial stability and sustainability (Di Domenico et al., 2010; Snellinger, 2018; Widyaningrum et al., 2017). In as much as the scholars emphasise finance in promoting the growth of youth enterprises, the two programme are different, commercial banks handled YVCF whereas local governments directly handled the YLP. Therefore, the loan management procedures and perceptions about the funding are different. The enterprise expansion would mean more products created, income generated, and more skills acquired. When youth expand their enterprises, they feel motivated and inspired to work hard for more achievements.

Although injecting more capital fosters expansion, effective financial management skills, and credibility are paramount in ensuring smooth expansion and controlling financial troubles.

Psychological satisfaction

What stood out from all interviews is the feeling of inner satisfaction. The youth emphasised respect in society as what they had gained from YIGs. Correspondingly, themes such as the determination, engagement, feeling of independence, and ‘I can now survive’ emerged from the verbatim. I considered concluding with this realisation because it is a combination of all the achievements discussed above. Surprisingly, most young ones revealed that they felt they respected, and valued in society. Youth enterprises-built comfort, confidence, happiness courage, and recognition of youth in Gulu District. The astonishing finding to research team is that most youth in active groups felt they have gained 100% from the social entrepreneurship intervention. Such narrative is indicative of inner satisfaction. In one of the discussions, all the members expressed their total contentment to the common goal, as a member demonstrated:

Yes yes...staying in a group makes me more comfortable, and committed because I forget about doing other bad things and feel better for my life and future, I don't know how I can express my happiness... I was miserable before... (FGD PAIO 004, Male Participant, 2019).

During a discussion, a female youth corroborated the above:

I am very happy to be part of this project, I feel like I had wasted life, now I have people near me to assist me. I work here get some money to support myself and my kids, i have learnt skills, I am now known in the village, even your (research team) coming here makes us very popularly and happy because the world will know about us ... this is a very good programme... (FGD BUNGL 001, Female Respondent, Bungatira Subcounty).

The above assertions imply the value attached to YIG and the intrinsic motivation the members derive from participating in the group IGA. However, this achievement did not apply on all YIGs, in poorly performing enterprises the members felt discontented. The cooperation, fulfilment of basic needs, skills acquisition and self-employment enhance inner satisfaction among the youth. After meeting the survival needs, the youth urge for sense of belongingness as justified in the Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This enhances the ability to participate in decision-making and other community activities, thus striving to developing their own potentials as they struggle for social change (Santos, 2012). Nevertheless, the programme has not fully heightened the youth's capabilities and empowerment. The variations in achievements scored implies the different interpretations and value individuals to achievements

and our expectations. However, this study did not conduct longitudinal and quasi studies to determine the impact. Other studies on impact evaluation has had experiential research to assess the impact of YLP in youth (Bukonya et al., 2019). The case study below provides the success stories from one of the youth interest groups.

The case for a successful YIG: Project A in Awach subcounty

The YIG is one of the successful youth enterprises in Gulu district. The group started in 2016 with few members as an informal saving group known as *boli i cup*. The saving component was to improve on their welfare and prepare for big celebrations such as Christmas and independence. The group used to organise themselves cultivate for members, and other community to generate cash for these celebrations. In 2017, they recruited more members to meet the 15-member requirement and secure revolving loan from YLP. At the time of focus group discussion, in 2019, the membership had dropped to 10 members, although only six were available for interviews. Female youth got married in distant places, and less committed male youth dropped out.

The YIG received UGX 7,000,000 in 2017 and engaged in produce business such as purchasing maize, soybeans, and sesame grains. The group worked hard and repaid the money within one year as stipulated in the YLP working documents. The profits were reinvested in the business in addition to meeting consumption needs. In 2018, the enterprise was encouraged to apply for more funding, and they received an additional microcredit of UGX 8,000,000 to expand the business. The hard work, timely repayments and successes registered motivated government to fund them twice (i.e., 2017 & 2018). During the interview, the chairperson stated that they repaid the first loan in less than one year. At the time of the interview, the youth had paid the principal (UGX 2,300,000), and they strived to repay the entire amount in the less than a year.

Despite the general challenges such as market instabilities, transport, departure of member and competition from intermediaries, the enterprise registered great achievements compared to any other group in the study area. As discussed in the previous sections, the members' income increased, and fully repaid the first loan. They also used part to buy personal properties; "I have bought domestic animals such as two cows and goats using the money from this group" (FGD AWA, YIG secretary, 2019). Other members as well used the proceeds to buy household utensils, pay school feeds and goats, piglets. Unity is what ensured from working as a team (social capital). One participant expressed "I have learnt a lot from friends, I am now better

than before, we can work together, market together, weed and sell together to me I have obtained a lot from this enterprise” (AWA 006, Male participant, 2019). When I asked about how they can score the interventions, the average score was 92 per cent. This implies that they were satisfied, happy and motivated an indication of successful group.

The youth presented factors for their success, ranging from personal to parent/family contribution, availability of opportunities and prior organisation. The team was motivated, interested, and committed towards achieving the set objectives. During an FGD, a member with excitement stated, we know objectives of the group... we have government money that we knew we are going to pay it back as a condition, so we must work hard to generate the money for repayment, (FGD AWA006, Female Participant, 2019). Another member corroborated “the interest in this business is very high, we make profits, so we cannot leave this group since we are making a lot of money (FGD AWA 006, Male participant, 2019). These quotations present the resilience and entrepreneurial competences that defined project A dealing in produce business in Awach subcounty. Furthermore, success was attributed to parental guidance on how to utilise the money, how and where to buy produce, and at what price. Some parents were engaging in the same business, hence more knowledge, experience, and information about the business. Therefore, parents acted as reference points, mentors, and sales agents to the enterprise. The availability of stock especially during harvest season added to their success. The practice of business management was observed from store management, recordkeeping to time management. Finally, excitement and zeal characterised the members during the interviews. The table below presents the major factors leading to the success of this YIG. The factors were perceptually graded as great, moderate, and small extent.

Table 4.3 The factors for the success of project A in Awach subcounty

Success Variable	Perception
Members’ commitment (trust, interest, unity)	Great extent
Parental involvement	Moderate extent
Prior organisation	Moderate extent
Effective leadership	Moderate Extent
Stock availability	Small extent
Market	Small extent

Source: *Field Data, 2019/2020*

The table above provides a summary of factors for the success of the selected case; they are graded perceptually on a scale of Great extent, Moderate extent and Small extent. The perceptual grading suggests the entrepreneurial commitment as key in fostering success in the

enterprise. Youth dedicated time, energy, and interest towards achieving the set goals and objectives. The high commitment indicates that youth had vision, and motivation towards attaining greatest success. The members trusted each other, their leaders, and this fostered unity in the project. With these entrepreneurship competences, youth capacity is developed to identify opportunities, mobilise resources and translated them into variable ventures (Eme, 2014). The Laban case concurs with Eme (2014) through taking advantage of available cheap produce from the rural setting, government funds to generating income. Therefore, the success of Laban Youth Produce Dealers dwells on visionary membership, but other factors also played a big supplementary role.

4.7 Conclusion

Chapter findings have shown that most youth enterprises were male youth dominated, with few educated youths beyond higher education. Majority youth who engaged in enterprises were married with marital obligations. I observed that despite the UPE and USE programmes, there are youth who were illiterate; thus, the effect of LRA on quality education cannot be underestimated. Agrienterprises dominated youth income generating projects with most youth engaging in agriculture related ventures such as piggery, poultry, crop cultivation and floriculture. The dominance of agrienterprises was attributed to guidance and procedures from the district YLP implementing team, and programme document, and availability of land resource.

The youths were majorly driven by the profit making most especially the young ones while those who were married with family obligations considered hybrid enterprises. The hybridity philosophy ensures the self-sustainability of these enterprises, as they generate income; they also aim at social value. Enterprise formation was guided by programme procedures stipulated in the MoGLSD-YLP Document; however, the implementers at district level had to impose some other regulations to foster the programme implementation. Initially by third sector played an important role in instilling social entrepreneurial spirits in youth, thus acting as a motivation for establishment of enterprises. Political timing played a great role in the formation of most groups; parental guidance and family environment fostered the successful operation of youth enterprises. Some youth groups sustain the IGA through diversifications, proper inventory management, and reinvestment for financial returns expansion. This accounted for the benefits registered from the enterprises.

This further chapter tackled the benefits gained by youth from the entrepreneurial programme, highlighting the gains registered by the successful youth. All youth acknowledged to have received the funding from government to conduct their business activities. The level of achievement depended on how the finance was utilised. Although all the YIGs had received funding from YLP, very few enterprises attested to had registered gains. Most members felt the interventions had met their expectations. Only two groups in Gulu district were progressive and had completed repaying the revolving fund to 100 percent with one of them receiving additional funding for enterprise expansion. This most successful YIG was Laban Youth Produce Dealers presented as a case study. This implied that very few youth groups succeeded and had registered benefits. The few surviving youth projects were those that started before the programme (YLP) implementation, and these had expanded enterprises, increased income, and improved social welfare, skills acquisition through peer learning, respect, and strengthened social capital. These findings suggested that youth who benefited were psychologically satisfied with their operations. However, a big percentage of YIGs failed in their operations, implying more livelihood challenges. These challenges are the focus of the subsequent chapter.

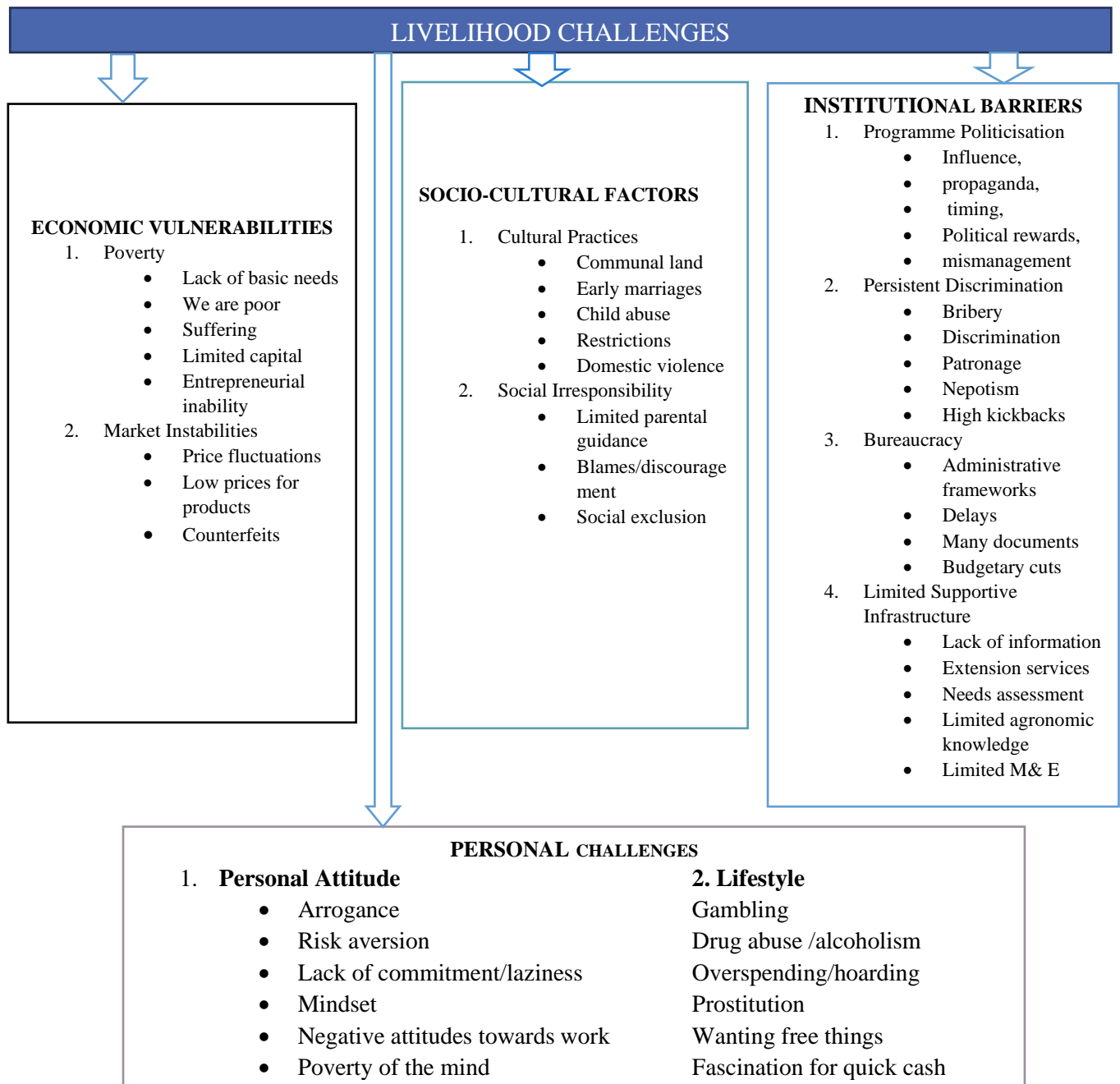
CHAPTER FIVE: LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES ON YOUTH SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the key question was on the challenges facing youth in the enterprises. The previous chapter tackled nature of enterprises and showed that few YIGs registered success stories in as far as empowerment is concerned. I focused on this objective in order to investigate factors limiting youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. It is relevant to point out that findings from the study might look peculiar in relation to what the norm is in other regions simply because Acholi sub region in Northern Uganda presents somewhat a unique situation. It is unique that northern Uganda experienced two decades of war, thus many youths grew up during the LRA war, and post-conflict situation. The analysis of this question yielded many themes, which are organised, presented, and discussed (see the illustration on figure 6.1). Throughout the various interviews, focus groups and field observations, the participants expressed concepts in their narratives that reflected social, economic, personal, institutional, political, and environmental discontentment limiting youth potentials. The different participants' stories, ideas, observations pragmatic views and interpretations have been conceptualised and summarised as 'Livelihood Challenges'. The views were coded, categorised into sub-themes, summarised, and closely linked to each other. They are presented as economic vulnerabilities, institutional barriers, socio-economic factors, and personal challenges. There were also entrepreneurial weaknesses hindering youth progress in YIGs. The challenges affected the personal life, groups, as well as performance of youth enterprises. They limited youth social missions, and sustainability of YIGs.

I first present themes emerging from transcripts in the diagram below, followed by the interpretation and discussion.

Figure 5.1 Thematic presentation of findings



Author's Diagram, 2019-2021

5.1 Economic Vulnerabilities to Youth Empowerment

This theme captures those sentiments that many participants expressed as they decried the youth economic woes. Economic vulnerabilities are an umbrella term used in this thesis to describe the economic challenges to youth entrepreneurship and empowerment in Gulu district, Acholi subregion. The participants emphasised that the youth face multiple economic

constraints limiting attainment of achievement of set social missions. The economic vulnerabilities threaten the dignity, confidence, and livelihoods of millions of young people (ILO, 2010). In developing and emerging countries economic drawbacks impacting on youth are manifested in youth unemployment, social hazards associated with periods of inactivity and disillusion and frustrations (Elder, 2010; Sikenyi, 2017). The youth lamented that they were exposed to many economic risks related to production, distribution, supply chain, finance, and consumption. My study conceptualised these as market instabilities, and poverty as the major risks to youth entrepreneurship and socio-economic empowerment in northern Uganda. These have heavy consequences on the lives, potentials, and endeavours towards attaining their aspirations. These are further discussed in the sub-themes below.

Market instabilities to youth entrepreneurship.

The root of cause of youth suffering mentioned was the market volatility, especially those engaging or intending to engage in economic ventures. Youth who were active in their projects stated that limited market opportunities threatened youth entrepreneurial progress. While some youth struggled to engage in agrienterprises and carpentry (rural and urban) respectively, the market for their products was either very low or absent amidst high input costs. The study findings show that the youth engaging in crop production, horticulture, and produce business felt the pain from price fluctuations, very low prices for the harvest and counterfeit inputs leading to losses. The urban youth dealing in manufacturing decried the challenge of limited market for their products due to competition from imported products, and products (such as bread) from other parts of the country. Similarly, they operated at a very small scale, in this case not able to access orders from big market customers such as institutions. Such market failures impeded the efforts of the youth for the most part of motivation depends on rate of return on investment. A participant stated:

We suffer from price fluctuation after harvesting; there is no available market for our maize, sesame, soya beans and beans, we give it away anyhow-at a very low price locally known as '*lap lap*', we lose the effort, time, and the money we used in planting, weeding, market is our biggest challenge (FGD PAIO 004, Female Participant, 2019).

In the same way, the key informants concurred with this conforming that market constraints retarded the prosperity of active youth entrepreneurship. Furthermore, participants explained that at times, young agri-entrepreneurs face competition from other large-scale producers, produce from neighbouring countries, and worst of all is inaccessibility to market (remoteness).

Then the other final thing is marketing, markets are very challenging these days. With the influx of produce from neighbouring countries such as Kenya, and Tanzania. Youth can grow a lot of maize then the prices fall. Last year maize prices dropped during second season as low as shs 300 per kilogramme from the average of shs 700. Really, you do not see anyone making money from those crops. When there is a lot of influx of maize from Kenya and Tanzania, maize here loses value. When Kenya goes out of production our prices shoot high (KII 4PM-T, Partnership Manager, 2019).

This statement implies there are no market linkages and commercial infrastructure, for example market bazars, specific market stalls for the youth, marketing information centres and cooperatives, as was also observed in the YEDF Kenya (Irungu & Kamau, 2015). Although the demand for the agricultural output may be available, the youth have limited marketing skills, and avenues, and most rural youth engage crop production fetching lower prices (Harris et al., 2011). Furthermore, the youth lack access to marketing and value addition opportunities to fetch higher prices from agriculture products. In this case, the youth are incapable of creating value for customer and building strong customer relationships to capture and build a big customer base (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009). Ultimately, minimal income is generated from the ventures resulting into not only underdeveloped youth entrepreneurial development but also eventual collapse. Connected to the above economic woes to youth empowerment is poverty.

Poverty challenge to youth entrepreneurship

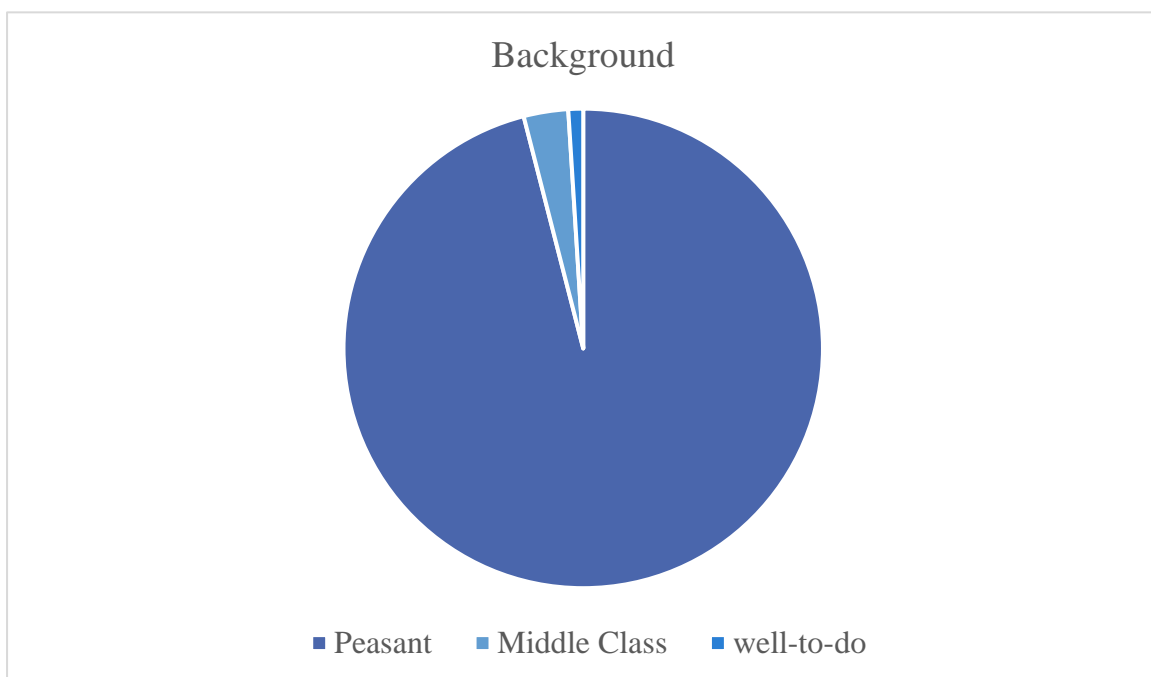
Poverty was reported as a major challenge to youth progress in entrepreneurship. Although, social entrepreneurship interventions are meant to alleviate poverty, participant revealed poverty as a major hindrance to the success of most YIGs. Most youth used part of the funding to meet basic needs instead of investing in income generating activities. Youth spent more time looking for other means of survival than concentrating on group activities. In seeking to investigate and analyse the major challenges to youth, I considered the notion of poverty as a threat to youth entrepreneurship. In all interviews, discussions and observations, poverty remained a major challenge to youth empowerment, despite the presence of entrepreneurship interventions. This study examined youth perceptions on poverty, its causes and the consequences.

I posed a question on the youth's understanding of poverty. Majority of the youth understood poverty as lack of basic needs of life, while others view poverty as simply being poor, while others perceived poverty as failure to enjoy better life. The inference drawn from this information is that a large number of youths lacked necessities such as food, clothing, quality

shelter, medical care and water. During FGDs at the homes, I experienced youth with their children dressed in torn clothing, while others looked very miserable and needy too. Therefore, they were disempowered, frustrated as they struggled for survival. A small portion of young youth view poverty as failure to enjoy better life and others visualise poverty from a narrow perspective of economic gains and luxurious life, justice, and equity (Eyber & Ager, 2003). The above observations imply that poverty is a dynamic process of economic, social, political and cultural deprivation which affects the youth at individual and community levels often posing barriers to accessing basic necessities, and investment platforms.

To analyse further the poverty encounter, a question was asked on youth's family background, and majority of the youth came from peasant families. Majority of the youth originated from peasantry families with a small proportion hailing from middle class and well-to-do families were urban-based. Social demographic composition presented in chapter four shows family background. Although, this is a qualitative study, the illustration below provides a visual presentation of background in relation to youth socio-economic background. The illustration

Figure 5.2 Participants' family background



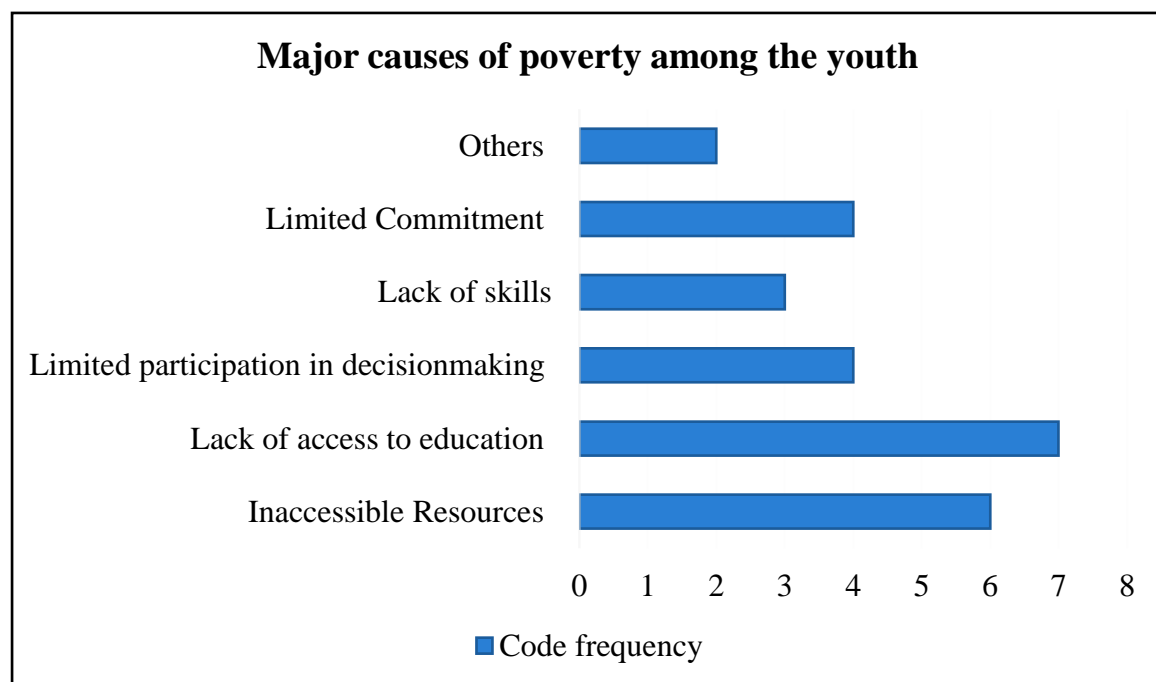
Source: *Field Data, 2019/2020*

The above illustration indicated that almost all the youth were very poor and hailing from the peasantry background despite engaging in enterprises. The incapacitated families cannot afford basic needs, quality education, and resources for entrepreneurship and subsequent empowerment for their children. The human capital development remains very low, thus justifying chronic poverty and unemployment among youth in the study site. The study proceeded with determining what accelerates poverty among the youth in the region.

Factors leading to poverty among the youth.

The finding on majority poor youth above prompted my investigation into the causes of poverty among the youth, and the discussions and observations pointed to a number of multiple causes. Poverty in war-affected areas goes beyond a single cause but many factors, hence, this question allowed participants to suggest as many causes as possible, which were categorised and presented according to code frequencies in the bar graph below.

Figure 5.3 Major causes of poverty among the youth



Source: *Field Data, 2019/2020*

The findings in figure 5.3 show limited or lack of access to resources such as land, capital, and limited access to quality education as the main causes of poverty among the young people in Gulu district. As discussed under unemployment, youth themselves attributed poverty to laziness and lack of skills while females blamed poverty on limited participation in decision-

making. Limited commitment was repeatedly directed to more male than female youth. Limited education and lack of skills is justified by findings on education level which portrayed that most of the youth were primary (PLE) and secondary education (UCE) leavers. Majority youth had dropped out of school before completing either primary seven or ordinary levels. Therefore, youth are either unskilled or semi-skilled hence unable to compete for job opportunities and utilise the available resources and entrepreneurial programmes. The youth blamed lack of quality education on the LRA war; this handicapped their parents, when it comes to skills, knowledge, and exposure (FGD PAT010, 2020). A key informant corroborated this:

During the war, a parent or both lost lives leaving the young ones to head family. Being child headed family you cannot provide each and everything for your siblings. Then within that period, the youth could not continue with their studies. You realise that before even getting mature enough, and with the problems encountered at home, a boy would decide that let me get a girl to be as my wife... However, you realise that the cycle of the problems continues. Because as you get married when you are still young, you produce a child when you are still young; you are unable to support the child with for further studies and those other necessities like fees...' (KII 3DYC, District Youth Chairperson, 2019).

Consequently, the youth faced challenges while seeking for jobs, and establishing self-employment ventures. The above findings support studies which stressed that youth raised in poverty have a likelihood of living poor as adults (Machell et al., 2016). Accordingly, poverty is transmitted from one generation to the next in what Birds and Higgins call IGT (Bird & Higgins, 2011). The presence of resources probably cannot yield positive results with limited knowledge, skills, exposure, and positivity. The finding backs Burt et al. (2014) who noted that poverty situation is worse in post conflict societies affected with civil war. The situation incapacitates young generation thus reducing the confidence, connection and contribution and demotivates positive values to growth (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005). This incapacitation restricts not only access to income and basic needs of life but fundamental freedoms of choice, decision making and inability to lead the lives the youth reason to value (Sen, 1987, 1992).

More developing countries are struggling with poverty pandemic and with youthful population who are the most affected generation (Burt et al., 2014). Evidence shows that northern Uganda is the most deprived region, with Acholi subregion as second poorest region in Uganda (Levine et al., 2014) after Karamoja region eastern Uganda. Although SDGs focus on eradicating

extreme poverty by 2030, youth in northern Uganda are significantly poor implying a huge challenge to attainment of these goals.

Similarly, literature shows that employable skills alone cannot generate employment among the youth, there is need for adequate finance for youth investments (V. Singh, 2016). Notably individual youth with innovative business ideas are hindered from progressing thus remaining poor. The inaccessibility stems from the absence of support from parents, organisations, and government. Equally important is the issue of lack of participation in decision-making and a sense of direction as regards allocation and management of finance and empowerment programmes. Thus, limited resources reported in this study as curtailing youth from engaging productive venture, hence poverty challenge.

When it comes to personal blame for poverty, the issue of laziness and limited participation in decision-making were uncovered. Although poverty is attributed to demand and supply sides, personal contribution should not be ignored. In the region, land is available and fertile, government provides some resources under programmes such as YLP, NUSAF III but the lazy youth have opted for urban life of sport betting, drinking and prostitution. Admittedly, some participants disregard limited resources as the main cause, they consider laziness, mind-sets as major factors contributing to poverty among youth generation. Occasionally, during the FGD, the participants refer to it as ‘poverty of the mind’.

I agree poverty is the biggest challenge in this community; though we attribute poverty to lack of capital to start own businesses, laziness is the biggest issue, many youths spend their time playing cards and sports betting, how do you expect such to fight poverty? (IDI 01YIG-P, YIG Leader, 2019).

A youth councillor reiterated:

The youth have poor mindset, they do not want to work, and laziness is killing them. Land is available and fertile but many want good life in town and trading centres, yet they have not worked for it. They are also fearful, and lack the confidence to present their views to us leaders (FGD MYC, Youth leader, 2019).

These findings categorically indicate that limited commitment to work continues to deprive youth successful entrepreneurship and better life. As we focus on the external environment and poverty among the youth, the issue of personal motivation to work, and participation play a greatest role in promoting youth self-employment and empowerment. Absence of participation in decision-making, delinks the young people from local resources and skilling opportunities, thereby hindering empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000). The youth’s passions to work are

negative, there is generally, lack of intrinsic, materialistic, instrumental and individualistic patterns of work in the region (Andersson et al., 2017). Ultimately, the high level of laziness means high levels poverty in community, therefore tackling personal attitude to work is central.

In addition, the youth feel powerless, isolated, desperate, hopelessness, and socially excluded (Lubaale, 2019). In one of the personal interviews with a youth after an FGD, I observed the hopelessness, loss of self-confidence, a sense of helplessness, anger as the youth were dressed in torn and dirty clothing, smoking, and drunk as early as 2.00 o'clock. During the field interviews, many urban youths were sitting in betting centres, at verandas of bars and shops while playing cards, and idle staring aimlessly into space over the sky as early as 10:00am. One sad youth explained the worrying situation at home:

You see me here, sometimes I sleep hungry; I stay at my sister's place who is also very poor, our parents very poor too, and you can see the kind of shirt I am putting on. At times, I feel like committing suicide, but I come here for comfort, when friends have some '*arege*' (local gin) I can taste and have sleep (FGD AWA002, Male participant, 2019).

Such an assertion implies that the youth have given up in life, with negative beliefs about the future and do not plan. According to the Positive Youth Development framework, youth without self-efficacy, high order thinking skills, positive identity and diligence are less healthy and less productive. Therefore, they are subjected to more suffering and misery, and this calls for an investigation into the effects of poverty.

Consequences of poverty on youth

Regarding consequences of poverty, participants reported multiple disastrous effects on the youth and general community. In this case, high crime rate was emphasised as the most calamitous effect, other indicated disease outbreak and some youth stated that poverty leads to family breakdown. Land conflicts was as well reported where youth wanted to sell part of ancestral land to buy motorcycles. Youth felt frustrated and resorted to alcohol and substance abuse and suicide. Some female participants reported that their husbands ran away from homes because they could not afford food, school fees and accommodation, ultimately leading to family breakdown. Many participants were confidently zeroing on HIV/AIDS as a common disease threatening youth productivity due to poverty. Some youth contended that female youth engaged in prostitution and sexual behaviour at a cost of as little as UGX 2,000 (less than a dollar) because they lacked the necessities of life. In one of the interviews in a rural subcounty,

a participant in a loud voice sounded HIV/AIDS as rampant and serious problem due to chronic poverty in region.

HIV/AIDS is high among the youth than the adults. Many of young girls have resorted to selling themselves for money. When you move around town at night, you will see girls of 15, 16, 18, 19, 20-24 years standing along the way selling themselves. Such risky behaviours can result to HIV-AIDS and death (FGD MYC, Female Youth Councillor, 2019).

To confirm this, I undertook an evening walk in the urban suburbs most especially Pece and Layibi divisions, and observed young girls standing on streets, bars, and disco and nightclub areas attracting clients. This affects youth productivity and confidence to participate in business activities.

Without doubt, such revelations indicate HIV/AIDS as a major threat to youth entrepreneurship and empowerment, and puts the youth at risk of less productivity, illness and vicious cycle of poverty. The participants indicated that HIV/AIDS results into loss of finance, loss of job, lack of participation in economic activities, stigma and discrimination. This finding is in agreement with studies in Sub-Saharan Africa (Liberia, Burundi, Rwanda) which shown that most young people engage in commercial sex, social networks, drug abuse increasing susceptibility to HIV-AIDS and its associated consequences of illness, less productivity, trauma and death (Harris et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2005; Namuggala, 2017). Studies by Kimera et al. (2019) in Kabarole further corroborate the study stating that youth feel stigmatised, ridiculed when they are suffering from HIV/AIDS. Therefore, poverty in war affected areas is associated with more poverty, unemployment and the lifestyles.

On the contrary, less than a half of youth provided positive side of poverty such as enhanced creativity and innovation, motivation, utilisation of available resources to starting own IGAs and teamwork. Regardless of the positive consequences stated by some participants, the narratives on negative effects, implies that poverty is a serious threat to youth entrepreneurship and empowerment in Gulu district, northern Uganda. Globally, one billion people live less than one US Dollar a day, reports by Uganda National Household Survey indicate that over 7.5 million Ugandans are still poor with the incident of poverty is highest in Acholi subregion northern Uganda 34.7 per cent, and the young people are the most affected (UBOS, 2017). Conclusively, when poor youth are inspired, nurtured and facilitated, they can develop aspirations, exploit the available capitals and take advantage of market opportunities for enhanced youth entrepreneurship and empowerment.

5.2 Socio-cultural factors to youth entrepreneurial intentions.

For the study, I conceptualise socio-cultural factors as shocks/barriers stemming from cultural practices, norms, behaviours, and responsibilities in a given society where youth live. The intention was to establish whether society encourages or discourages youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. Several respondents commented on cultural issues as hindering blocks to youth entrepreneurship. The participants in rural areas mostly reported cultural practices and social responsibility as barriers to youth livelihood. Understanding the influence of culture of a given society is fundamental in describing the youth situation in the region as regards to enablement.

Cultural Practices

Regarding this, a question posed sought to test the youth about the existence of cultural factors limiting their empowerment. The youth agreed that in their communities, there are practices that affected their economic performance, and empowerment. The participants mentioned early marriages, lack of/restricted land ownership, discrimination and social exclusion in meetings and other investment opportunities. Majority of those interviewed revealed that cultural factors limited youth empowerment while less than a half of the participants disregarded cultural factors as an obstacle to youth empowerment. Female youth stressed a challenge of marginalisation when it comes to land utilisation and exclusion from opportunities as blockades to achieving goals and ambitions. Females were the most hit by this challenge since they were prone to divorce, marginalisation, and separation. Furthermore, males took control of decision-making in most YIGs. Males dictated on nature of business to start, whether their wives could join a specific enterprise/group or not.

The female participants claimed that most times they were not permitted to own land, participate in economic activities such as operating a butchery, construction, *boda boda* and operate recreational venture such as bars. Communal land ownership was reported as a major obstacle to investment in agriculture, one of the male participants argued that family members inhibit individual youth from utilising the land. Contrary to this, many youths disagreed with this, revealing that in their families they can utilise the land resources. The divergent views resulted from different family settings, and values. Youth who were born and raised in their biological families had rights to utilise the land whereas those born outside marriage, reported denial of land rights.

During focus group discussions, female participants claimed the children they produced while at their parent's home were discriminated and denied rights to land ownership and such children are regarded as 'foreigners'³⁰. Likewise, the divorced women were denied land for farming since they belonged to another family (husband's home). Land ownership and utilisation is not an entitlement to them but the prerogative of family members:

Once we leave our homes for marriage, we are not supposed to own land. The culture proposes that we should only own at our husbands' homes. In case of divorce, the children we produce are also denied land that they are bastards; we are just like this... (FGD BUNGL 001, Female Participant, 2019).

In the same way, AK emphasised this:

Culturally, the children born out of divorce are denied land, thus remaining landless and poor. They are treated as foreigners (locally referred to as '*lutino luk*'), however, hardworking one is, no land for productive agriculture, so they remain miserable and take refuge in towns, and you know the life there (FGD BUNGL 001, Female Participant, 2019).

These assertions suggest that the culture is deep rooted in resource ownership and use and affect youth participation in development in the area. The male youth with entrepreneurial competences and investment prospects requiring land were prohibited and discouraged by cultural silo mentalities. Studies by ILO on youth and entrepreneurship corroborate this findings postulating social and cultural barriers to youth start-ups (Schoof, 2006). Most significantly, the boy child is discriminated more than the girls are and such treatment exemplifies gender-based discrimination (Dibaba, 2017; Sommers & Uvin, 2011).

The society stereotyping, labelling, and nicknaming discourages the youth, deny them opportunities towards contributing to entrepreneurship and economic development. As stressed in previous studies in the region, negative attitudes and stereotyping against women discourages and makes them feel inferior to participating in decision making and matters of development (Omona & Aduo, 2013). The young ones are most exposed which increases poverty, inequity as well as the growth of scarcity and disappointment in life (Pereira & Coutinho, 2019). In the end, these negative messages about youth limit life options, and may lead to poor choices in life regarding use of resources, time, potentials, career growth and empowerment.

³⁰ Stereotyping on children who are born while women are not officially married or divorced, outside the wedlock.

Social injustice

Parents and society play an important role in upbringing of the children and young people. Many parents had failed to play a mentorship and inspirational role in fostering entrepreneurial spirits in the youth in the area. The study discovered that parents were failing to play a leading role in enhancing youth empowerment. Some parents in rural areas failed to educate the girl child, confined them with domestic duties such as house chores, and garden work than engaging in youth enterprises. Parents further denied youth access to valuable resources such as land; the youth were rendered voiceless when it comes to utilisation. It was evident male youth dominated all YIGs, since most females had gotten married in distant districts of Pader, Amuru, Soroti, and West Nile. The members of the society, too, were reported to be barriers to the youth entrepreneurship. Parents entertained early marriage, and shield defilement cases justifying that early marriage shape family lives of women. Furthermore, it was reported that the children were left to attend night parties, own houses³¹ (as early as 14 years of age) and enjoy discos in towns and market days without parental control thus exposing them to risky behaviour. Referring to this issue, one key informant had this to explain:

The issue of cultural is affecting some youth. The issue of defilement is very high, girls are defiled, they are married off when they are still young, and parents conceal information. The conservative parents say that girls are supposed to get married when they are still young before, they are spoilt... (KII 6ACDS, 2019).

These acts exposed the youth to risks such as HIV/AIDS, dropping out of school and early pregnancies. In addition to the right to quality, education and better life is denied. Such practices explain why early marriages and teenage pregnancies are common in rural areas. These reduced female concentration and engagement in income generating activities supported under YLP. Majority of female participants recorded primary level of education, and I observed very young girls in rural areas attending interviews/FGDs with their own children. Other youth revealed that society members deny youth opportunities under disguise of the age deficit (that they are still young to manage). Female youth were confined for domestic work such as house chores, childbearing among others. Surprisingly, even those who are educated are discouraged and blocked from work opportunities by family (such as husbands) and other community members, and thus, confining them on domestic work.

³¹ A house in this sense meant grass-thatched huts (traditional) which are constructed by youth, so they are independent from their parents.

Then also culturally, we have educated women who are restricted by husbands from taking certain job opportunities. I handled an issue with one of the girls who was working in one of the companies here in Gulu; the company decided to post her to new branch in Lamwo as a head. The woman is a hardworking person; however, the husband refused her arguing that she cannot work far and leave him alone. You see! (KII 3DYC, District Youth Chairperson, 2019).

Therefore, this social injustice creates an imbalance between male and female in families, yet families are supposed to be building blocks for entrepreneurship, safe, and sustainable communities (Gillies, 2008), parents and other family members are supposed to foster and transmit core values to the young ones. Multiple social responsibilities and conservative social norms (Ramadan, Abdel-Tawab, El Sayed, & Roushdy, 2014) restrict female mobility and flexibility in actively engaging in entrepreneurial activities, and consequently few female youth in entrepreneurship interventions. Parents and society members are always held responsible for the behaviour and development of children (Gillies, 2008). However, laxity and irresponsibility affect youth entrepreneurship and wellbeing. The ensuing mistreatment retards social and economic development not only on present but future generation well and the entire community.

5.3 Institutional barriers

When discussing institutional challenges to youth socio-economic empowerment, the key questions focused on organisational practices in government institutions, limiting youth from YLP and the influence on youth empowerment. The youth talked of structural challenges which affected access to funding and performance in enterprises. Basing on the various perspectives, views, and other observations, three common sub-themes. There are:

- i) Politicisation of government programmes with political manipulation and lack of clear representations at all levels,
- ii) Persistent discrimination whenever youth opportunities prevail for exploitation and utilisation, and youth do not get a fair share of their needs; and,
- iii) Limited supportive infrastructure to sustaining youth livelihood activities and ensure productivity. Many participants offered both system and individual multiple descriptions of the challenge. Each of these is discussed further below:

Politicisation of youth entrepreneurship programme

Concerning politics, the study explored the extent to which the political environment limited the youth potentials. Most of the participants recounted that political influence as among major challenge to youth livelihood interventions in the region. The youth were politically manipulated right from inception to implementation of the programme. The research found out that youth were brainwashed towards perceiving government funds as free money meant for consumption. The participants explained that politics influence a lot in many livelihood programmes. The political campaigns of 2015, 2016 affected youth decision making on formation of YIGs, and investment decisions. Political propaganda on youth empowerment programmes yielded misconceptions and subsequent mismanagement of the entrepreneurship programmes. The youth lamented that the politicians exploited them during campaigns, influenced decisions and misled them on the actual purpose. The ineffective communication yielded confusion, mistrust, conflicts and social exclusion in most interventions. Others who did not subscribe to a particular political party reported exclusion from technical, material and financial benefits. Unfortunately, the programmes meant for the youth were diverted to specific adults (beyond constitutional age) amidst youth political leadership. There was a case of a 40-year-old member of a YIG at Custom Corner Village Gulu City, yet the maximum age was 30 years.

Further, there was Local Council I chairperson in Awach subcounty who listed his children and wives as beneficiaries of a programme meant for youth. In similar scenario, the district leaders were reported to having registered youth beneficiaries who subscribed to the ruling party the NRM leaving those opposed to ruling party. Participants overwhelmingly reported that they lacked leadership and representation at sub counties and municipal divisions to drive youth interests. They lamented that most leaders satisfy personal and party interests:

Lack of representation at the sub county is another challenge we face. People who are elected represent their own interests and forget us. Even the youth leaders we have do not come to us to seek for our own views and learn about challenges we face. Therefore, no one knows what we go through (FGD UNY003, female participant Unyama Sub County, 2019).

Literature supports this excerpt stressing that the existence of many youth development programmes may not change the youth livelihoods.

The youth development landscape is populated with various youth entrepreneurship and state supported employment schemes, presumably to address the issues of

youth employment and economic empowerment. However, many of these have neither significantly affected youth unemployment nor youth economic empowerment (Charles & Jameson-Charles, 2014, p.50).

Such an assertion implies that politics often gets into the way of doing what is best for the youth. The youth are indoctrinated into perceiving socio-economic programmes as political structures and platforms for winning electorates thus reducing the economic motivation.

Further investigation showed that political heads had branded the programmes to be free government cash meant for campaigns, therefore, the youth were overwhelmed about the programme. This swept away the contribution, economic independence, and competence enshrined in the PYDA. Many youths got attracted to form groups to enjoy government free money without consideration for investment, productivity, and repayment. Others referred to the funding as presidential cash meant for votes and consumption. Therefore, political influence took midpoint stage as attested by the youth political leaders.

There was political influence in youth livelihood programme. The politicians exploited the youth in their campaigns in 2015, and 2016, they used this government intervention to attract support and decisions. We were misled by these MPs, local council candidates, for example, they told us to eat the YLP money since it was free. We rushed to form groups and grab the cash for enjoyment (FGD MYC, Municipal Youth Council, 2019).

The district youth leaders corroborated:

We had much political interference during group formation. We started in 2014 when it was about to get to general elections. People would say go and get the money from the government, *go... go... go...* and form the group. We just formed the group without knowing each other. At times you just call anyone who is just smoking his/her *bangi* (marijuana) to sincerely come and join a group, what kind of group shall we expect? ... The political selection is spoiling the benefits, check; the new groups are aligned to the political heads in a division or subcounty. Some youth with good and genuine projects are being stepped on. Some political heads want to reward some groups as a way of preparing for 2021, to claim that “when he/she was in office youth benefited”. A group was deferred claiming that it was not known in the area, because one of the group members was campaigning for opposition candidate (FGD MYC, Male Councillor, District Youth Council, 2019).

With such political showcase, many youths obtained funds and used them for personal enjoyment than to achieve the actual goals of the programme. The quotes opine the fact that the entrepreneurship intervention became a political tool to garner support from majority youthful population. Even the nomenclature of enterprises, that is, ‘*youth interest groups*’ is a question of debate. In whose interest? Is it government or young people interest? Politics is

powerful in influencing matters of the society, people believe more in political leaders than technocrats. Although, Ejang (2020) notes that in Lira district in northern Uganda the process of selecting beneficiaries was transparent and participatory, this study established the contrary with politicians manipulating the process while favouring the relatives, and supporters. From my opinion, the divergence in the two findings is due to the differences in district leadership and administration for both Gulu and Lira districts. A similar study in northern Uganda stressed personalisation of YLP programme by politicians, and concurred with the earlier previous sentiments in this study that the funding was a political reward (Uwonda, Ejang, Biromumeisho, Kansime, & Ojok, 2017b).

More literature portrays political interest and influence as a major hindrance in the allocation of youth development funds as politicians tend to favour supporters and exploit fractionalisation for own political benefit in Kenya (Asaka et al., 2012; Kamau & Mohamed, 2015; Walukhu, 2015). With political misinformation, propaganda and intoxication ghost groups formed. Thus, most groups dissolved immediately after receiving cash. Other projects were mismanaged and neglected by owners since it was free government money hence susceptibility to natural and market vulnerabilities. Furthermore, politics breeds discrimination and with this discrimination, youth feel that programmes are meant for specific individuals, and adults, thus limited from application and utilisation (Ndhlovu & Twala, 2017). With this observation, I can conclude that though some youth benefited, many youth groups registered failures due to political influence and others undermentioned factors. Consequently, involving politicians in youth entrepreneurship programmes kills the landscape and aspirations for youth self-employment. The lack of transparency and authentic political climate disregards the voices of the youth, hence failure to addressing the most intractable social problems (Collins & Clay, 2009). Decisions are repeatedly made without a clear understanding of needs of target audience (youth), and breeds wastage and funding youth who are less productive. With the limited youth involvement in policy decisions and communication, a big hoopla is made since the result of the policy is not addressed effectively.

Persistent discrimination as a barrier to youth entrepreneurship

Related to the above, inequality featured in all focus discussions and interviews conducted. Likewise, the study found out corruption as a common characteristic in most technical offices managing YLP. In this case, the youth claimed that government funds were not equally distributed. Further exploration showed that youth with innovative ideas and social

entrepreneurship acumen were left out, the youth had to bribe so that they access government funding, in addition to embezzling available resources before they reached the youth. In addition, local councils recommended only youth born and raised in areas most especially in rural areas, thus leaving out newly married females, and youth living in the district. Sometimes the officials solicited for bribes before youth accessed funding at district level (the participants repeatedly termed it as ‘kickback’). The participants lamented that the inability to raise bribes, excluded most youth from livelihood programmes. In this regard, one participant had this to say:

Corruption in government institutions is very high. This is especially when they are offering jobs; the officials discriminate against us. They even ask for bribes before we access any funding/jobs. Some project implementing staff demand for something before you access work opportunities, or support (FGD DYCFemale Councillor, 2019).

The above statement implies that those who had the resources to bribe or accept to forfeit part of the funding as a ‘kickback’ only accessed the programme. The youth felt neglected, demotivated, and perceived government entrepreneurship programmes to be for a specific group of youth hailing from well-known and connected families. This reduced the initiative to exploit livelihood opportunities and undertake enterprises for empowerment. Furthermore, the sustainability drive of youth social entrepreneurs is minimised. Others studies confirm this finding presenting lack of transparency, corruption and rigid processes as additional challenges to discrimination which minimise youth initiative to innovation and entrepreneurship (Schoof, 2006; Uddin et al., 2015).

More still, the issue of discrimination took a centre stage in all the interviews. Youth indicated that central and local government officials concealed information about opportunities from them in addition to exclusion from planning and implementation. The youth council concurred that corruption played a big role in denying youth livelihood opportunities. They argued that most government programmes were opportunities for seeking political offices notably at subcounty, district and national level. Additionally, if programmes were channelled through the subcounty or district, politics still unreasonably blocked some beneficiaries in favour of few supporters. Thirdly, technical staff used youth funds for personal gains. The elders and officials often disguised under young age, youth inability and unpreparedness to deny youth opportunities, yet it was politics at work.

In my division, there is the issue of political parties; you find the youth group with many people from particular political party. Whenever they fill forms, they may not succeed due to party affiliation. Those that party officials do not like will not go through. Most of groups being formed have their members from opposition, and if they never campaigned for a particular political leader, they are not endorsed for consideration and any other opportunity (KII 10YFC, Female Youth Councillor, 2019).

Other youth leaders corroborated the above finding acknowledging that both political leaders and technical staff undermined the youth efforts towards utilising the available funding. This negatively affected their energy, effort, management abilities, and opportunity. One FGD participant, in this regard, said:

Even if programmes are meant for the youth, the kind of lamentation you get is that the young ones cannot manage such projects. The elders bar poor youth from accessing education, support such as scholarships. You find opportunities are being given but when you do not have attachment to a kind of office, you do not access it even... During funding, you find a political head dictating that make sure so and so does not get any funding here. This is especially, in Laroo and Layibi divisions. There must be a direct link or attachment to political heads. This calls for leadership and responsibility to make sure all youth are considered (FGD DYC, Youth Councillor Municipal Council, 2019).

These statements were not criticisms of the public sector but reflected the reality of the current situation in the country. The silo mentalities among the technical and political leaders disadvantage qualified youth from exercising economic and social rights. The quotation demonstrates the inequality and inequity existing both central and local governments in country. The political and economic exclusion render the youth voiceless and economically vulnerable (Porter, Hampshire, Mashiri, Dube, & Maponya, 2010). The youth are left hopeless, distrustful, and less motivated to compete for available opportunities in both government and third sector. The spill over effect spread to the utilisation of local resources hence undermining the application of principles of positive youth development and empowerment frameworks (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). The absence of confidence in available programmes kills the initiative to work thus reducing the landscape for inspiration and resilience. The discrimination was manifested in documentation that was intended to deny youth opportunity to participate in entrepreneurial interventions. This was conceptualised as bureaucracy.

Bureaucratic tendencies

Associated with institutional barriers is the bureaucracy that entangled most youth activities. Some participants expressed the belief that the programme was a template marred with difficult procedures, budgetary cuts, documentation, and intentional delays. The guidelines were dictated from the central government without the involvement of beneficiaries and other community stakeholders. The business plans, constitutions were already designed only requiring the youth to fill in the names. In some sub counties, the Community Development Officers dictated the business names. Surprisingly, the YLP document from central government (Ministry) contains an array of investment options for skills development and livelihood support respectively (MoGLSD, 2013). Nonetheless, district officials complicated the process limiting activities and choice. The youth admitted that the exercise was too procedural, forms very hard to understand for illiterate youth, in addition, officers dictated the activities.

There was filling forms from the sub county, delays at the sub county, taking forms to the district, and I hear forms go to the ministry. Being very remote, it is very hard to access the sub county and district headquarters, when you are filling forms, they force you to include specific activities (FGD PAIS 005 Male Participant, Paicho Subcounty).

From the documents reviewed, during the YLP stakeholders' meeting the issue of bureaucracy surfaced, "The forms are too complicated for many youth groups to understand, especially many who did not go to school, and there is too much documentation (Focal Point Office Report, 2018)".

Additionally, the process was very slow, with many documents to fill (in English), and delays in disbursement of funds and implementation of activities. The youth insisted and complained of officials demanding for kicks-backs so that the process could be expedited. One angry youth from a failed IGA exposed:

The subcounty officials demanded for UGX 50,000 (\$14) from each group if it was to succeed. We struggled to raise the money so that we can have our enterprise accepted, but remember we are very poor. Was the UGX 50,000 (\$14) a government requirement? I think the sub county chief, and accountant are very corrupt (FGD AWA002 Male participant, 2019).

In another sub county, a 30-year Ajok Betty (not real name) expressed similar concerns:

There are many ‘pen and airtime’³² demands from underground such as sub county chief, parish chief. We were also required to give something in appreciation and kickback to sub county accountant after the money has been disbursed...laughs. When requested they processed the initial UGX 8,700,700 (\$2,363.30), but what we physically withdrew from bank was UGX 8,600,000 (\$2,336.3) from DFCU bank, and here no explanation for the difference was given (FGD PAIO 004 Female Participant, 2019).

In some cases, the officials stated the amount of money each group was supposed to cash in (bribe) for quick processing. Shamelessly, one official is reported to have demanded for UGX 2,000,000 (\$544) after the requisition of UGX 7,000,000 (\$1,902) has been endorsed. In other circumstances, the officials demanded for UGX 50,000 (\$14) from each group as facilitation fee contrary to programme guidelines. Where the youth failed to honour the command, the project activities stalled, or the cash reimbursements were delayed. Although bureaucracy has to serve the process, these revelations indicated intentional delays to extort money from the struggling youth. This accounted for the corruption (n=5) reported in most interviews and discussions, implying that the youth were not in position to fully utilise all the funds and be able to generate high returns on investment. Those who failed to ‘appreciate’³³ had their planned budgets disapproved, reduced, or delayed. Coupled with limited information on how the programme ran, mismanagement by key stakeholders, the projects were bound to crumble and collapse. Most groups failed to meet their working capital requirement. This explains why most groups were struggling to recover the money and complete repayment since 2015 because the external party consumed part of the money. This finding concurs with other studies which reported corruption as among the key challenges in most youth enterprises development funded projects in Kenya (Asaka et al., 2012; Sikenyi, 2017). The effect of corruption coupled with prior discussion on the unpreparedness and information gaps stagnated whole process of entrepreneurial intervention.

In addition, a small number of those interviewed reported inadequate funding. Budgetary cuts were reported in almost a third of those who were interviewed. The youth claimed that the district officials reduced the planned finances without feasibility study and considering the fixed and working capital requirements. Some groups requested for UGX 12,000,000 (\$3,261), and only received UGX 8,000,000 (\$2,174), yet the planned activities cost UGX 12,000,000 (\$3,261) or more. Initial investments in poultry, piggery, goat rearing, carpentry and joinery,

³² Pen and airtime demands is language used public officials when soliciting for bribe from clients, so they endorse a specific requisition.

³³ Appreciate meant youth are forced to reward (bribe) district officials with part of the revolving funds so that quickly budget requisitions endorsed.

and animal traction required heavy investment in construction, feeding, and vaccination. Technically, feeding takes 70-80 per cent of the total cost. The bureaucratic tendencies consume a lot of time, slows the process, and are costly, conformed in similar ILO studies on youth and entrepreneurship (Schoof, 2006). Therefore, the remainder would not be enough to run the project, thus forcing most youth to abandon piggery and poultry projects. Others studies ranked bureaucratic tendencies the second most challenge to youth entrepreneurship in Bangladesh (Uddin et al., 2015). Therefore, youth funded enterprises usually suffer at the hands of corrupt, bureaucratic officials.

Limited supportive infrastructure

The success of youth enterprises depends on available infrastructural support. For this study, infrastructure goes beyond the physical facilities but the human capital at both local and central governments to support youth entrepreneurial activities. This was one of major structural barriers to youth empowerment in Gulu district, northern Uganda. Youth lamented of limited support in their daily economic operations. With limited supportive infrastructure, the sustainability of youth enterprises is doubtful. The findings revealed that youth who would have operated IGAs successfully could access extension services, information centres, business incubation centres and market opportunities. Further, the participants revealed lack of a needs assessment, and monitoring and evaluation of project activities. During the field visits, and data collection, it was observed that some villages (for example, Palaro subcounty, Omel Parish) are so remote with poor telephone network, limited social services such as health, education, and absence of business incubation centres, impassable feed roads, and no vocational or business centres. There are always potential movements to the nearest trading centres or towns to trade, undertake service work or enjoy social amenities. Additionally, the study established that there were very few technical and professional persons within communities to offer technical support, guidance, mentorship and assist the youth in best agricultural practices, business management and procurement. This limited support is divided in subthemes of absence of needs assessment and limited monitoring.

Absence of needs assessment for enterprise survival.

The study findings pointed to the fact that project initiators and implementers could not determine the youth needs, feasibility, and dynamism. Lack of needs assessment garnered the third most frequency (n=15) during FGDs and in-depth interviews. The YLP was centrally planned and rolled down to local governments for implementation without clear understanding

of the local environment and resources. The local government had limited expertise, facilities to support youth enterprises. Therefore, project activities, and other guidelines were dictated from the centre without beneficiaries' considerations. Even at local government, the technical team failed to ascertain needs of the youth enterprises.

Other responses to this question include imposition of projects on the youth by the District Technical Committees (DTCs). This was due to inadequate staffing to train, mentor, and guide youth on investment options. Most youth labelled the enterprises against the programme, in most interactions the youth repeatedly referred to projects as 'YLP animals, YLP machines' instead of owning the projects (using 'ours' language). They claimed the enterprises were for the government and not the youth. There was no feasibility study to determine the viability of project activities in terms of market, economic social and technical aspects. Both the beneficiaries and technical personnel postulated this limitation:

In 2015, we were told by district officials to form groups dealing in either poultry or piggery projects. Personally, I had other business ideas but because it was a directive, we had to follow what the technocrats are telling us since they controlled the funds. We just organised ourselves and started dealing in poultry keeping. Nobody bothered to ask our preferences, so the group collapsed (FGD DYC YIG Executive member/youth councillor, 2019).

The business expert noted:

The greatest mistake we make as organisations we do not go to the ground to get the real problem. Some interventions are our initiatives they do not buy-in the ideas. However, when you go to the ground, you will see that this is what youth need. Then your interventions will be meaningful, we impose projects on the youth (KII 7BSO, Business Skills Officer, 2019).

The youth attested to the factor that district officials had interest in supplies and procurement, thus, directing on specific enterprises to operate. A case in point were poultry and piggery projects where they were interested in supplying chicks, piglets, animal, and poultry feeds to the youth.

From the above quotes, and affirmations, it is evident that the youth were detached from the programme, discouraged, which reduced a sense of ownership and responsibility among the members. Youth connectedness as embedded in the empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 2000) lost meaning. The excerpts also indicate that limited infrastructure led to poor investment decisions. For that reason, understanding ones' needs is fundamental in enterprise success. Imposing business ideas on youth destroys the innovation, and sense of ownership and

responsibility among the young entrepreneurs. With limited infrastructural support, youth needs are misunderstood. The lack of a needs assessment disconnects the individual initiatives from the funded activities, yet community needs must be criteria for project selection (Asaka et al., 2012). However, it becomes very difficult to determine and match individual needs with group needs. Therefore, some projects collapsed because the youth perceived such to be government projects, thus limiting personal initiatives. Some proposed projects such as poultry and piggery, could not match the needs of youth implying limited ownership and personal motivation to undertake the projects. Group dynamics, hardworking, and selflessness cannot easily be navigated once thorough needs assessment is not undertaken. This is linked to the monitoring of youth projects for improvement.

Limited monitoring from technical, administrative, and sector experts

With the expressions like “*Wa pee ki ngat moo ma tiro wa dok miniwa kony*” (literally *meaning we lack guidance and support*) stemming from all the youth projects visited, I was keen to ask about technical guidance and monitoring of youth activities. Majority of the subjects commented that they rarely saw any extension worker, government or district/subcounty official visiting youth projects. Lack of institutional support surfaced in all interviews, whereby youth felt neglected by district officials. Technically, several rural youth projects in Palaro, Patiko and Paicho Sub counties had never been visited, advised, or supported during their operation due to remoteness and distance. Similar challenge of monitoring was as well reported among the urban enterprises. The youth expressed that they only received phone calls from officials demanding for repayment, or progress of the project. In other groups, the members mistook me to be a monitoring official, yet I had gone for research (academics). Although the YLP programme document stipulates the responsible offices responsible for field visits to project sites (MoGLSD, 2013), the offices only aimed more at fund recovery than technical support and guidance for improved project performance. During a focus group discussion with District Youth Council, a youth male councillor lamented:

People get money to go and monitor, instead move in two or three groups, just go and relax. The youth councillors are being facilitated but the facilitation is not doing the right thing; you find youth leaders within municipality get money for monitoring but divide it within a few minutes. He/she does not go to the field for monitoring, they are not even informed, when you ask about something, they just go to CDO and inquire (FGD DYC, 2019).

Other participants (youth) corroborated this:

We report cases of animal diseases, fights, conflicts, mismanagement of funds to the sub county, district, but officials keep a deaf ear, when you call the veterinary officer, he asks for transport allowance, we were not helped at all until the group dissolved (FGD PAIS 005 Male participant, 2019).

We were given a telephone number to call in case of any problem, when we call the sub county, the CDO or Agricultural Officer either promises to come or sends some interns who have limited skills. Sometimes, we asked these interns questions, they fail completely; it was even under NGO arrangement that they could come (FGD PAT010 Male Participant, Patiko Sub County, 2020).

The above quotations portray enterprises vulnerability and susceptibility to collapse. The district officials acknowledged the finding arguing that they rarely conducted quarterly monitoring due to limited facilitation such as fuel, motorcycles for field movements, and safari day allowance (SDA) for the exercise. They claimed that some places were so remote that one required more than one week visiting all YIGs in the sub county. In addition, the offices reported that they were overloaded with multiple roles, in a one case scenario one works both as a probation officer and YLP focal point officer. Adversely, the youth are left to struggle on their own, and end up landing into production and market deficiencies. Such insightful explanation emanated from key informant:

I think one challenge is access to quality inputs. There are so many counterfeits in the market, you find the youth have struggled to open the land but buys fake seeds, fertilisers, and at the end of the day, he is just losing out all that effort. The other thing is to do with the agronomic knowledge, where they get genuine inputs, they are not able to follow the best agronomic practices that will get the best yield from their effort. In a situation where someone decides to grow soya beans, they will do spacing that is not appropriate. That means the yield per acre will go down, and a person is going to be making losses only (KII 4PM-T Partnership Manager, 2019).

This implied that the youth were left without guidance, information, and technical rectification of business failures. Furthermore, many agricultural projects such as piggery, poultry, crop production, ox-plough cultivation, necessitated constant monitoring by a team of animal and agronomic specialists to assess the performance and offer the necessary support. Although mobile telephony technologies are emphasised to be ideal for agriculture extension service for rural farmers (Mugabi et al., 2018), some of the areas are so remote that mobile networks are inaccessible. In addition, some farmers may not have knowledge and skills in adopting such modern technology. Furthermore, the youth revelations demonstrated that concerned offices failed to provide the much-needed extension services.

While empowerment theory and PYD framework emphasise creating an enabling environment, the absence of institutional support (monitoring) limited the youth from exploiting the available opportunities for entrepreneurial growth (Namatovu et al., 2012). It is against these propositions that many livestock projects requiring constant monitoring and support were bound to fail due to animal and bird diseases, conflicts, and others natural calamities because the youth were incapable of mitigating situations. The above signifies that the young entrepreneurs are limited in capacity to advance to greater enterprises, thus reducing productivity and growth. Similarly, the limited extension service curtails the existing start-ups from expansion and realising the high returns on investment. Physical movement has potential implications for rural livelihoods and survival of youth investments in rural areas (Porter et al., 2010). The youth spend more time and finance on movements to access markets, service thus increasing the operational costs and reducing profitability.

5.4 Personal challenges (PCs) to youth entrepreneurship

The previous sections examined the revelations of social, economic, and institutional dimensions to youth's progress, depicting the discourse of the study as outside-world factors affecting youth livelihoods. This section looks at another aspect of barriers from the youth's side. The participants acknowledged youth behaviours were detrimental to personal growth and development. The participants attributed youths' woes to personal responsibility. The responses ranged from attitude to personal lifestyle. The study explored the underlying personal characteristics, negative and risky behaviours affecting livelihood opportunities. Through in-depth interviews, more issues emerged, were coded, and categorised into 'personal attitude' and 'lifestyle'.

Personal attitude to youth livelihoods

Firstly, the study intended to establish how attitude limits one's ability and potential to exploit the available opportunities within YLP. In this study, attitude focuses on predisposition to respond negatively towards certain ideas, persons, programmes, and situations. The findings revealed that most youth were regarded as 'arrogant', less committed', have 'poverty of the mind', averse, and lacked confidence, character, manners, values, and positivity. These sentiments were however opposed by inactive youth (idle) claiming that the suffering stemmed from the government, society, and parents. The social and structural barriers and effected of war could be blamed for these negative behaviours. Participants from active youth projects/IGAs and key district stakeholders reported that youth were disrespectful, negative

towards work, prefer freedom to work, and have morally degenerated. There was too much fascination for money yet the preference to work is negative. Youth leaders themselves perceived the youth as less committed.

... Youth down there in our communities are less committed, not motivated to do business. Even if there is an activity or programme, they cannot participate; they prefer watching movies, dancing at marketplaces, sitting at shop verandas, bars, betting houses and frequenting trading centres and towns for leisure (FGD MYC Female Leader, 2019).

Additionally, more youth description from a youth leader indicated that the youth behavioural patterns could not allow youth to engage in productive enterprises. The participant, with disappointed face and a loud voice, reaffirmed the above. He lamented that the youth are responsible for their own suffering amidst the available fertile land, government, and NGO opportunities. Other studies in Uganda attribute this attitude to some churches which promote laziness and poverty (A. Wilson & Letsosa, 2014).

Instead of seeing poverty at a negative angle, they tend to perceive it in a positive light. They have the belief that poverty keeps the youth humble before God. The desire to develop is not a blessing but known as a sin. The message has helped many poor young people in Uganda to accept their conditions as God-given, and their hope for a better life is projected on the world to come and not this (current) world...They feel happy and worthy because theirs is the kingdom of God (p.3).

The above study indicates that youth are made comfortable and feel that hard work a waste of time. The empirical findings revealed that youth have negative attitudes towards work especially agriculture, and other so-called dirty jobs. The key informants reported that most youth disrespect and disregard agriculture.

One of the biggest challenges with our youth is the attitude. Youth do not look at agribusiness and agriculture as a very critical activity in getting them out of poverty and getting them some kind of employability. Therefore, it takes time to convince the youth to take farming as a business, as something that can get them out of poverty. Therefore, that attitude thing needs a lot of mindsets changing. Of course, it is linked to laziness and how they look at certain enterprises. They have access to productive resources such as land but look at farming as a village dirty job (KII 4PM-T Partnership Manager, 2019).

The revelations above imply that youth do not appreciate agriculture sector as a feasible source of employment. However, this finding is contradicted by a study in Malawi which established positive perception of agriculture, and agribusiness among the youth (Zidana et al., 2020). In Malawi, youth perceive agriculture as a profitable sector and decent employer compared to

Uganda where agriculture fetches very prices and as a dirty job. Despite Uganda considering agriculture as a backbone and largest sector, youth continue to perceive it negatively. The personal attitude renders such youth unemployable, unwilling to take up job opportunities or operate an income generating activity to earn a living. Although agriculture is recognised as backbone of Uganda (UBOS 2016), the negative attitude towards farming limits its viability and role in transforming youth lives. Other youth sell off inherited land to join *boda boda* business rather than agriculture (Kitubi, 2021). The study limited its scope to investigating the factors heightening this attitude issue.

Previous studies on youth engagement in agriculture have indicated that youth are not attracted to the venture because of risks, parenting, urban life, perceptions, nature of education, its intensive nature and low profitability (Ahaibwe et al., 2013). I considered parenting, education, preference for urban life as detrimental to youth employment in agriculture sector but some agrienterprises are more profitable than service sectors as well, hence this study rules out profitability as a demotivating factor to youth engagement in agriculture. The key question is how do youth meet their basic needs? As previously discussed on unemployment and poverty subsections, the youth resort to unwarranted practices of prostitution, theft, murder, and other crimes to earn a living. Accordingly, poor attitudes such as limited commitment, preference for free money to work, discourage most employing agencies/organisation from sustaining youth at work. Studies suggest that most employing organisations recruit young workers with positive values, understanding the meaning of work, committed and attractive to work (Andersson et al., 2017). Therefore, attitude change is necessary in transforming the lives of the youth.

Youth lifestyle.

In seeking to investigate and analyse the behaviour and way of life, I considered the notion of lifestyle in terms of alcohol, drug abuse, gambling, and prostitution. The findings revealed that the youth lifestyle is detrimental to the youth enterprise culture, and subsequently, socio-economic empowerment. The youth leaders and other youth acknowledged that most of the youth were fascinated with quick money, thus, they spend most of the time on gambling and prostitution, sitting in trading centres, spending what they earn from *boda boda* business on alcohol and drug abuse. To most youth, lifestyle meant to earn and spend the cash in bars, local drinking joints, disco halls, sex and marketplaces.

Other participants attributed lifestyle to youthful age. Youth IGA leader reported that age bracket 18-24 are still reluctant, visionless, and still do not understand the true meaning of life

compared to 25 years and above. The participant further referred to 25 years and above as senior youth who are hardworking and have a vision. An expert in youth agripreneurship concurred asserting that age has a greater influence on participation in development programmes.

...but those who are of age bracket 18-24 years normally have negative attitude towards certain agrienterprises. But some of the age group between 25 and 30 years, have seen it all, they have gone through hardships, and they know if I do not do my farming, the only resource I have is land, if I don't do it I won't survive (KII 4PM-T, 2019).

These are energetic, eager to learn, skilled and a productive cohort with basic standards and other social responsibilities to meet. The older the youth are, the higher the zeal to work actively towards achieving the set goals. Studies indicate that young people have a strong natural disposition for innovation and learning tools and such assets can help to create viable options for participation in concrete income activities (Goedkoop, Roa, Sanz, Barahona, & Menéndez, 2004) and attain greater success.

On the contrary, participants emphasised that youth have failed to learn, build capacity, and connect to others despite being energetic. While in a discussion, a participant overwhelmingly reported fascination for quick cash, yet laziness is a common phenomenon.

The youth are less committed, they have too much fascination for money, yet they do not want to work. We have enough land, but these youth cannot work... the youth refuse to work due to influence from fellow youth, yet they want to go for dancing, drinking, smoking...where do they get money from? ... (FGD UNY003, Male participant, 2019).

A key informant corroborated this assertion attesting that youth were committed more to gambling and alcoholism than engaging in economically productive activities:

...most of the youth are now addicted to gambling. And you know gambling is quick cash, most of the youth want quick cash, when you bet now you can wait for two hours and get quick cash. Then also, there is the issue of drunkenness, talk of drug abuse, which is also very common. This has killed the ability to participate in entrepreneurship (KII 2FP, District Official 2019).

To confirm this, I took observations in many betting halls both in urban and peri-urban, and empirically observed a huge number of the youth sitting idle in betting centres trying to catch their luck. This is an indication that the youth are less productive in agriculture, trade, manufacturing and service sectors and such addictive lifestyles cannot get them out of poverty.

Male youth were the majority observed idle in and around town suburbs and trading centres instead of engaging in productive activities. Older married female youth struggled with petty businesses, while single ones resorted to sex work during nightlife for survival.

Whereas there is a high fascination for money, majority of the key informants confirmed youth preference for leisure to work, immersed in drinking, gambling (betting) and smoking. Six out of the eleven key informants attributed such practice to LRA war, which confined the youth (babies by the time of war) in camps without an environment provoking hard work. During an interview, I observed that some youth attending the focus group discussion left shortly to smoke from a twenty-metre distance, and others were drunk. The colleagues came with cigarettes and some plastic bottles of alcohol for sharing. High alcohol and substance abuse among the youth was attributed to peer influence. This lifestyle was practised and enjoyed more by the male youth compared to the females.

Further investigation established that drug and alcohol abuse and related antisocial behaviours are corroborative evidence. The youth were observed in town and some trading centres chewing green leaves locally known as '*mairungi*'³⁴ while drinking as early as midday. When probed, they claimed that they were searching for comfort and fun since they are unemployed. Literature has it that alcohol consumption, and other kinds of drugs have become an increasing common practice among the youth today. Drinking with intention of getting 'high' and using psychoactive substances is now a growing phenomenon involving young people (Fabrizio, Faccioli, Fazzi, Marconi, & Martire, 2013). Hence, alcohol, sex work, gambling and associated risky behaviours are a threat to the health and economics of the youth aged 15-29 years globally, for our case 18-30 years (Namuggala, 2017; Ramsoomar & Morojele, 2012). Although the studies in South Africa determined the alcohol initiating age at 13 years, this study did not review policy documents regarding alcohol in Uganda. Nonetheless, alcohol consumption negatively affects youth productivity and worsens youth livelihoods in the region.

The consumption patterns and youth drinking behaviours are necessarily related to the process of identity building and construction (Beccaria, 2010), urge to experience emancipation, and enjoying fun. The youth argued that they are drinking due to frustration caused by unemployment, poverty. However, studies indicated that people mainly drink to socialise, have fun with others, relax and respect culture (Rolando, Beccaria, Tigerstedt, & Törrönen, 2012).

³⁴ Youth are addicted to chewing green leaves as a drug. Most youth perceive it as energy booster. It is considered as a form of drug and substance abuse.

Despite the presence of smoking regulatory policies in Uganda, young people were observed smoking publicly, and participants indicated that some youth even smoke marijuana. The issue of drug abuse among the youth is one of the top problems among the youth not only in northern Uganda, but Uganda and Africa in general (Chesang, 2013). It is further reported that drinking is a sign of established autonomy as youth are away from their homes and families (Fabrizio et al., 2013). This forces most youth to spend time at market days, weekdays/ends in trading centres and suburbs while drinking, dancing than entrepreneurial activities. The youth end up in risky sexual behaviours, thus increasing chances of early pregnancies, and spread of HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

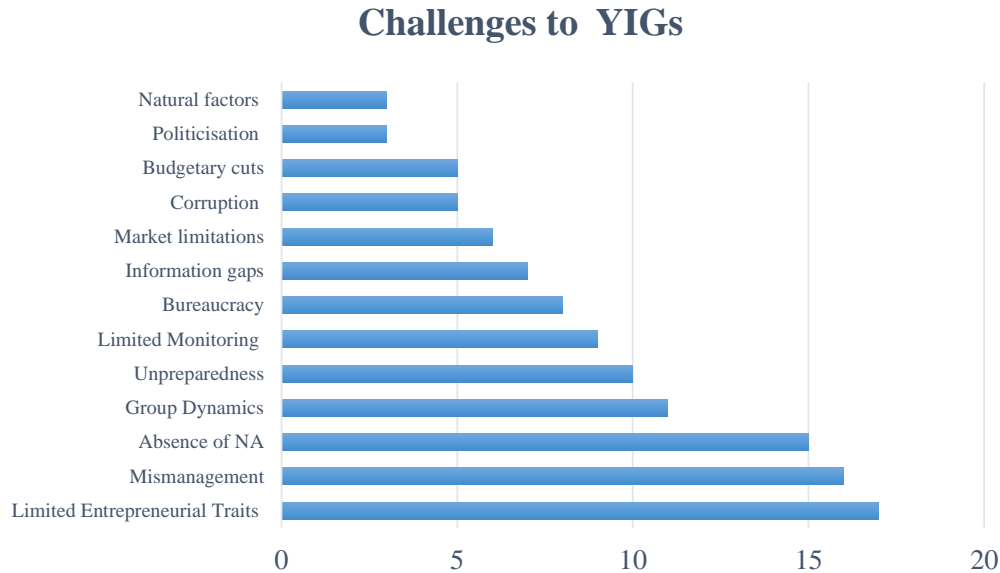
Categorically, when it comes to individual youth, the youth are personally responsible for their own misery; their beliefs and behaviours constitute concrete barriers to empowerment at individual, group as well as community levels. However, the cultural, structural, effects of LRA war and politics play a big role on influencing youth commitment towards entrepreneurship. Youth livelihood scholars note the uncertain nature of this youthful stage of life, as a movement along the trajectory from being children to taking on greater adulthood responsibilities (Sommers, 2012). As the youth transition from childhood to adult many expectations such as employment and wealth, independent family life, freedom emerge, and these are problematic for those living in poverty and out of school (Van Blerk, 2008). The socio-demographic features determine youth's commitment, aspirations and behaviour towards productive activities (Angba et al., 2009). The personal lifestyle and negative attitudes focusing on consumption than economic production and investment will continue to hinder youth entrepreneurship and improved livelihood. No matter what programmes are designed for youth empowerment, social behavioural change is fundamental for enterprise culture and ensuring sustainable youth livelihoods.

5.5 Weak entrepreneurial attitudes

While interacting with youth, I discovered that youth lacked entrepreneurial acumen necessary for progress in business ventures. In all interviews, this emerged as a major challenge to youth failure in economic activities. The illustration below provides the impression that youth in Acholi sub region lack the entrepreneurial competences necessary for entrepreneurial progress and socio-economic empowerment. To achieve the social mission, youth require competences for effective participation and contribution. Weak entrepreneurship attitudes garnered the highest frequency in terms of codes compared to other challenges. These themes are arranged

according to their code frequencies. The illustration below summarises the challenges and their frequency.

Figure 5.4 Challenges to Youth Interest Groups



Source: *Field Notes 2019-2021*

Participants overemphasised the weak entrepreneurial spirits among the youth in northern Uganda. They repeatedly mentioned lack of commitment, passion, hard work, competence and determination, and disrespect for economic activities (work), laziness, and greed for quick cash as detrimental to the success of most youth IGAs. Some participants expressed the belief that most youth lacked the prerequisite personal entrepreneurial competences necessary for successful exploitation of the available opportunities. “Our youth have bad attitude, they are not committed to work, and want to enjoy free things, we started our group in 2016 when we were 15 members, many lazy ones have run away, we are now only six” (FGD AWA 006 Male Participant, 2019). Equally, impatience was exposed:

The youth are impatient they want quick returns, they do not want to wait, if the project is taking long to yield productivity, they find it a problem, so they prefer something with quick results like sports betting. That is why they have dropped out of the programme, so entrepreneurship spirit is lacking in them (KII 2FP, District Official, 2019).

In relation to impatience, some youth failed to utilise the funding advanced, others divided the money amongst themselves. I reviewed the documents (reports) and ascertained this:

Some groups like Oguru produce business in Awach divided the money among themselves and the treasurer left for their home in Oyam district with part of the group money. Most youth form groups for the sake of getting money; thereafter they split (YLP District Quarterly Progress Report, 2018 p.11-12).

The youth political leaders shared the same view, positing that youth are negligent, and do not dedicate time and energy to productive project work. During the FGD, one leader had this to point out:

We have uncommitted youth, some youth in *Bardege, Layibi, Laroo* divisions did not dedicate their time, energy, and power towards the work. Even if the opportunities are available, they prefer betting, watching football until late than going for work (FGD MYC Female Municipal Youth Councillor, 2019).

Indeed, it was observed that some youth projects were unattended to, a case in point were unattended to piggery ventures in Bungatira and Unyama Sub counties, and a merchandise shop in Palaro county that was closed the whole day, yet the members were in the trading centre and market centres, while others were at home relaxing. During a personal interview with the YIG Chairperson, he lamented:

I am the only person operating the shop as if the fund was given to me alone, my members are at marketplaces dancing, others are playing pool, very few mind about our business. We were given money to buy and sell produce, but drought forced us to operate a shop. People do not want to be at the shop all time. I have also opted to rest today; the project is for all of us, I cannot suffer on behalf of everyone (In-depth Interview, YIG Chairperson, Palaro Subcounty, 2019).

Similar negligence and mismanagement of activities was observed at most abandoned and failed youth projects. In addition, some of the poultry and piggery projects failed and were observed empty or with malnourished animals or birds. Some cattle were left to graze without supervision, moving from one place. The cattle were sometimes susceptible to bushfire, theft, and other diseases. I observed cows in Omel parish in the bush unattended to yet, they were part of ox-plough cultivation as a youth project.



Plate 5.1: Unattended to youth livestock projects Unyama and Awach sub counties

Youth reported that most youth projects in livestock failed. This explains why many projects in these municipal divisions and sub counties completely failed despite receiving funding. Due to this, all livestock projects failed because there was not much attention in form of feeding, care, and hygiene. In the Municipality, youth attributed failure to disasters such as animal and poultry diseases, pests that claimed many piglets and birds (chicken) in 2016. The youth leaders reported that due to lack of expertise, and livestock management skills, all pigs and birds died. However, animal diseases affected all not only youth livestock enterprises but also the entire community. On the contrary, key informants blamed such failure on mismanagement, lack of responsibility, poor entrepreneurship traits and communal ownership. youth lacked the entrepreneurial mind-set and culture to sustain the business ventures (Wokorach, 2020). The youth were unable to utilise the available resources for growth of their enterprises.

During data collection, most of the piggens (piggery houses) and poultry house were empty, some had malnourished animals unattended to, yet the members were present. The collective ownership discourages hard work and responsibility among the youth. Other studies conform to findings stressing that youth lack entrepreneurship aspirations, and strategic thinking, and positivity (Egorov et al., 2019; Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011). Although this study focused on youth groups as avenues for demonstrating entrepreneurial competences, other literature has it that individualistic cultures in USA promote self-reliance, hard work and independent action (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016).

The study reveals the weaknesses of collectiveness in promoting entrepreneurship, thus demonstrating the role of entrepreneurial minds towards the success of interventions. It concurs with Aja-Okorie's and Adali's studies in Nigeria, which stressed that youth, require appropriate

entrepreneurial attitudes to participate in and successfully exploit entrepreneurial programmes. However, the cultural background, nature of education inhibit youth from entrepreneurial initiatives (Aja-Okorie & Adali, 2013). Indeed, socio-cultural factors have an influence on youth's negative perceptions (Fatoki & Chindoga, 2011). Nonetheless, their study was on university students, yet my study focused majorly on illiterate, poor youth. Overall, limited entrepreneurial mindset inhibited enterprise management, innovation, and personal initiatives among all youth in Gulu district. Therefore, availability of financial support cannot yield sustainable enterprises for social change. The absence of entrepreneurial attitude demonstrated absence of the 5Cs, and 1C³⁵ enshrined PYD framework (Anyon & Jenson, 2014; Damon, 2004) and active participation, sustainable skilling embedded in empowerment theory (Zimmerman, 2000). Existence of market alone cannot enable the youth to strive, willingness and ability to take risks are fundamental for youth success (Kazela, 2009). The absence of personal entrepreneurial competences (PECs) is an expression of unpreparedness and prepares fertile grounds for project mismanagement, and eventual downfall of youth enterprises.

Programme fund mismanagement by both YIG leaders and technical personnel

Common in all interviews was mismanagement of funds by the group leaders and district officials. This was a common factor for the failure of many youth projects. Participants reported that youth interest group leaders diverted project finance for personal gains. The three executives (i.e., chairpersons, secretary, and treasurer) were indicated to have connived to swindle project funds. It was so unfortunate the leaders ran away with project cash immediate after withdraw from the bank. Other YIGs bought expensive phones while some youth organised parties for the members than investing in the projects. In other groups, the project leaders demanded for a contribution of shillings 30,000 (\$ 8) and UGX 5,000 (\$ 1.36) from each member before joining the projects, yet most of them were so poor and needy. Some committee members (Three) escaped immediately after withdrawing the project cash (money) from banks such as DFCU bank. In one of failed groups in Awach sub county (Gum pe rom Youth Livelihood Project), one furious member lamented:

There is no proper record/evidence that there was money. There was no bank statement, no lists for signing, not even any document indicating how much we have received or collected from the loans from borrowers. No record of tools we had. The leaders could not even show us how much they received or even collected

³⁵ 5Cs stand for Competence, Confidence, Connection, Character and Caring and compassion as tenets of PYD framework. The 1C is an additional tenet called Contribution developed by Lerner et al., 2005. These are presented under the theoretical framework in chapter one.

from the government. There were only verbal statements (FGD AWA002, Male Participant, 2019).

Those who were authorised to transact business had all the power to handle cash, which further worsened swindling of funds:

The number was large (up to 15-20 members) but only chairperson, treasurer and secretary knew what was happening in the project. According to how we had agreed before, four members were supposed to withdraw cash from the bank to our surprise, only the chairperson (husband) and treasurer (wife), could withdraw the money... Our leaders escaped with our money, switched off the phones. So we decided to struggle for the remaining tools, and equipment in store (FGD AWA002, Male Participant, 2019).

A municipal official corroborated fund mismanagement, and noted:

Yah, I have more than two collapsed groups, the first one had chosen produce buying and selling in 2014/15, after the withdrawal the treasurer tricked members at the bank to wait for him as he receives the call, they waited for him at the bank the whole day and realised the guy had disappeared with the money. He switched off the phones and disappeared from the district up to now, another group received the first instalment, divided the money among themselves and disappeared (KII 8CDM, Gulu Municipality, 2019).

Other than YIGA leaders, technical officials took advantage of youth ignorance and incompetence and generally lack of entrepreneurship knowledge and mismanaged project funds. Some district officials used part of the money for personal gains before disbursement to the youth projects. It was reported that one district official had to operate a fixed deposit with UGX 250,000,000 (\$ 675,769) meant for youth livelihood fund for some time before reimbursement (KII 11 MYC, 2019). This affected all the planned activities and budgets for most youth ventures leading to failure of most youth groups in municipality.

The participants further attributed failed and suspension of YLP funding in Bardege division in municipality due to misuse of programme funds by both beneficiaries and implementing officials. In addition, some project leaders incorporated their relatives in the groups thus violating the programme guidelines, and this prepared fertile grounds for extortion and disappearance of project funds. Mismanagement of youth funded projects was reported in many studies in Kenya where YEDF projects were marred with mismanagement of funds (Mburu & Makori, 2015; Sikenyi, 2017). Procedurally, this revolving fund is refundable whether the project is operational or not. The disappearance of funds discouraged and disintegrated the most projects. This explains why most groups in sub counties and municipality failed despite receiving the funds. It is imperative to note that without capital, enterprise cannot operate and

sustain operations. Therefore, this implied lack of clear needs assessment, teambuilding, monitoring and limited understanding of group dynamics.

Group dynamics in youth income generating activities (YIGA)

The youth claimed that they had diverse needs, prospects, expectations, views and aspects. Although group dynamism is viewed as an asset, most youth groups were marred with disagreements, conflicts and confrontations. The findings further indicated that the youth had limited understanding of one another. It was impossible to come together harmoniously, thereafter set norms, form, agree and develop formidable interest groups. Consensus which is key in group enterprises was impossible as individual views were overriding group ideas (Parsons, 1995). Furthermore, the primary participants reported the groups were so large that it became difficult to agree and harmonise their interests. Thus, the group dynamics led to negligence, conflicts, abandoning group activities, and mismanagement of tasks. They blamed this on a large membership, as one 28-year-old noted; “We were many and confused, we lacked trust, as members we had conflicting ideas, and different business preferences” (FGD UNY003, Male participant, 2019). Similarly, the implementers of the programme confirmed this:

The groups are large; they are composed of 10-15 members, and when they are many, there is always conflicts and the interests are different. This paralyses the activities as disagreements are the order of the day. Many groups have collapsed because members failed to agree (KII 6ACDS, 2019).

Groups’ dynamism is a special factor during team formation, however, if it disorganises the performance of youth projects, since members lack understanding and perceive development ideas differently (aiming for different missions). In groups, decision-making and consensus on social mission becomes difficult. This is what Parsons termed as dangers of groupthink, where decision-making is dominated by one or two people, and some members may feel inhibited from going against the general consensus (Parsons, 1995). Similar studies in Kenya concluded that youth group dynamics affects the performance of youth enterprise development funded projects significantly (Kiyana & Gitonga, 2018). This denotes that the size of the group, number of activities done together, co-existence years, and group communication influence the performance of youth projects. Therefore, group dynamics necessitates thorough preparation, member check, and building strong foundation to minimise conflicts and subsequent massive exodus of the members that can lead to consequential collapse of projects. The group dynamics implied that the youth were not entrepreneurially prepared to take up business activities.

Unpreparedness element and its role on youth entrepreneurships

Connected to group dynamics is lack of preparedness. Majority of the participants felt that the youth were not fully prepared to exploit the entrepreneurial opportunity. The youth hastily formed groups, without proper training and sensitisation on the innovative ideas, group formation, social impact, technical aspects of entrepreneurship, and project performance. Additionally, youth had joined the groups without knowledge of purpose of the funding. An example is Gum pe rom Youth Livelihood Produce buying and selling and Waryemo VSLA in Awach Subcounty, where youth were lured by few youths (leaders) into joining them without introducing the business purpose. These groups failed because members were marred with conflicts, extortion, and greed for cash, neglecting economic investment. The YIG leaders too advantage of members' ignorance, unpreparedness, and caused failure of the enterprises. Here are excerpts from the failed group:

We paid membership fee of UGX 30,000 and we were told it was for procedures, imagine we needed help, but we used our resources for procedures, and that money was eaten by our leaders, what kind of leaders were they?

There is no proper record/evidence that there was money. There was no bank statement, no lists for signing, not even any document indicating how much we have received or recovered as the loans from borrowers (members). No record on even tools we had. The leaders could not even show us how much they received or even collected from the government. There were only verbal statements.

The number was large (up to 15-20 members) but only chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary knew what was happening in the project. According to how we had agreed before, four members were supposed to withdraw cash from the bank to our surprise, only the chairperson (husband) and treasurer (wife), could withdraw the money. The leaders introduced strict and hard systems that made some people to withdraw from the group. They could say sign here, sign here, the forms were in English, many pages, and requested for UGX 30,000 before any money is loaned to us. We learnt that this was to scare us so that we do not ask them (FGD AWA002, Male participants 2019).

The above excerpts imply that these leaders took advantage of the projects to extort money, something that discouraged the members from the intervention. The disappearance of funds meant reduction in the motivation to engaging in the project activities. This created a gap for the failure of most projects. The start-up capital was consumed, leaving no cash for both fixed and working capital requirements for the projects.

More so, the participants indicated that they were not used to handling huge sums of money like the millions provided under YLP. The youth leaders confirmed that the youth were not ready to take up the programme:

I think the youth were not so informed about how the YLP projects worked, most of them thought once you access this livelihood fund, you just use it and you do not refund it. Therefore, after receiving the money and realising that they were supposed to refund the money, some groups are still on keeping the on account up to date. They do not want to invest it, instead want to pay it back. They complain, “Why does government need us to use the money and refund”, others wasted the money on phones and parties and ran away (KII 3DYC-District Youth Leader, 2019).

Furthermore, the beneficiaries contend that they had limited time to form groups, set purpose, training and understand the programme operating procedures, “The 30-minute training we received at the sub county was limiting, insufficient, very brief, and we were not able to acquire enough skills, knowledge and inspiration about business processes” (FGD BUNGL 001, YIG Chairperson, 2019).

From the above quotations, projects were started without clear strategic plans, vision, and purpose. With such, many youths were not aware of their responsibility, basic social entrepreneurship principles, self-awareness, and market needs, thus inability to handle huge amount of fund. The youth lacked motivation, confidence, and direction and reinforced entrepreneurial spirits into developing start-ups. As Ejiogu and Nwajiuba put it, managerial skills and knowledge are needed for successful operation of new venture (Ejiogu & Nwajiuba, 2012), however, in this study, these skills were not fully developed an indication of lack of adequate preparation to take up the interventions. The amount of start-up finance was mostly more than five million Ugandan shilling (UGX 5,000,000), thus necessitated adequate financial management training and preparedness.

Contrarily, other studies disregard such entrepreneurial training depicting it as a failure since its focus is on exploitation of opportunities assuming that the opportunities have already been identified (Neck & Greene, 2011). Thus, little attention and time is placed on enhancing creativity, innovativeness, and idea generation process. Although Neck and Greene (2011) based on practice-based pedagogies, training is key in fostering preparedness. Therefore, many youths formed groups for cash gains not for sustainable entrepreneurship and empowerment. It is imperative to note, unpreparedness hinders viability and sustainability of projects leading to the collapse of several IGAs. The process failed to exert control, inspiration and positive change among the project members (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Zimmerman & Warschausky, 1998). Consequently, unprepared generations squander the available opportunities and make the process more expensive through business errors, continuous

monitoring, and extension services to the IGA. The case below provides an example of a failed youth enterprise in Gulu district.

The Case for the failed YIGs: Project B Piggery Project, Unyama subcounty

Project B was a youth project located in Unyama subcounty Gulu District. This youth enterprise derived its name from Loyoboo village. The group's name has historical roots. When the settlers from Karamoja got tired and thirsty, they drank from Unyama stream. They commended the water as 'very nice' (*loyo*), better than the available green vegetable called *boo*. Thus, the village name *Loyoboo. Utem Gum* means 'let us try our luck'. The youth believed government programmes were very competitive only for educated and urban youth. They thus wanted to try their luck as see if they can win the opportunity. Loyoboo, which started in 2015, after training from Technoserve an NGO engaging in youth entrepreneurship training, and other business management practices, operated as VSLA group until YLP set in. The informal VSLA registered with district office to legal receive revolving fund (loan) from government programme. All registration procedures at subcounty and district offices were fulfilled, and recommendations for funding made. The YIG succeeded in securing UGX 6,300,000 (\$1,726) to be refunded with one year without interest. Five female piglets and one male pig (Boar) was purchased using the money, while part of the money was used for construction, tools, and equipment, and feeding. The project was established on land provided by chairperson's family.

The piglets grew up, produced many, and became unmanageable and expensive to feed. By the time of first visit in 2018, I observed only three malnourished pigs, with only the chairperson attending to the project. During interviews, the chairperson reported that all other members had deserted the project activities due to workload, expenses, and conflicts over land and political propaganda from local councillors. However, a key informant blamed the failure of the project on the chairperson, who personalised the project, used part of the money for personal activities, and controlled the project as a one-man's venture.

Mr... is tricky and a liar, when he obtained the funding, he changed completely, he planned for the cash alone, dodged other members, established the project at his mother's land, and diverted funds for personal needs. Conflicts ensued in the project, the other members felt discouraged and left the project thus could not manage as a single person. He dodged any call from district officials, and during our monitoring visits, he goes into hiding. Failure is largely attributed to his actions (KII 5CDS, 2019).

The above excerpt suggests that personal ego, mistrust, and patronage contributed to the failure of the IGA. Following the revelations from the informant interviews, I undertook a second field visit to the project. It was established that the project had completely failed, with no animals, and collapsed structures (pigpens). The chairperson admitted that the animals died because he failed to manage them, as an individual since funding was insufficient. Feeding had also become difficult. This implied that the animals died of poor health conditions due to poor feed feeding and hygiene, though some died of swine flu. Thus, the project that had started strongly with a well-trained leader and funding ended in failure within one year.

Table 5.1 Factors contributing to the failure of Project B

The table below provides a summary of the factors for the collapse of the selected case; they are graded perceptually on a scale of great extent, moderate extent and small extent.

Failure Variable	Perception
Project mismanagement by (greed for cash)	Great extent
Conflicts/group dynamics	Moderate extent
Bureaucracy	Moderate extent
Shortage of funds	Small extent
Work overload	Small extent
Limited extension services	Small extent

Source: *Field Data, 2019/2020*

The hypothetical above table reveals that the mismanagement by YIG chairperson characterised by greed for cash, selfish interests, disrespect, and mistrust culminated into group conflicts. These indicate lack of entrepreneurship attitudes and personal challenges highlighted in this chapter. Establishment of economic IGA on family land without clear documentation was the first step towards personalising the project, and denial of group decision-making. The disgruntled members felt powerless, less committed, and eventual departure from the YIG. The members and chairperson were ignorant about the pillars of social value, sustainability, opportunity recognition, and social innovation (Dees, 1998). These findings deviate from the 5Cs embedded in the PYD and active participation proposed in Zimmerman’s theory. The chairperson lacked the competence, connectedness, character, and compassion needed for the success of the project. This ended up discouraging the contribution stipulated in PYD (Anyon & Jenson, 2014). The departure implied more work and financial burden on an individual, which is a difficult task. Probably, regular extension services and monitoring from the technical teams would have tracked the inefficiencies and assisted this enterprise. Consequently, social entrepreneurship could not lead the youth in this enterprise to socio-economic empowerment.

5.6 Conclusion

Conclusively, among the most significant livelihood challenges highlighted by the study market vulnerabilities such as price fluctuation, lower prices, poverty forcing youth to using bigger portion of the start-up capital for basic needs. Youth economic empowerment continues to be a dilemma despite the presence of social entrepreneurship interventions. The youth continue to experience chronic poverty. Although institutional, social, structural and economic factors inhibit the youth from exploiting the available opportunities and achieve the inspirations, personal challenges stemming from limited commitment, negativity, and lifestyle stage an additional barrier towards youth empowerment. Nonetheless, these were connected to weakness in the structural settings of the society. Therefore, personal attitudes towards work reduce concentration on YIGs, thus less productivity and failure.

In as much as livelihood challenges are similar everywhere in Uganda and Africa, youth in northern Uganda grew up in civil war, a scenario that presents a unique challenge. Many manifestations on challenges pointed to the LRA war, which affected the socio-economic fabrics of life such as education. Until present, the scars of the conflict affect youth participation and commitment on income generating activities. Therefore, the presence of physical, financial, and natural capital may not necessarily transform to positive socio-economic change if these challenges are not tackled holistically. These challenges affected the establishment and success of youth income generating activities/enterprises in the district. Youth were not fully prepared to practise social entrepreneurship for social change. The majority youth felt their expectations were not met by the livelihood programme thus presented several factors limiting youth entrepreneurship and empowerment.

Weak entrepreneurial traits largely affected performance of most youth IGAs and signified unpreparedness, lack of information and limited entrepreneurial training. IGA leaders and technical team put much blame on political timing and communication, bureaucracy and excessive corruption and mismanagement of projects. With group dynamics, conflicts, limited commitment and negligence, most projects were susceptible to natural disaster, and eventual failure, as evidence with Project B, Unyama sub country. Basing on these observations, there is need for formidable measures to strengthen the youth's capacity to optimise benefits from existent and future social entrepreneurship interventions.

CHAPTER SIX: OPTIMISATION OF BENEFITS FROM SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTERVENTIONS

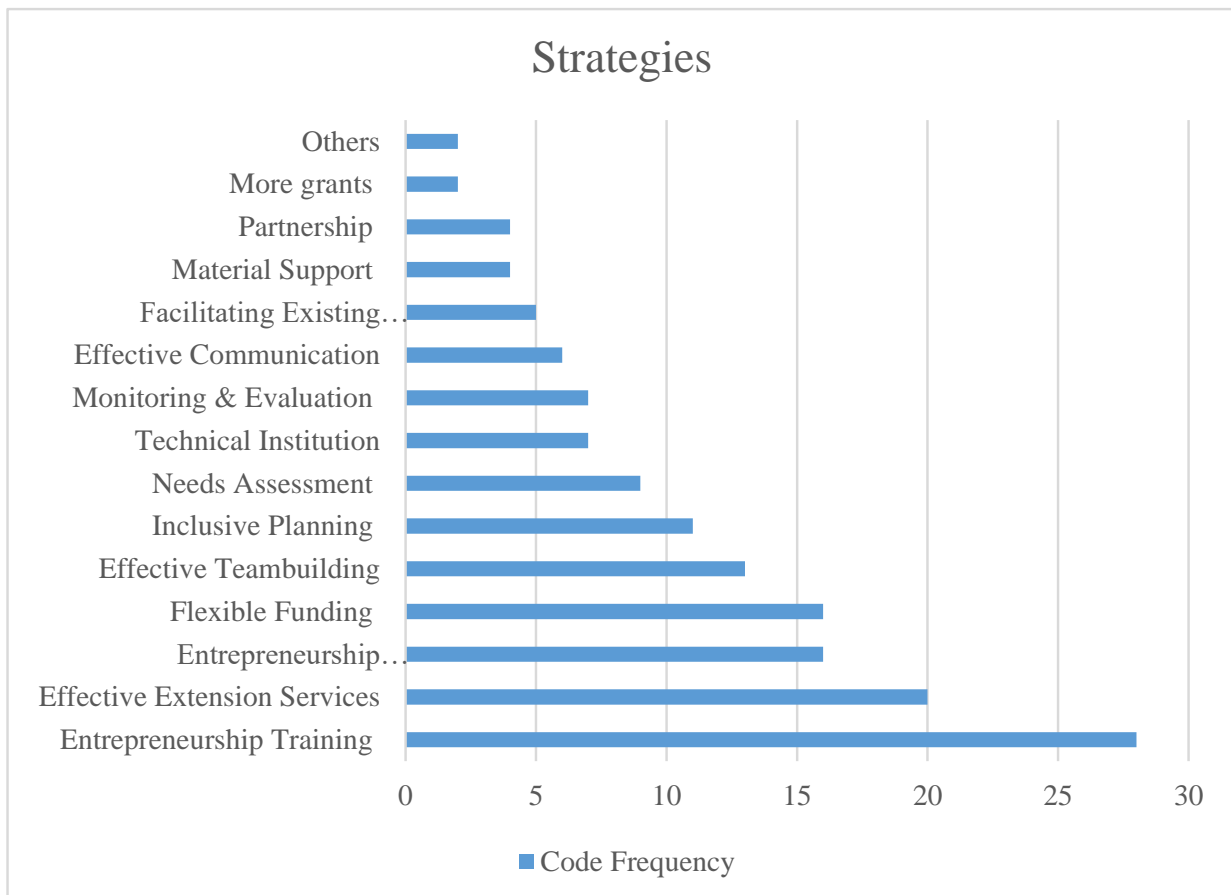
6.0 Introduction

The chapter builds on the previous chapters to explore how to optimise benefits from current and future SE interventions. This gives development of a framework that could assist in the subsequent implementation of youth entrepreneurship interventions. The findings in this chapter reflect what youth and other stakeholder perceived could build an enterprising young generation. The qualitative approach provides better understanding and insights on building youth capacity to benefit optimally from current and future entrepreneurial programmes. In this chapter, youth voices, views, and perspectives are vital when seeking for empowerment strategies. The group discussions are key fora for the youth to engage in sensitive topics and provide own solutions to the challenges they face (Greebausm, 2000). Field notes were mainly utilised during field interviews at youth projects such as stores, gardens, aquaculture, extraction sites, gardens, salons, and carpentry workshops. When traversing the rural and urban projects during data collection, I learnt that all the youth had much to speak out and shared much of what they felt works best for entrepreneurship and empowerment. This chapter, therefore, presents themes emerging from the interpretivist lenses.

6.1 Strategies for optimising benefits

The key task was how to capacitate youth optimally utilise interventions benefit from existent entrepreneurial interventions. When participants were asked on what should be done to build youth capacity to maximise benefits, the following themes emerged. Most findings were inductively determined, though some themes such as entrepreneurship training, more grants, partnerships and needs assessment were a set of priori themes derived from literature. The themes are subsequently presented in figure 6.1, and, thereafter discussed (guided by content analysis).

Figure 6.1 Strategies for optimising benefits



Source: *Field notes, 2019/2020*

The above findings indicate that entrepreneurship training was the most appropriate strategy for promoting youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. Effective extension services, entrepreneurial incentivisation and flexible funding followed this. The least is more grants, and others. This implies that youth demanded for more skills, knowledge, and inspiration than funding. All data collection methods recognised the need for entrepreneurship training for youth in Gulu District in Acholi subregion. However, these strategies are intertwined because no measure can serve in isolation.

Entrepreneurial training

Majority of the participants revealed that training in entrepreneurship is a fundamental strategy in fostering an enterprise culture and empowerment among the youth in northern Uganda. While as most studies emphasise need for funding as key, youth in Gulu district demanded for training. The training would propel youth to generate achievable business ideas, effectively

manage their finances, identifying opportunities from environment and build social capital. Additionally, training was taken as form of awareness creation that enhances community sensitisation, mentorship and role modelling, effective monitoring, group cohesion and other associated benefits. The findings suggest that training is core and multifunctional and incorporates all other models in promoting youth entrepreneurship. Training shapes youth as social entrepreneurs not only focusing on money making but focusing on improving the society where they live.

Furthermore, participants indicated that training equips the youth with knowledge and skills, changes the attitudes and mindset. The participants mostly emphasised training on financial management, value of agrienterprises, business idea germination, value addition, innovation, and general business management. One of the participants highlighted this during focus group discussion in Awach sub county, “As youth, training us in entrepreneurship practices such as financial management and recording keeping is very important. This will help us to acquire skills in generating business ideas, use money properly and start good businesses” (FGD AWA002, Male participant, 2019).

Other participants in Paicho sub-county re-echoed the above, emphasising the importance of entrepreneurial training towards sharpening the business lives and skills of most unskilled youth:

We do not know how to use the money because of lack of education. Therefore, giving more training on how to run the business. We learn more business aspects such as how business makes profit and losses. With this training, we shall be able to succeed in our projects (FGD PAIS 005, Male participant, 2019).

Furthermore, the youth recommended and yearned for technical training in best agricultural practices, such as horticulture, aquaculture, floriculture and postharvest handling, besides packaging, marketing, procurement, supply chain management, quality control and customer care.

When asked about the duration of training, there were multiple responses. Participants emphasised a month, three weeks, and three months while others indicated continuous training on monthly basis to act as a reminder and maintaining awareness among the members of the income generating activities. They contend that enough training would build the capacities of youth in best business practices, change mindset, and avails them with adequate competitive business skills. One respondent emphasised adequate training before implementing the project to prepare the youth mentally, physically, and financially; “Before government funds any youth

project, there should be proper and enough training on how to use the money” (FGD CUS007, Male Participant, 2019).

The issue of training youth first before funding was emphasised as well during key informant interview:

The training period should be in line with the training content. Topics like financial management require a longer time, taking youth through step by step. Then tackle the aspect of leadership for like a one week. If you want them to understand, take seven days on each topic. Every morning start with recap to motivate and remind them, stop at midday for exercises. Training should be away from their locality, so that youth do not have to go out every time to receive calls and visit friends. They will train and catch up, then signing attendance and getting out (KII 5CDS, District Official, 2019).

The youth development expert highlighted early preparation for mindset change, awareness, and productive capacity building:

The best measure is early preparation, we need more time, and these youth need good training in group dynamics, financial management and entrepreneurship. Good training should be at least one week depending on the curriculum; our youth need intensive training for behaviour change (KII 4PM-T, Partnership Manager, 2019).

Another KI stated:

Firstly, I would recommend that at least the training should be for the whole month. Then, they can train youth 2-3 times a week, for one or two months. I think the whole concept of procurement, finance, marketing, communication processes are understood well. Secondly, the social accountability committee will be able to undertake their responsibility of understanding a serious group. At district level, I would request government to identify may be an independent institution that can train the youth effectively. Like in Gulu, we have NGOs/institutions like Technoserve, VSO, Whitaker Peace and Development initiative, Gulu University that are training the youth in business skills, cooperatives, and group performance. So if the government can allow the district to identify some partners who can train these youth effectively before they can access the money I think that would be very good. This reduces misuse of funds and issues of management of projects (KII 3DYC, District Youth Leader, 2019).

These revelations suggest that training is key in transforming the entrepreneurial lives of the youth. Furthermore, training is not a single day or activity but a planned sequential and regular programme. The findings are in agreement with other studies which stressed the importance of entrepreneurship training in equipping the youth with necessary entrepreneurial competences, changing attitudes, and entrepreneurial thinking (Kiesner, 2009; Matsumoto, 2008; Valerio et al., 2014) for successful execution of youth empowerment programmes. Matsumoto’s emphasis on education and training for youth in post-conflict suits my study because youth in northern Uganda are a product of war requiring careful, lengthy, and regular training.

Borrowing from Wood (2011), purposeful training is not a single event but rather a continuous process with series of events aimed at sustained life change (Wood, 2011). Indeed my study established the urge for continuous training by community development office, district technical team to foster behavioural change and arousing the entrepreneurial intentions. Wokorach (2020) recognises training as key in developing entrepreneurial mind-set, culture, and youth capacity to think, act and relate. Its continuity provides the skill set, and mindset for identifying and launching new enterprises since training is a dynamic learning process as posited by scholars in entrepreneurial learning (Cope, 2005). Entrepreneurial training must enhance the creative thinking of the youth towards generating big business ideas. It is unarguably stated that in any entrepreneurial process, building individual skills, knowledge and experience play a vital role (Adebayo, 2015). Thus, this builds the ability or capacity of youth to identify opportunity, mobilise resources and translate such ideas into viable ventures (Eme, 2014). Basing on this, a number of programmes offered training to 6,000 youth under YouWiN, YES promoted mandatory placement and skills acquisition and vocational capabilities (Adebayo, 2015). The training in Nigeria challenges the practices under the Ugandan YLP as discussed in the previous chapter.

It is imperative to note that training is not about promoting the ideology of entrepreneurship as propagated in YLP, but creating understanding of entrepreneurship, developing capabilities, critical alertness, financial literacy and contributing to developing of capabilities, entrepreneurial cultures, identities and real vision (Bakotić & Kružić, 2010; Rae, 2010; Wokorach, 2020). Although they stressed the value of entrepreneurial education, the only criticism with Rae's propositions is his/her focus on enterprise education in universities thus ignoring training in informal setting like rural Northern Uganda. Ejiogu and Nwajiuba (2012) stresses the value of training in enhancing managerial skills and knowledge needed for successful operation of new venture though other studies disregard such entrepreneurial training depicting it as a failure since it focuses on exploitation of opportunities assuming that the opportunities have already been identified (Neck & Greene, 2011). Basing on the Positive Youth Development approach, the amount of start-up finance was mostly more than five million Ugandan shilling (5,000,000)³⁶, thus necessitating an enabling environment that can only be created through adequate financial management training and preparedness.

³⁶ This was equivalent to USD 1,364.95 at the time of interview. However, the foreign exchange rate changes from time to time depending on the global political and economic conditions.

To prepare youth fully for positive development, there is a need to focus on family structure and environment. The ecological perspective strengthens the confidence and character to act and live productive lives. In northern Uganda, young people's opportunities were directly or indirectly affected by war through family disruption, therefore, youth struggle to meet family obligations which challenges their progress in economic activities (Oosterom, Namuggala, & Szyp, 2021). Among the Acholi, manhood is determined by one's ability to meet his family's needs, and demonstrate power (Onyango, 2012). The struggle to live a powerful man (youth) affects one's concentration on training. Furthermore, there is patriarchy and varied needs across gender, age and youth find it difficult to negotiate their claims into material resources and production means (Dixon, 2021; Omona & Aduo, 2013). According to Dixon (2021) the war brought in contestation over land as people returned from camps, thus it becomes difficult for youth to utilise and invest in agriculture and other land-resource related activities after the training. The youth noted that they lacked decision-making powers over which sections of land to utilise, since clan elders possess powers over land utilisation. Consequently, the purpose of training may not probably yield results.

ILO appreciates the influence of entrepreneurship education and training in equipping young people with attitudes, confidence and skills (flexibility, and creativity) to cope with uncertainty in the environment (Schoof, 2006). Therefore, training should be holistic, inclusive, engaging, aimed at mind-set change and motivating if the skills and knowledge are to be relevant to successful operation of enterprises. These technical skills are complementary with the soft skills for proper functioning of the youth. Involvement of team of technical experts, independent institutions and social workers in the training creates awareness, and entrepreneurial orientations. Nonetheless, the training by local government officials lacked the specific expertise, technical knowledge, and technology to drive youth into an intended entrepreneurship seat. The professional and independent organisations such as NGOs, CBOs, and other youth development agencies are better placed to offer productive and well-balanced training to the youth. Such professionals go beyond the normal content delivery but do psychosocial support as well. Long durations of training, with thorough and appropriate content sharpens the memories and builds strong assets and skills in the youth hence revitalising their energies, passions, capabilities, and resilience towards utilisation of the available resources, and successful entrepreneurship.

Provision of effective extension and advisory services to youth projects

With continuous training comes extension services and participants across focus groups, interviews and case studies emphasised the role of effective extension services towards the success and sustainability of youth projects. The youth expressed their urge for extension services across all the enterprise activities and stages. They emphasised the need for follow-ups to remote areas, field visits to gardens, animal farms, nursery beds, fishponds, shops, and other projects. The participants proposed weekly visits, accessible extension workers such as veterinary officers, agricultural officers, production and commercial officers, community development officers (CDOs), social workers and procurement officers. They contended that extension service enables YIGs to stay focused on their production lines.

Youth argued that the failure of many youth enterprises was due to insufficient technical guidance and advice. One participant stated, “Make more follow-ups so that in case of any problem it can be forwarded and rectified” (FGD PAIO 004, 2019). While traversing the remote areas in Omel, Awach, Palaro and Patiko sub counties, I observed that, indeed, the youth projects faced multiple problems, which required attention of the extension workers. In some instances, I started guiding on record keeping, stores management, conflict management, confidence building and time management amidst being a data collector. Stationing extension workers at grassroots builds the confidence of young entrepreneurs in agriculture and other venture.

A furious participant commented on the importance of extension services on reducing financial mismanagement by leaders:

There is (a) need for follow up by government officials at sub county and/or district level before greedy group committee members swindle money. Instead of coming to arrest us after a project has collapsed, they can offer advice, guidance and save us from such greedy leaders (FGD AWA002, Male Participant, 2019).

The professional in agricultural productivity and youth agrienterprises and development underlined the great work extension workers do towards foster project sustainability among the youth.

Poor quality inputs is quite a challenge- government has to put many regulations and ensure that dealers have quality inputs. Extension workers...to help the young farmers improve on agronomic practices easily execute this work. The key leaders at sub county level should play a key role because they are closest to the youth (KII 4PM-T, Partnership Manager, 2019).

However, the district official stressed the need for increased budget for regular field visits and extension service. Budget allocation go hand in hand with willingness to offer service. In all the quarterly progress reports and meetings, facilitation for extension workers was overstressed, “We need more facilitation for regular field work especially CDOs, TOTs to ensure compliance to the set standards” (District Focal Point Office-Quarterly Progress Report, 2018).

The above report presents the worth of extension services in the normal functioning of the society. Extension services go beyond mere field visits to technical, business, and psychotherapeutic support. The technical support available is fundamental in fostering model groups, averting situations (such as conflicts), information access, exchange, and providing timely solutions to problems. Recent studies in Greater Masaka Uganda acknowledge the role of extension services in revitalising agricultural productivity (Mugabi et al., 2018). However, their approach focuses on telephone digital technology, yet my study stresses the value of field visits and interactive/physical extension services. In addition, some of the youth enterprises are in remote areas where telephone network is a problem, and technology adoption may be very low. It is believed that extension services are best provided where social networks are strong, and there is effective coordination and collaboration among the youth, between youth and extension workers (Stanton-Salazar, 2011).

Extension services need to be regular, concrete, accessible, affordable, and sufficient in both rural and urban settings across all sectors. Extension service is not mere field visits or tourism avenues but rather involves training, counselling, rewarding and other technical support necessary for successful youth entrepreneurship. However, more logistics are needed for effective facilitation and motivated service and ensuring wider coverage and frequency. Regular and effective extension service inspires, strengthens, and enhances commitment, confidence, motivation, cooperation among the youth income generating groups. These attributes accelerate youth social entrepreneurial growth and empowerment in the region.

Entrepreneurial incentivisation for youth entrepreneurship

The participants discussed the connection between incentives and success of YIGA. Provision of incentives was indicated as one of the strongest measures to enable youth optimally to benefit from interventions. Other than funding, material support and extension services, participants spoke of other motivations which can attract youth’s commitment, morale, and

dedication towards effective utilisation of empowerment programmes and hence, successful entrepreneurial development. The proposition was for both those who are already in the groups and those who were yet joining. They considered such incentive to attract the youth social entrepreneurship and enhance productivity. In addition, members of failed youth enterprises (such as Piggery project B and Youth Livelihood Project G), stressed the need for incentives to attract, arouse and retain the youth in group projects.

The notably mentioned incentives include the business plan competitions where winners are awarded, the prize competitions among operational groups and rewards for the best performing youth IGAs, considering existing ideas, and long repayment period in case of revolving fund. Others suggested recognition on local media such as radio to sensitise, motivate and attract hard work among youth. One serious looking participant stated, "...the government should organise competition among the different youth groups and award prizes for best performing as a motivation" (FGD BUNGA008, Male Participant, 2019).

This was augmented by of the youth IGA leader:

You see once government rewards best performing groups like those which have completed paying back the loan, more youth will be motivated to work hard and receive more funding. Even new ones will have to put in more effort so as to win the prizes. Then, our businesses will have to expand... (IDI 02YIG-L, Project Leader R Concrete and Mould project, Gulu Municipality, 2019).

The Youth focal person reiterated:

We encourage the groups to quickly complete repaying the fund and come we give them more money. Once other youth see them progressing, they can be motivated to also form dedicated teams, work hard and benefit from government programmes. If NGOs can as well employ such strategy, we shall see a changed youthful society (KII 2FP, YLP Focal Point office, 2019).

The incentives act as pull factors, instil a sense of commitment, hard work, and work ownership. More youth strive to compete and win to be rewarded. These rewards can be material, financial, and recognition. However, some youths may feel discouraged once they are not rewarded, and this can as well affect the performance of the programme. This reduces their cohesion, character, contribution and participation decision-making, hence affecting asset building (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005; Zimmerman, 2000). Nonetheless, rewards are fundamental in enhancing intrinsic motivation of individuals towards attainment of the set goals.

Another way to stimulate the youth participation in social entrepreneurship is considering existing ideas. The participants stressed that youth with innovative ideas know what they want

and what to do, once they are supported, it provides an inspiration to other youth to generate viable business ideas to benefit from incentives. Furthermore, they reported that the whole programme needed to be more demand driven, and competitive than considering all youth including those who are less interested. Such measure forces the youth to strive towards exploiting the available opportunities (incentives). The Business Skills officer and youth entrepreneurship and training expert maintained:

It should be demand driven, and youth will be able to own it. Let the youth initiate what they want. It will enable us to see if the youth are interested... I would also think approaches should change. Let us select a few youths with an initiative, (identify few people), support them expand their ventures thus motivating others, (KII 7BSO, 2019).

Organising business plan competitions to aspiring young entrepreneurs drives more job creation to attracted youth. Similar studies in Nigeria indicates that a programme of Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN) organises annual business competition for young entrepreneurs to showcase their business idea, innovations, business acumen and aspirations to investors, business leaders and mentors (Adebayo, 2015). From training of over 6,000 youth spread across geo-political zones, 4,000 were awarded with the grant to expand their enterprises, enforce specialisation, be visible access professional networks and create jobs.

Unlike in YouWiN, YLP in Uganda considered all a larger section of youth including those without entrepreneurial acumen, and no competitions organised. Attracting youth with entrepreneurial competence to participate in the competitions increases the inner drive to achievement. However, entrepreneurship incentivisation requires well streamlined framework to sustain the motivation, some youth work for the sake of attaining rewards which may sustaining the business/project ideas. The process must be corruption free and follow the principles of social justice such as equity, transparency, and accountability. A clear understanding of the purpose of the incentives, mentorship to the youth, and follow up on activities is fundamental in fostering an enterprising culture among the youth.

Flexible funding to youth interest groups

As discussed in chapter six, youth complained of rigid and imposed business idea by district officials. In this chapter, the participants recommended funding that allow them freedom to implement personal initiatives and activities to enlarge the income base and exploit the market share. During the FGDs in Unyama subcounty, I observed that some businesses operated in

specific seasons such as ox-plough cultivation, horticulture, and floriculture, produce business and so on. The youth acknowledged that sometimes, the first idea might fail to materialise. This necessitates the need to diversify. A participant indicated:

...funders need to consider our best needs and not being rigid on initial ideas. For example, if our first idea was ox-plough cultivation, we can put this aside and venture into produce buying and selling during the harvesting season. This is because produce is available, sufficient, and cheap. After harvest, we can inject the money in the shop business than keeping it (FGD UNY003, Female Participant, 2019).

Another participant reiterated, “The government should allow us to use part of the money for the stated purpose and the balance is invested in side businesses to make more money” (FGD UNY003, Male Participant, 2019).

One youth municipal councillor echoed the above during a focus group discussion, “...let the enterprises not be restricted but we allow the municipal youth to change and engage in enterprises that are on demand and have the market in city”.

The district technical official commended this suggestion, but emphasised diversifying after notifying programme-implementing authorities and seeking for permission to diversify. The argument is that the other projects should be in line with the development agenda such as environmental sustainability, skills development, and livelihood components. However, this suggests that social innovation and initiative are compromised.

Another aspect of flexible funding is supporting individual youth through considering individual innovativeness and personal choices. The participants appreciated working in groups but recommend that funding to individual initiatives be prioritised. In a focus group discussion, a participant stated, “I prefer distribution of money to each member so that we make personal choices. When we are given own cash, we can live our own life and do what we want than relying on the group decisions” (FGD AWA002, Male Participant, 2019). However, distributing cash to individual youth without proper preparation and training breeds wastage of resources, some youth opt to purchase personal items for consumption rather than investment.

From the expert’s point of view:

We can support youth in groups, but we allow them to allocate the money according to individual business interests. Peer monitoring is enforced because once one member defaults the whole group is liable. As they conduct personal enterprises, they are able to encourage and monitoring what their colleagues are doing so that at the end of the day are able to pay back. In the process, the personal initiatives grow, and our youth earn a living. This approach has worked well with our youth project (KII 7BSO, 2020).

More so, flexible funding was perceived to be timely funding for business expansion. To the participants, the need for cash depends on time and nature of business. Some projects are lucrative during specific seasons when supplies are available and cheap. The commonly mentioned enterprise was producing business during harvesting season, planting seasons in case of animal traction, and entertainment business during festivals and political seasons, such as independence, Christmas celebrations, New Year, and campaign periods. Therefore, the application for financing must be honoured at the time of need to capture market and attain effective inventory management. During a focus group discussion in Awach Sub County, one concerted youth stood up and emphasised:

Government needs to timely fund our businesses usually in less than four months after applying when there are products (sesame, beans, soya beans, sorghum). This enables us to buy these products during harvesting season because when money is given after harvest, there is nothing to buy (FGD AWA 006, Male Participant, 2019).

The above quotation implies that the youth would be able to meet timely replenishment for continuous operation of the businesses. Flexible funding ensures continuous production and meeting market demands. Customer needs are met, cash at hand increases thus high rate of return on investment and more income generation. Therefore, the youth utilise part of this income to meet the repayment terms. Important to note is that working capital requirements are maintained thus increasing productivity. This ensures sustainability of youth enterprises, thus expanding the social impact.

Partnership with independent institutions

The technocrats and experts underscored partnership with independent organisations such as cooperatives/SACCO to handle funding and other entrepreneurial responsibilities. Such an organisation is in position to maximise benefit from the programme through supporting profitable innovations, timely funding, and mentorship. Some of the organisations such as these are more grounded in social entrepreneurship practices than local government technical committees. Other than funding, additional findings from the in-depth interviews highlighted that partnership with national and multinational corporations provides demand and market driven training, qualifies and places youth into industrial training and aids mobilisation and provision of funds for sustainable ventures. Participants further stated that scholarships for the youth could easily be accessed.

The partnership further strengthens the aspects of training, fund mobilisation, and some youth gain from apprenticeship through industrial placements. Further, partnership with such organisations minimises mismanagement of funds, streamlines processes, and conducts feasibility studies. Quality service is key when dealing with youth affairs. The misconceptions of free government money are avoided, thereby ensuring efficiency and effectiveness of the programme. A development expert opined:

I think the first measure government needs is to work through probably a financial institution, a lower-level side financial institution, could be a SACCO, or a cooperative. Where youth are tagged to a certain institution, they cannot run anywhere. Then they have that mentorship because when tied to a cooperative there are elders who bring them back. The elders oversee youth actions, when they go wrong elders correct them (KII 4PM-T Partnership Manager, 2019).

A municipal official corroborated; “If it is to be a revolving fund then an independent organisation should be responsible for the management of the youth fund. We (government officials) have become more of debtor collectors, yet we have much work” (KII 9YFPM, YLP Focal Point Office, 2019).

From the above observations, it is imperative to note that partnership is essential for successful training and financing. Previous partnership between government and commercial banks involved banks handling the YVCF on behalf of government where youth applied for loans (Ahaibwe & Kasirye, 2015; Ahaibwe et al., 2014). However, most rural and the youth who could not read or write could not access the funding fearing the bank procedures, and remoteness. The partnership, in form of cooperation, co-production, and corporation would steer execution of youth businesses. Funding needs to consider the accessibility, lead-time, business venture and seasonality. Although some ventures can be implemented at any time of the year, many business activities should be strategic to market, season and nature of youth enterprise. This calls for diversification of project activities to facilitate continuous production and operation to ensure the sustainability of the IGA.

Supporting individual innovations in a group is vital however, it requires careful examination and special consideration, or it may lead to group conflicts if the money is to be recovered (MoGLSD, 2013). Studies on youth entrepreneurship support partnership with private sectors and NGOs postulating that this would help in developing multipronged strategies meant to assist youth financially identify appropriate opportunities, and screening youth business ideas (Sambo, 2015). Studies in Pakistan view partnership not only for funding but increasing creativity, innovation, and for critical thinking because of the exposure (Khan, 2017).

Governments are loaded with multiple statist functions, therefore, partnership with third and private sectors provide a pragmatic approach to scan, train, mentor, prepare, assess and finance feasible and viable youth projects and relieving the government of the burden of youth empowerment.

Effective teambuilding among the youth interest groups (YIGs).

Teambuilding was reported as an effective way of optimising value from SE programmes. I posed questions on what effective teambuilding would mean to them, and the following concepts surfaced. The responses ranged from reducing numbers, building trust, age consideration, time, communication and setting model groups. One participant talked of reducing the members to five from the previous 10-15 members. In this submission, these five members should naturally form the group, allowed enough time to understand one another, share business ideas before funding is provided. My study was conducted among the youth that are part of the organised groups. The participants stipulated that they should be in innovative teams rather than uncoordinated large groups if they are to reap from youth programmes. To them, teamwork involves interdependence, working for common goals and helping one another. One participant described her experience in working in large groups as she proposes her way forward:

I remember when we were very many in group, we failed to understand each other. Some people used to be absent, come late, and dodge work, claim sickness or even switch off phone calls. Sometimes our chairperson could visit them and finds them sleeping at home physically fit. Whenever you ask, they tell you it's a "group thing". To me when we have a small number of less than five members, we can have shared purpose and easily commit ourselves towards success of our project (FGD PAIO 004, Female participant, 2019).

The above participant's statement highlights the role numbers play in fostering commitment and dedication among the youth. Coordination and mutual understanding are possible when it comes to small teams. Indeed, these traits are among the essentials for successful entrepreneurship and empowerment.

A youth leader articulated her thoughts about teamwork during the FGD with the youth council:

When groups are formed early enough, youth easily co-opt. I think this is the right way. You can even prepare the groups for the whole year. When you form a group early enough, they are organised, aware, know what to and develop common goal. In case of an entrepreneurship programme, it become easy to select serious people. I think in conclusion, this is the best way... Laughs... (FGD DYC, Female Councillor, 2019).

A key informant presented his suggestion to effective teambuilding emphasising age grouping. This technical officer stressed teaming youth according to age range for effective coordination. He stated:

On age, if government groups youth basing on age brackets 15-20 years, 21-25, 26-30 years, the conflicts and tension occurring across ages is reduced. For example, there is someone of 40 years in Unyama, who took advantage of his age and manipulated young ones, used the fund for personal gains. The older youth usually plays with the young ones. Once the team is based on age similarity, I think they can easily trust each other, cooperate, and have common interests (KII 5CDS, District Official, 2019).

During the preliminary study, one chairperson of a failed group presented a dissenting view. He based his proposition on his experience, since the project had failed due to large membership and many teenagers in projects. He emphasised forming teams with a composition of aged/old youth versus young ones. He asserted:

To me, mixing senior youth with junior (I call them luxurious) youth is the best. When you finance 18-24 years in one enterprise, you waste your funding. These people think of drinking, sex, and smart phones. The age 26-30 years and above have the role to play in their families. Senior youth mentor the young ones and show them what to do, including disciplining them (IDI 04-YIG-UN, Group Chairperson, 2019).

The above excerpts suggest the age is an important factor when it comes to group formation and success of an enterprise. Age determines enterprise choice, commitment, and financial discipline. As discussed in the previous sections, the teams require thorough training on group dynamics, harmony, conflict management and cohesiveness. Most youth political leaders, and technocrats concurred with this reiterating the need for interpersonal communication skills, technical expertise to enable the youth to understand their project. Team size expedites work, produces results quickly, and builds the synergy among the youth. Others proponents argue that teamwork develops social networks, social bonds, social capital and adaptation to group dynamics, commitment and trust, all essential for youth empowerment (Bassani, 2007; Jennings et al., 2006; Midgley, 1997; Oliver et al., 2006). Although these studies do not mention teamwork directly, their emphasis on social networks for meaningful participation fits the theme of my study.

Teamwork is central for youth participation, knowledge sharing, therefore inevitable in entrepreneurship and empowerment endeavours. Hofstede (1980) advances that group loyalty and decisions are enjoyed in teams, however, individual decision making and deviance is likely to be discouraged (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016). Studies on teamwork and entrepreneurship

intentions postulate that teamwork demands for ability to respect, and flexibility to tolerate dissenting views to reach agreement and interact in multidisciplinary groups, identify potential leadership skills, and group development (Pérez et al., 2015). Despite adopting a quantitative approach and transversal design on fresh university students, their perceived self-efficacy in teamwork and entrepreneurship fits in this study (though with a qualitative lens on this question). Therefore, the youth will not only come together to work or enjoy funding but also tolerate dissenting thinking and develop products that result from collective effort and synergy.

The power of a needs assessment

Under a needs assessment, participants' views pointed at understanding the youth needs, ideas and involving them in programme planning and implementation. As presented in previous chapter (chapter 5), where youth expressed dissatisfaction on programme design, template interventions, imposed activities and centralised planning, yet youth needs are neglected. In this section consultation gained momentum as a basic strategy for SE intervention effectiveness. Majority of the participants proposed consultations, understanding local needs, and involving youth in decision making before entrepreneurship programmes rolled to the target population.

Whereas many youths maintained that a needs assessment is equivalent to involvement in project designs, others indicated that it would ease understanding of their activities and environment. To participants, involvement promotes efficiency and effectiveness in the YIGs. Some participants considered needs assessment important for confidence building and appreciated their local resources respectively. Understanding local needs and consultations were emphasised in many interviews, discussions. During focus group discussion, one participant with, a raised voice, recommended “Both government and NGOs should consult us the youth before funding our projects. Through this, our needs can be clearly understood, and we can get funding for the right project than imposing projects on us” (FGD BUNGL 001, Male Participant, 2019).

A key informant corroborated the above assertion,

Firstly, consult what the youth need first because problems differ across places. What we need here in this village may not be what youth from other villages want; our rural setting is different from urban. Secondly, even among the youth needs differ. Beneficiaries enjoy the programme if we consult them, (KII 1YC, Youth Councillor, Paicho Subcounty, 2019).

Bottom-up planning was also over underlined in all my interactions with the youth. The urge to involve youth and youth leaders in needs assessment and planning enhances a sense of responsibility and ownership of projects. The participants asserted that, through this, the government assesses the financial needs, local conditions, resources, and environment, thereby funding appropriate YIGAs. Regarding this, the technocrat observed:

We need bottom-up planning, I think even at village level we need to be planning for youth activities so that it trickles/moves up to national level. This enables government can know what indeed the youth of here want. Sometimes government may plan for sorghum yet they youth of village A want another project, bottom-up planning assists them to plan accordingly (KII 2FP, YLP Focal Point Office, 2019).

The above revelation suggests that funding goes to the right economic activity, youth feel motivated and inspired to take up profitable enterprises. Needs assessment produces forensic information necessary for successful project execution. It makes it possible to link youth to local resources, and utilise the ecological assets, thus sustaining the business ventures (Damon, 2004; Zimmerman, 2000). Maximizing benefit from social entrepreneurial programmes depends on collaboration between project designers and target population.

Inclusive planning

Inclusive planning motivates the youth to take a lead in the programme. In all FGDs, and interviews, the youth complained of lacking information and imposition of projects on them by government officials. Some participants (n=11) demanded for inclusion in decision making both at local and central government level. To them, inclusive planning would lead to successful ventures. They stated that it is youth who understand own needs and ecological assets around them. The technical officers at the district level as well corroborated. During the second phase of the interview, this recommendation was re-echoed:

It is important to know what they want, engage them in programming and implementation. I wish this programme had involved the youth from the beginning. It was going to be the most successful entrepreneurship programme. Ministry only came with the idea, but never involved the youth. Such programme needs the youth to take the lead in every aspect (KII 2FP, YLP Focal Person, 2019).

The above quote implies that the youth prefer incorporating their inputs, ideas during the project programme design to benefit optimally from any programme. Furthermore, a needs assessment and inclusive planning instils a sense of ownership, personal responsibility and social accountability among the beneficiaries (Molyneux et al., 2016). Molyneux et al., (2016) draw on promoting citizen's voice and participation as a youth empowerment tool to seek for

accountability and social audit. Social entrepreneurship promotes accountability to the constituencies through meeting the social purpose (Austin et al., 2006). Further still, inclusive planning is premised on the assertion that local communities constitute an important group of stakeholders in planning and implementation of youth empowerment programmes (Azman et al., 2011). This is because they understand their local settings, dynamics, and needs.

The great motivation develops when all the parties to benefit from entrepreneurial interventions are involved as collaborators. Empowerment theory emphasises changing language from beneficiaries to partners/collaborators for effective participation, and sense of ownership. The key question is on whom to include in the planning process since some decisions are technical and professional in nature, and the youth have dissenting views, needs and different levels of educations, experience, and exposure. However, an analysis of a society's needs informs candid decisions on cost, training, environment, time management, communication, scope and expertise. Understanding the context is key in establishment of the projects that are feasible and viable in a given environment.

Thorough monitoring and evaluation of youth income generating activities

By considering this M and E, I found that most of the youth had recommendations on how to improve and sustain output in their ventures. Most of the participants talked of the urge for frequent visits and checks from technocrats and other leaders at both village, parish, district, and national level. The youth recognised the importance of monitoring and suggested that problems in the projects can be prevented if regular and effective monitoring is ensured. They emphasised that regular interaction with professionals and programme implementers provides a conducive working space. As a rural youth noted:

Monitoring is very important. They should always come and see what we are doing instead of waiting to come for recovery and arrest. The officials will also be able to able to check how we are using the money, and advising on best solutions, (FGD AWA002, Male participant, 2019).

This revelation was from a youth project member in Awach sub county which had failed due mismanagement by group leaders. The members concluded that if monitoring was streamlined all the problems faced right from the reception of funds to procurement and eventual collapse of the IGA would have been solved. All youth political leaders proposed the idea of constant monitoring by all the stakeholders at district, sub-county, and local council levels. One participant coined it as having a formidable force for effective monitoring:

The process needs to be reinforced, meaning that the youth leaders, the technical people involved in verification of the groups. They should be given ample time for frequent monitoring of group performance before and after receiving the money from YLP. We must have enough time for the Technical Planning Committee (TPC) to verify and approve feasible youth enterprises (FGD MYC, Male Youth Councillor, and Municipality).

To some participants, monitoring should go beyond quarterly to weekly basis. However, the technocrats in charge of projects stated that this requires enough facilitation to widen the scope of monitoring:

There should be enough money for running offices, like at the moment there is no operation fund for monitoring. How do you go to the field when your motorcycle is broken, there is no miracle? When there is facilitation, you must intensify monitoring, not just quarterly. There must also be support supervision to youth activities (KII 9YFPM, Municipality, 2019).

The participants emphasised conducting an evaluation of the YLP since most YIGs has operated for more than year. The examination would determine the effectiveness of the youth entrepreneurship activities such as successful or unsuccessful projects. The youth councillors emphasised investing time in assessment of whether youth enterprises have impacted on lives of the youth such as change in knowledge, attitudes, behaviour, use of resources, expansion of business operations. The exercise determines the success of YIGs against programme objectives. One expert in youth agri-entrepreneurship opined:

I think government needs to conduct an evaluation of its programme by visiting all youth ventures, examine their performance overtime and come out with a report. Like I said before, some youth groups failed but nobody knows why they failed. Similarly, evaluation reveals successful projects and reasons for their success. District officers simply rush to arrest the youth for defaulting repayment terms. What is important is to draw lessons from youth activities and formulate measures for improved performance. Future youth entrepreneurship interventions will learn from such evaluation exercises (KII 4PM-T, 2019).

The third sector experts recommend having a strong M&E framework for youth entrepreneurship schemes. Youth entrepreneurship is like nurturing a toddler to adulthood; therefore, such framework states the personnel, timing, activities, support in the field, and geographical coverage. Similar studies in Kenya suggest that monitoring should not only be a regular requirement but aimed at improving the quality of youth project delivery processes (Waithera & Wanyoike, 2015). Their study was premised on influence of staff and personnel training, stakeholder participation and political influence on M&E, ignoring the fact that staff can trained but failed to monitor. My point of departure is that staff are available and trained, what is necessary is to execute the M&E process. Nevertheless, stakeholder participation and

political factors are so instrumental in most government funded youth entrepreneurship programmes in Uganda.

To Njuki et al. (2013) monitoring is so central in improving performance of youth groups, the quality of M&E practices serves the purpose. Monitoring, in this case, can be thought of as effective ways involving continuous visits to youth projects to ascertain how they are performing, assess the challenges faced and provide corrective measures. Therefore, youth projects demand consistent, joint, and regular efforts. Continuous monitoring provides contextual and practical information, feedback for thorough extension services and training hence fostering progress in the youth ventures. Focused on everyday activities, monitoring enhances IGA competitive nature in market in form of improved production, quality, and bargaining power.

Establishing technical institutions for youth skills enhancement

The youth demanded for centres that equip them with practical skills and knowledge. The technical institution is looked at as an opportunity and centre for skills development. As highlighted in chapter six, limited skills were reported among causes of poverty situation in northern Uganda. The participants agreed that having a technical training centre at grassroots offers the solution. The establishment of technical institute was the second most frequently mentioned theme by rural youth. Several skills gaps mentioned including carpentry, agricultural practices, value chain, hairdressing, ICT, construction, and repairs. The youth talked of the need for youth resources centres at sub county and parish level respectively for information exchange and education. To them, centres would cater for the needs of illiterates, dropouts and unemployed youth. This was portrayed as; “war made us not to get opportunity to get quality education; some people did not go to school, so there is need for a vocational institute at the sub county to enable us access practical skills” (FGD PAIS 005, Male participant, 2019). Similarly, a female participant, AS (not real name), with sad facial expression noted, “We need technical schools at each sub county and skilling at each village so that we access, learn construction, hairdressing, metalwork, and catering” (FGD UNY003, Female Participant, 2019).

Establishing accessible and affordable vocational centres at sub county level builds and develops the human capital (Chambers, 1995) in the community, and youth’s abilities to utilise the available opportunities in service, manufacturing, trade and industry and agriculture sectors. One participant pointed out:

Vocational schools can offer enough training on how to use the available resources. They offer training on best agriculture practices, technical skills like carpentry, hairdressing, postharvest handling and value addition. Enough training should provide skills to empower the youth and build their capacity to think, talk, and love farming... (FGD BUNGL 001, YIG Leader, 2019).

Youth leaders also emphasised the urgency for vocational skills, arguing that the region has resources, what is lacking is the skills and knowledge to utilise productively the resources. “Training on how to handle business should be a focus with training on farming as a business, how to handle animals, birds and crops” (KII 1YC, Youth Councillor Paicho Sub- County, 2019).

The above suggestions portray the demand for practical skills in the region. Sustainable skilling ensures effective participation in development activities. Youth become competent, confident and utilise the available resources profitably. I appreciate vocational skills’ complementary nature with entrepreneurship training in shaping the future of the youth in contemporary work. My argument, however, is that practical skills require enterprising culture for youth to benefit from the existent empowerment programmes. Sustainable skilling is what defines youth’s ability to gain mastery of their own lives, and participate in decision-making (Zimmerman, 2000). The vocationalisation must include business elements and other soft skills such as, communication, time management, critical thinking, customer care, decision-making, resourcefulness, and passion for work. The value of training is determined by the very many successes youth register after the training such as starting and growing businesses, lifestyle changes, polishing and looking for formal employment both in for formal and informal sector.

The current study agrees with studies by Blaak, Openjuru, and Zeelen (2013) who acknowledged that vocational education improves the quality of those excluded from formal education through practical empowerment with marketable schools. However, in this study, I consider vocationalisation suitable for unemployed graduates as well. Training should be for all youth if we to have an empowered society. Skilling promotes sustainable development embedded in social entrepreneurship principles. Social entrepreneurship is all-inclusive approach towards having a resilient young generation. Demonstrating the need for vocational training is key within rural community. The participants’ conclusions also illustrate that exploiting the available entrepreneurship programmes arises through youth’s reflexive and reflective consideration of their local resources and activities.

Introduction of youth resource centres at grassroots levels

Connected to the vocational institution is the demand for youth resource centres at grassroots. Youth personal attitudes and lifestyle changes have affected the ability to participate productively in socio-economic activities. As I argued in chapter six, youth find themselves at crossroads between leisure, lifestyle, and entrepreneurship. Therefore, with vocationalisation at play, the youth start to engage in skills training and consequently running projects. As youth attempt to establish projects, the need for regular information sharing, mentorship, behavioural change, psychotherapeutic support, and entrepreneurial orientation grows. Business support, counsel, and direction demands a reference point, and this arouses the need for information, and business incubation centres at all levels. These are avenues where business facilities/services are offered, business ideas nurtured, and lifelong skills are attained, as one youth participant illustrated; “government should establish a youth resource centre at parish level, where we shall be sensitized on business ideas, HIV-AIDS, drug abuse, and others lifestyle challenges” (FGD AWA002, Male participant, 2019).

The youth centres act as business information and marketing forum for youth goods and services. In relation to this, one stakeholder noted; “...create a kind of youth hub to be able to advertise their products like how VSO is doing, take photos of their products, post them so the work can access them” (KII 11 MYC, Municipal Youth Councillor, 2019). These admissions can be interpreted as evidence of how youth are desperate for information services, mentorship, idea nurturing, business incubation and marketing avenues. While these centres are taken to be skill-building abilities, they can as well assist youth to initiate big business ideas. The catalytic effect of educational and awareness-raising activities in these centres arouses the entrepreneurial thinking, reputation and competitive nature of youth enterprises (Blundel, Lockett, & Wang, 2018; Wahga, Blundel, & Schaefer, 2018).

Notably, the youth can freely exchange and discuss the challenges faced both on personal, institutional, and environmental levels. Project difficulties are discussed, and solutions forwarded for consideration. It is worth noting that these youth centres act as networking avenues. Furthermore, coming together strengthens peer learning and motivates fellow youth. While youth centres are established, the technical staff, digital services and electricity should be put into consideration. However, the presence of physical infrastructure alone may not qualify a site to be a resourceful youth hub. The youth need the motivation and consciousness to use utilise the hub for the growth of their projects. Whereas other strategies would work

best, youth resource centre provides information as inputs for successfully execution of other models.

Effective communication channels for maximum exploitation of opportunities

The findings indicated that effective communication is very fundamental in creating awareness about entrepreneurial interventions. More so, effective communication fulfils the practical purpose of facilitating understanding among youth to utilise the available programmes effectively. Having listened and analysed youth concerns shown in chapter four, five and six, I developed a strong conviction to probe on the best how communication can actually reach the youth. The findings indicated that the youth prefer drama, sports, radio talk shows and church congregation as the most effective ways of transmitting the information. One youth pointed out; “government or NGOs should organise the football matches with all the youth and at the end of the match talk to them about the value of being together in groups” (FGD CUS007, YIG Chairperson, 2019).

In the same discussion, participants considered drama to be the most appropriate; one calm participant said, “...stakeholders can organise some drama plays that can transform our lives and drama brings us together and we can understand the message well” (FGD CUS007, Male Participant, 2019).

Although many participants did not indicate drama, the influence of drama and football was shown to be instrumental in effective communication. Drama was reported as the best communication strategy. The communication fora bring together youth with divergent ideas and values, attitudes, and skills. After such sports, social entrepreneurship ideas can be passed to the youth and inspiration messages relayed. I consider these ways as best mobilisation strategies for the youth who are remote, immobile, and volatile. Drama instils morals, inspires and relates to the real situation at hand. It is through drama and football that the message on agriculture as a well as youth entrepreneurship is preached. Sensitisation about the programmes and other opportunities is made possible once youth are brought together. These communication channels can be utilise to build an enterprise culture thus increasing youth entrepreneurial activity and decreasing state role on regulating and intervening in youth economy (Blundel et al., 2018).

Beyond facilitating sports and drama, effective communication requires regular radio talk shows about youth livelihood interventions. When messages are repeatedly conveyed, the young people pay attention, and degree of seriousness and retention is high (In-depth

interview). ‘Mature’ youth agreed with radio talk shows as an appropriate communication channel. I use the term ‘mature’ to depict youth who are 26 years and above (presented in the respondents’ demographics). The technocrats added their voices on holding regular talk shows about youth programmes for dialogue. Technical and political wing utilised such platform to sensitise the youth about the programmes. “Another solution, the spokespersons at division level should talk about the programme, even CDOs can have radio talk shows about the programme, you never know, someone may get some information” (KII 8CDM, Municipality, 2019).

The youth held a unique version of community radio programmes streamed live from the grassroots; these are avenue for sharing information:

If government can organise ‘*Kabake*’ (literally meaning to ‘gather and dialogue’) show here in our village, we can speak out our minds about the challenges we face. Here there are problems of poor roads, absence of extension services, lack of water, and others youth project related needs. Through this platform, our voices can reach the top offices and larger audience (FGD PAT010, Female Participant, Patalira Parish, Patiko Sub County, 2020).

Mention must be made to the fact that radio talk shows encourage discussion from the public, thereby generating an array of suggestions, which may improve programme performance. Nevertheless, this channel does not guarantee that information reaches and/or is understood by the intended recipients. Youth may not attend to radio talk shows compared to the elderly. Furthermore, the timing of a show is fundamental in capturing the listenership. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic where physical meetings are discouraged, radio may be the best.

Nonetheless, physical interaction remains the most appropriate media in effective communication. Feedback is key in such interactive communication. A study by Sambo (2015) on factors influencing youth entrepreneurship in Ethekewini Municipality, South Africa emphasised aggressive marketing campaigns to create awareness of support services through community meetings, township road shows, radio talks shows, drama and social media. These drama and radio talks relate to the suggestion on ‘*Kabake*’ established in this study that emphasised information exchange among different stakeholders in youth affairs as a precursor for project success. Effective communication means clear pathways through which the message reaches the youth and should be obtained from themes relayed by the programme initiators and implementers. Effective communication delivers the right message to the right audience and through the right channel.

Although communication was not a key question in the study, this surprising finding on drama and sports as best communication media occupies space in this study. Communication connects young people to government, community, peers, and designs programmes that are youth-friendly and youth-focused, in addition to building youth interpersonal skills (Shanahan & Elliott, 2009). Other past studies support the use of effective communication in fostering resilience, social competence, responding to interpersonal problems and deepening collaborative work and understanding the world around them (Elias et al., 1994; Midgley, 1997; Oliver et al., 2006). On contrary, the current study did not extensively explore the extent to which effective communication promotes this theorising by the scholars and its influence on decision-making. Notwithstanding, it is worth noting that better communication empowers youth to navigate for information, advice, and service when they need them. The participants zeroing on drama as the best communication strategy implies that its level of penetration in fostering understanding. That is why I put it at the forefront in fostering receivership. To this effect, face-to face communication, mobile phone texting and social media are appropriate for relying on the message effectively about the programme to the youth.

Considering already established youth innovations and enterprises

Existing enterprises are considered as youth income generating activities that operate (operated) before intervention (understudy) was implemented. The participants opined that the existing IGAs have experience, competence, confidence, and clear ambitions and understand the environment. To the participants, the general purpose of the enterprise is known, and the youth realise the benefits of operating the project compared to start-ups. There is also existing knowledge and information about the activities, strong networks and sense of ownership guaranteed. One group leader who is an ICT graduate noted:

The programmes should consider already existing groups. This is because some youth simply and quickly form groups when they hear of money without any business idea. When already existing groups are considered, the degree of success is high compared to new ones because the youth already know what to do in their businesses (FGD BUNGL 001, YIG Chairperson, 2019).

To supplement the excerpt above, another participant emphasised:

Go to the district and see the list of key active groups i.e., those performing well. Observe what they are doing and their financial needs than rushing to groups that are just starting from zero and interested in money and then run away (FGD CUS007, YIG Manager, 2019).

In another discussion, the same idea was substantiated, "...programmes should aim at considering the youth who are in groups since they have knowledge in running the business unlike those not in groups" (FGD CUS007, Male Participant, 2019).

Most of the quarterly reports reviewed emphasised funding already existing groups. These had structures, purpose, and active members (Gulu District Quarterly Progress Report July to September 2018). Active participation, personal contribution, and youth cohesion existed in such YIGs. Such groups needed more capital to expand on the existing ideas.

Although the key informants appreciated the fact that vulnerable youths are the target, as stipulated in the ministry guidelines, they agreed with the above assertions, suggesting the importance of paying special attention to active groups/enterprises that have been in existence for years. As we discussed in chapter four, it is possible to assess the performance and determine the experience and funding needs of existent IGA.

The guidelines specify vulnerable youth who are unemployed. However, when you follow the guidelines, you may end up with youth who are less experienced and with low motivation in business. Management of the enterprise becomes a big problem. If they could say the organised groups in existence can be supported it can be great in fostering expansion (KII 9YFPM, YLP Focal Point Municipality, 2019).

During the consultative meeting with District Youth Council, all leaders danced to the tunes of the above songs. They also overwhelmingly recognised the value of considering existing ventures as one bold leader illustrated:

I want to recommend, let the enterprises not be restricted, we sensitise the young people and look at genuine groups already in place. We first audit them and then fund them. In addition, if this money could go for individual active entrepreneurs, more successes can be registered. If you find a person doing his/her own produce buying and selling business, audit that person, and finance him/her... Identify young people who own enterprises and see how government can support them (FGD MYC, Youth Male Councillor, 2019).

Ozaralli and Rivenburgh (2016) support individual innovation highlighted in the above quotation:

Since individualistic cultures are supportive and tolerant of self-reliance, individual decision making, diverse thinking and independent action - qualities well associated with entrepreneurship - we can claim that individualism may facilitate the intention for entrepreneurial action. In effect, such personality traits as innovativeness and competitiveness are shaped in individualistic cultures and well documented to be related with entrepreneurial activity (p.5).

In relation to new groups, the participants emphasised the need for early preparation to familiarise new members with operations before funding youth enterprises. The underlying rationale is to introduce the members to business world, personal initiatives, readiness and entrepreneurship acumen, and organisation. The above excerpts recognise the role of individual contributions towards youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. However, this involves screening young people with viable business ideas which necessitates partnership between government and private sector (Sambo, 2015). Therefore, targeting individual innovative youth forms a basis for sustainability of projects. The irony is however that, individuals take the personal initiative, commitment, and responsibility towards the personal ventures' projects than communal ownership. Therefore, programmes should be formed for YIGs, not YIGs forming for programme. What is impressive here is the knowledge, experience, and stability demonstrated by the existing groups. The environment is already scanned, business idea tested, confidence built, and resilience demonstrated. However, this idea ignores the start-ups who are yet to commence operations and benefit from the projects. The needs of the start-ups (new enterprises) are inevitable during implementation of social entrepreneurial interventions. I consider prior training, a needs assessment, effective mentorship through sensitisation and communication significant for the new groups.

Prioritisation of physical material support to youth groups than cash remittances

The primary respondents opposed the idea of cash funding justifying that cash makes the youth “mad” and “wasteful”, as I reflected them in the previous chapters (chapter 5). Although a small number portion of the participants (FGD n=3, KI n=2) provided this finding, I consider it an important strategy when designing the model to enhance youth optimal benefit from the SE programmes. The physical material support need to commensurate the nature of social enterprises (chapter five) and the needs of the youth activities. The commonly mentioned materials include the tools, equipment, animals, birds, furniture, raw materials, and other agro inputs products. Youth contended that the temptation and risk of financial mismanagement by leaders, and other members is minimised. Such voices were raised by the youth from groups whose leaders ran away with the project finance. A one disgruntled Bob (not real name) noted, “Government or NGOs should support us with physical materials and assets such as pigs, birds, ox-plough rather than cash. These must be in line with our ideas. Cash makes people mad” (FGD AWA002, Male Participant Awach Sub County, 2019).

A female participant in Unyama sub-county highlighted the advantage of physical materials over cash remittances:

Government or other actors can buy tangible assets such as bulls, ox-ploughs, pigs, etc. which cannot be easily sold for cheap lifestyle. Once we have them here, it becomes hard for any member of the group to cheat. Materials save us from the processes of applying for funds, withdrawing, and risk of carrying money home, buying materials and other transactions... (FGD UNY003, 2019).

The female participant agreed with the above quotes accentuating the significance of physical materials. She based on their successful produce business to illustrate that material support to the functioning of the IGA. “I prefer support to means of doing business like motorcycle, bicycle for transporting the produce from the farmers, and from stores to the market. Money is tempting in the eyes of young people” (FGD AWA 006, Awach Sub County, 2019).

These vignettes demonstrate the importance attached to materials than cash. The approach reduces the greed for cash, financial mismanagement, saves time and eases the procurement processes. The key question is on working capital to meet daily activity expenses (such as rent, repairs, feeding, transport, taxes, and fuel among others), and the transparency of the procurement office. Despite material support, the youth may require a fraction of the cash to cater for operational costs and other miscellaneous expenses. Additionally, it may disconnect the youth and reduce a sense of ownership from the enterprise as some materials may be labelled after the funder. More still, a necessary needs assessment, feasibility study and youth inclusion in the processes are prime. Therefore, physical material support is more appropriate for already existing projects than new and young enterprises.

More grants to youth enterprises

A section of the participants agitated for more funding in form of grants. The findings indicated that for maximum empowerment, the funding should be commensurate with the needs of the youth enterprises. Therefore, the participants pointed to grants as an alternative to revolving funds (loans). The youth wished to have funds which were non-repayable. Their voices focused more on donated cash, interest free, collateral free and Low interest microcredit to expand on the scale of operation. The youth considered this as prospect to attract participation and concentration on the projects. One male participant suggested; “If possible, the government should give this grant so as to allow us participate in these programmes, our colleagues refused to join us because the funding is a loan” (FGD CUS007, Male Participant, 2019).

Some other participants contradicted the above recommendation, they supported refunding the money to help other youth groups and spread the benefit: One qualified nursery teacher (ECD) a member of an active group illustrated:

The money must be interest free but paid back to help other groups (youth). This helps many youths to benefit, and the society feels the impact of the funding. As one group pays back, other youth groups use the money and refund. I assure you five-ten years, we shall have an empowered society... (FGD UNY003, Female Participant, 2019).

The technocrats affirmed the proposition of more grants due to large numbers of vulnerable and unemployed youth in the region. Building the financial capital strengthen the capacity of most poor youth to undertake large investments. As Green and Haines (2015) put it, most poor youth lack access to financial capital thus justifying the need for more grants. Similarly, some youth projects such as piggery and poultry demand a lot of working capital to meet the daily business requirements. Key youth leaders used the example of NUSAF, UWEP programmes which do not charge interest nor seek for refund to justify why grants can work best in empowering the youth. ILO's findings postulate improving access to finance as an incentive towards fostering start-ups and youth entrepreneurship in area (Schoof, 2006). Others scholars also support microcredit as appropriate measure in enhancing youth capital accumulation for investment (Ondoro & Omena, 2012). Microcredit motivates the youth to perform willingly, actively, productively and strive towards recovery of the credit. It is worth noting that injecting more money in youth programmes necessitates well prepared minds that industriously utilise the money, thus compelling consideration for performing IGA, as opposed to investing in lousy and new entrants. Much grant money to the young groups may arouse youth demands for luxurious lives and waste. Therefore, this calls for thorough entrepreneurship training, mentorship, effective teambuilding, needs assessment, effective communication, and intensive monitoring.

Developing policies on youth social entrepreneurship (YSE)

Some participants talked of having laws, plans, guidelines, and frameworks specifically on social youth entrepreneurship for youth born in conflict situations. All these were conceptualised among others as YSE policies. The participants complained of limited market and stiff competition from medium and large enterprises both national and foreign. These challenges aroused a question on the contents of the policy. The findings revealed that developing policies on YSE as the best strategy to enhance youth entrepreneurship. The policy

should have specific components to promote social entrepreneurship among Acholi subregion youth. Most of the subjects reported that the policy would emphasise access to market, service delivery and market information and protection of local youth enterprises and outlining funding strategies. They stated that a policy could as well incorporate youth in monitoring and evaluation of youth projects.

Other than the above suggestions, the participants had a strong belief that agriculture insurance would save the youth from risks and losses. It was reported that during some seasons, youth enterprises especially in agriculture were not performing well thus needed to be insured against potential risks such as price fluctuation, and drought. Furthermore, female participants emphasised the urgency for having youth friendly policies to ensure access to health services and increase productivity in the area.

As women, we find it hard to access health centres for sick children, and ourselves we have to walk far distances. Sometimes, our IGA members complain that we are absent at work, or late for cultivation, meetings, and this affects our productivity. So we urge government to have policies that ensure cheap, affordable and accessible healthcare so that we have the energy and time to concentrate on our enterprises (FGD PAT010, Female Participant Patalira parish, Patiko subcounty, 2020).

A key informant agreed:

I think government should have a policy on youth entrepreneurship especially in this war-affected Northern Uganda. Yes, the present policies are too general and address youth empowerment for all Ugandan youth. I supposed we could have a policy specifically for our youth such as on agriculture insurance, funding, and marketing ...and other youth socio-economic issues... (KII 4PM-T, 2019).

Other youths pointed to policies, which focus on market for youth products, and protecting them from foreign and big businesses. This fosters innovations and promote entrepreneurship among youth in the local setting. The above excerpts suggest that the YSE policy goes beyond specific entrepreneurship components but aims at holistic functioning of the youth, and their enterprises. These findings corroborate with a study in Zimbabwe that recommended state protection against unfair competition from cheap, imported products and encouraging subsidies for local youth SMEs. Such policy is to minimise the struggle and eventual collapse of local youth enterprise (Gukurume, 2018).

From the ILO point of view, youth entrepreneurship policy is a multi-stakeholder approach between government and society, and, such policy would handle the areas of youth motivation, opportunity and skills development (Schoof, 2006). However, to guarantee success, scholars contested positing that there must be a vivid reason for a policy to be formulated, there must be evidence that there is harm to youth enterprises, the need for more youthful entrepreneurs

and evidence that such policy would promote youth entrepreneurship (Acs, Åstebro, Audretsch, & Robinson, 2016).

The integration of the youth entrepreneurship policy with key macroeconomic and sectoral policies avoid treating youth livelihoods and entrepreneurship in isolation (Schoof, 2006). Schoof indicated that youth entrepreneurship policies focus on pre-start-up support compared to SME policies that are more on post start-up (e.g., BDS). With these standing, we can complement that as policy on protecting local youth enterprises serves its maiden role, other policies must focus on motivating youth, market, funding, and entrepreneurial training. This strategy therefore means that all other strategies would work better under a proper designed and comprehensive policy framework on youth entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

Drawing from this chapter's presentation and discussion on building youth capacity, it is observed that entrepreneurial training is the best fundamental strategy for youth behavioural change, raising youth aspirations thus optimising gains from SE interventions. Financial support alone does not pull youth ability to invest in appropriate ventures. The youth are able to understand and appreciate social entrepreneurship theory and practice. Training should consider the family structures and environment in the Acholi sub-region. However, training alone is not enough because youth empowerment demands for flexible funding, entrepreneurial incentivisation and robust extension services to boost youth income generating activities. Furthermore, youth inclusion in planning and needs assessment enhances feasibility and motivation, builds teamwork, and effective communication. There is a need for strong M&E framework to strengthen group performance and successful execution of YIGA.

Government partnership with private institutions such as third sector promotes efficiency and effectiveness among empowerment programmes. Government must formulate a policy on youth social entrepreneurship to protect youth enterprises, ensures access to market, information and funding strategies most especially for after war generation. Overall, the youth should be fully prepared, incentivised to take up the available opportunities for sustainable youth entrepreneurship and empowerment. Basing on these findings, I propose a framework that can be adopted for the youth to maximise benefits from the SE entrepreneurial interventions, and successfully engage in entrepreneurship. This is discussed in the subsequent chapter, which focuses summary, conclusion, proposed framework and recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This research investigated the contribution of social entrepreneurial interventions on youth socio-economic empowerment in Gulu district, northern Uganda. Basing on the analysis of YLP a social entrepreneurial approach to youth empowerment, can be observed that special consideration to enhance youth entrepreneurship and empowerment is needed. The findings indicated that enterprise formation and livelihood challenges require special attention when designing interventions for youth socio-economic empowerment. Therefore, this chapter gives a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the aims of the study. These were to: i) establish nature of youth enterprises; ii) examine the livelihood challenges the youth; and iii) explore how best the youth can be made to optimise benefit from existent SE interventions.

7.1 Summary of Findings

Nature of Youth Enterprises

The study investigates youth perceptions on YLP as a social entrepreneurship for youth empowerment. The chapter's introduction tackles socio-demographic composition of youth enterprises before embarking on categories of enterprises, formation of enterprise, entrepreneurial motivations, and sustainability. Regarding the composition of youth interest groups (YIGs), male youth dominated youth enterprises compared to female youth with most females perceived to have married in distant places and left the enterprises. Majority of the youth were aged 26-30 years, since they completed education, willing to settle and married and had marital obligations to fulfil. I furthermore, established that most youth engaged in agrienterprises surprisingly these males dominated all sectors except transport service. The dominance of agriculture was attributed to procedures set by district stakeholders directing all youth to engage in agriculture. Therefore, the power relations between the agent-principal and the subjects were at play. I also established that most youth operated hybrid enterprises, with the motivation to earn income while meeting social mission. The drive to meet basic needs of life forced many youths into hybridity, however, most youth continuously mentioned profit motive. Although agrienterprises dominated other sectors, it was on a small scale due to the land utilisation restriction and negative youth attitude towards agriculture. As some youths

engaged in service, few youths dealt in manufacturing and extraction sectors and the most successful of all was, produce buying and selling. No group engaged in apiculture despite the high demand for honey and its products in the region.

Regarding enterprise formation, programme procedures played a great role in pushing the youth to form YIG. The political timing and propaganda motivated more youth to get attracted to the funding opportunity. In the already established enterprises, this study recognised annual celebrations in motivating the formation of most youth enterprises (YIGA). The youths were brought together, saved for important events such as Independence Day, Christmas, among others. This justifies the value attached to celebrations. Annual celebrations played a great role in creating social cohesion, identity, teamwork, social orientation, and purpose-drive generation.

Similarly, the role of third sector in group formation and youth enterprise development could not be underestimated; the NGOs/CBOs had trained, sensitised, and gave start-up kits to some youth. Relatedly, most of participants had organised VSLAs that were formed before YLP. More than a half had benefited from NGO programmes; therefore, forming the YIG was very easy. Consequently, when the YLP was unveiled, some YIGs simply incorporated new members to meet the membership requirement (10-15). It is needless to mention that very few youths had personal innovations before the government funding, what happens was to recruit new members to respect the guidelines. Prior organisation was a very fundamental finding in this study. However, what stood out from the findings is that the decision-making powers remained in the hands of the initiators of the project. In some cases, they worked as causal labourers paid by the initiators of the enterprise.

The study provides the entrepreneurial motivations as the need for social change and overcome the socio-economic problems. A fraction of the youth was motivated by need for achievement, and social welfare to form enterprises. They had recognised their problems and worked towards solutions through engaging in entrepreneurship. Indeed, the persistence of poverty and high unemployment rates in the region motivated majority youth to participate in any entrepreneurial activity to meet the necessities of life. Family and community environment where the youth lived were too reported to be a force behind youth aspirations. The youth who had parents as their mentors were excited and motivated towards excellence. With reference to this, the study established that the most outstanding and successful YIG was one where parents placed themselves strategically in guiding their children on business matters. Additionally, to

sustain the enterprises, savings and diversification were observed as primary strategies employed in some YIGAs.

In other groups, clear recordkeeping served the purpose for the proper inventory management. It is here that one remote youth group had clear books of accounts, bank statements plus all purchases and sales records implying systematic planning and management of enterprises. Either the field observations highlighted complications in most livestock enterprises, which were both unattended to, malnourished animals and birds, or empty structures implying failed projects, with no clear records of inventories. Therefore, the challenges indicated characteristics of incompetence, limited skills, knowledge in the field and mismanagement of IGAs. The level of organisation and dedication determined the level success and benefit.

The study also investigated the gains from entrepreneurial interventions. The study was based on the preposition that all the youth were beneficiaries of YLP; however, there was expression of mixed feelings on benefits. Whereas all YIGs received funding from the youth livelihood programme, a portion of the youth could not acknowledge the support offered to them. The services obtained were in form of microcredit, access to information, and confidence building through training. Those who benefited pointed out at most microcredit and training, conversely, the training was for only three executive members from each YIG and for a shorter period, and leaving many members uninformed of the business acumen. Additionally, the training was more on business management than technical aspects of SD. To ascertain the opinions on empowerment, I investigated their perceptions on the programme meeting their expectations. Surprisingly, a large percentage of the youth indicated that they had gained nothing from the services provided. The benefits achieved by few youth groups included self-employment, improved social welfare, increase in income, business expansion and other benefits related to psychological satisfaction.

The very few projects which had progressed and recovered that revolving fund expressed high-level satisfaction. However, these were only two YIGs among the 102 YIGs from the district. Some participants expressed stress, frustration and fear caused by engagement in the programme. The participants, whose expectations were met, registered gains in form of self-employment, increased income, skills acquisition, respect, enterprise expansion, building social capital and popularity. The successful stories from Project A Youth produce dealers demonstrated a group that benefited from investment. The YIG used proceeds to expand the business, increase stock. The achievements attracted the government to lend more funds.

The most surprising finding was the peer learning, coaching and involvement in community affairs as confessed by some youth IGA leaders. Largely, several factors hindered the progress of most youth enterprises. Most YIGs failed, stagnated, and those surviving had faced several organisational, personal, natural, bureaucratic and management issues. Unexpectedly, even the most successful projects faced such encounters that limited full potential to entrepreneurial development. Consequently, the youth continue to face livelihood challenges in Gulu District.

Livelihood Challenges to Socio-economic Empowerment

This study sought to youth perceptions on the contribution of social entrepreneurship to youth socio-economic empowerment. The context necessitated examining livelihood challenges in Gulu District. The study established that economic vulnerabilities, institutional and socio-cultural factors continue to pose a challenge to youth progress in enterprises. The notably emerging challenges of, poverty, corruption, and discrimination in job market and other opportunities, market vulnerabilities, and limited participation in decision-making took centre stage in study.

A large number of youths were from peasant backgrounds, implying more poverty challenge to progress in enterprises. Youth used much of the funding to meet consumption needs instead of investment. Furthermore, members of YIGs run around to look for survival than concentrating the project activities. The participants attributed poverty to lack of access to resources such as land, most especially those born out of broken marriages, limited capital, low levels of education and less commitment, and other related factors. The most disastrous consequences of poverty were increased crime expressed in youth gang groups locally known as ‘*Aguu*’, and *B13*, antisocial behaviours, family breakdown and conflicts over land utilisation.

The overarching issue is the contribution of personal challenges, and social injustice in undermining the youth livelihoods. What was most interesting was the availability of fertile land, which would have stirred youth agripreneurship and youth empowerment. Despite the presence of such opportunities in agriculture and natural resources, what I found out is that lifestyle and negative attitudes towards agriculture-related work and other informal jobs (blue-collar jobs) posed a great blockage to youth productivity in the region. The personal challenges were a deeper manifestation of internal and structural limitations. Most youth did not possess required knowledge and skills, aspirations, motivation and positive energy towards work, self-

employment and entrepreneurship. Thus, poverty continue to affect youth productivity in the area.

More so, the mindset about free government funds, NGO funding and communal land continue to reduce youth urge for more production and profitability. Contrary to what the empowerment theory and PYDA postulate, the youth were not connected to local resources, and lacked the motivation to exploit the available opportunities and contribute to self-employment. Could this mean youth be responsible for own misery? If yes, then the institutional, economic, and socio-cultural factors could not have surfaced in this study. The livelihood challenges to youth enterprises are intertwined; poverty is a manifestation of other contributing factors.

More still, limited institutional support to enterprising youth; weak entrepreneurial attitudes, limited funding, and market instabilities were reported to have worsened youth progress in entrepreneurial ventures. Furthermore, more than sixty per cent agreed that cultural practices most especially early marriages and restricted land ownership curtailed female participation in decision-making and entrepreneurship. Although, youth reported limited institutional support as a major challenge, limited entrepreneurial competences hindered youth investment. Key informants and other stakeholders concurred with youth on the above challenges, but attributed negative mindset, mismanagement of projects, and lack of adequate preparation to the youth misery in the Gulu district, Acholi subregion. The failure of most youth enterprises after receiving the funding implied very weak entrepreneurial spirits among the youth. The example of Youth Piggery project B presents a case of a failed project due to mismanagement of funds by the chairperson, group conflicts, patronage, incompetence, greed for cash and unpreparedness. These challenges necessitate strategies that would prepare youth for productive and profitable participation in entrepreneurial ventures.

Optimisation of Benefits from SEIs

Concerning exploring the best ways to enable the youth benefit from existent SE interventions, the intention was to promote youth entrepreneurship and enhance socio-economic empowerment. Participant responses and voices acted as bases for developing a framework that will foster effective implementation of youth social entrepreneurship programmes. The most recommended strategy was entrepreneurial training. The respondents reported that this training facilitates youth towards generating business ideas and management of business finance. More so, youth could be positioned towards identifying business opportunities from

the environment and building social capital. The prominent finding on training was three weeks to three months entrepreneurial training to equip youth with skills, knowledge, behavioural change, awareness creation, and motivation to utilise their full potentials. The training would prepare the youth for entrepreneurship inclination, building social capital, urge for start-ups and heighten effective communication. The participants demanded for continuous training in well-established technical institutions, and youth resource centres at grassroots levels to sustain information sharing and skills transfer for all categories.

Provision of youth groups with more start-up capital was also suggested as a key force behind promoting youth entrepreneurship. The financing should focus on a well-trained population. Contrary to YLP fund, the youth emphasised very low interest microcredit/loans, interest free microcredit, while a small fraction of youth indicated both donated cash and collateral free microcredit. Developing a policy on youth social entrepreneurship could be fundamental in protecting local youth enterprises, promoting access to market and market information and outlining specific funding strategies and M&E of youth projects. Youth agitated for involvement in project design is part of capacity building. Youth inclusion in planning the youth entrepreneurship programmes exposes their needs, facilitates effective communication and thus, ability to establish visible feasible enterprises. The issue of a community radio programmes locally known as '*Kabake*' would foster grassroots youth exchange and share of information with public. However, top on the agenda was the regularity of extension services in offering technical support, guidance, monitoring and evaluating the youth funded projects.

The most surprising finding was sports and drama as the best approaches to mobilise, communicate, and sensitise youth on socio-economic empowerment. Youth would be served better if policies were developed to protect young enterprises from stiff competition, streamline funding, ensure agriculture insurance and foster partnership with Multinational Corporations for youth entrepreneurship development. Overall, the study concludes that these approaches are complementary, and sustain each other for effective youth empowerment.

7.2 Conclusions

This study aimed at investigating youth perceptions on YLP as social entrepreneurship for youth socio-economic empowerment. The study findings shows that social entrepreneurship has the potential to leverage youth social change. This depends on nature of enterprises, in form of formation, motivation, and sustainability. Based on data analysis in response to youth

entrepreneurship and empowerment, understanding enterprise composition, entrepreneurial orientation, and benefits accrued. The findings indicated that all youth operated informal enterprises on a very small scale. What was crosscutting is dominance of agriculture-related projects. The justification for dominance of projects in agriculture was attributed to the procedures imposed by district officials, and land availability in the Acholi More males participating in YIGs than females, despite the national statistics portraying a higher female population in the region. All the enterprises were composed of males and females at the start, except one YIG comprising of only female youth with disabilities (special grant). Hybridity enterprises dominated most youth enterprises, although youth mainly mentioned profit-making motives.

Most youths engaged in agrienterprises rather than manufacturing, service and other trading enterprises. What stood out from this study is that all youth enterprises were informal and operating at a very small scale. Youth engaging in produce business activities registered greater success than any other project, with most piggery and poultry projects in sorry state and/or eventually failed. This shows the skill gap, and preparation to take up labour intensive and skills-oriented projects. The motivation for choice and establishment of youth venture was largely due to the pronouncement and availability of government funding, politics, and prior organisation. Personal aspirations and family environment, mentorship and inspiration took central stage in guiding enterprise establishment. More still, political timing played a great role in the formation of most groups with most of the youth conceiving and understanding political messages. It is worth noting that enterprise formation became easy for groups that formed and operated before the YLP. However, the need for economic independence and connectedness as stressed in PYD approach were not deeply established in the study. The established business yielded benefits to the youth, nevertheless, the benefits were from very few enterprises. The research examined the gains registered by the youth from materials/services received. Self-employment, improved social welfare dominated other benefits, as indicated by the testimonies of meeting basic needs of food, children's tuition, and medical bills. Observations from carpentry, and integrated farm revealed youth who had acquired on hand-on skills through peer learning and coaching from their experienced YIG members. Such practical skills conform to Uganda's Vision 2040, of transformation towards middle-income status.

From these revelations, it emerged that psychological satisfaction prevailed in some youth who expressing excitement, happiness, respect, and striving for more achievements. It is possible

that the achievements depended on the level of preparedness, readiness, and entrepreneurial attitudes. Indeed, less than 40 percent stressed that the YLP met their expectations, implying a bigger percentage of those whose enterprises were still limited, hence calling for an examination into livelihood challenges.

Politics, weak entrepreneurship competences continue to affect YLP as social entrepreneurship for youth socio-economic empowerment. Youth continued to face hardships amidst implementation of youth livelihood programmes, and availability of natural resources. Although institutional, social, political, structural, and economic factors inhibit the youth from exploiting the available opportunities and achieve the inspirations, absence of entrepreneurship competences affected the success of most YIGs. Therefore, the presence of physical, financial, and natural capital may not necessarily cause sufficient positive socio-economic transformation if these challenges are not tackled holistically. Youth are not fully prepared take up available opportunities for social economic empowerment. Funding alone is not enough to cause social change. This calls for formidable strategies towards psychosocial support, sensitisation, mentorship, inspiration, positive development, and building a strong and productive youthful generation.

Regarding optimising benefits from social entrepreneurial interventions, entrepreneurship training is most appropriate approach. Whereas other studies focus on more capital and access to resources, holistic training and extensive extension services for sustainable youth skills stood out as the best strategies for youth entrepreneurship. Intensive entrepreneurial ignites significant mindset change and, positive development and asset building. Further, the training raises youth aspirations, capabilities, and motivation to take personal initiatives, scan the environment and generate business ideas for socio-economic development. Nonetheless, training alone is not enough, sustainable youth projects demand for regular and effective extension services, thorough entrepreneurial incentivisation, and incorporating youth voices in project planning, design and implementation. It is possible that the outcomes vary depending on the level of preparedness, readiness and entrepreneurial attitudes. Additionally, a needs assessment, accessible youth information centres promote enterprise feasibility and motivation, and effective communication. Overall, the youth were confident that these strategies would fully prepare and capacitate them to take up available opportunities for sustainable youth entrepreneurship and socio-economic empowerment.

Implications of the study for theory

Altogether, the study contributed to theory in three ways (i) validating other previous and existing research on social entrepreneurship and youth empowerment; (ii) contributing to knowledge on drivers and entrepreneurial motivations towards SE interventions, and (iii) exploring how best the youth can be made to optimally gain from SE interventions in both conflict-affected areas and non-conflict contexts. The study also confirmed and validated the intricacies of social entrepreneurial and youth empowerment. There must be thorough examination and understanding of youth context before any intervention is rolled out to youth. This study while acknowledging that economic, institutional and socio-cultural factors may be largely blamed for youth misery, a person of a 'youth' and his/her mindset contributes more to livelihood challenges.

Therefore, the study borrows from the Positive Youth Development framework to expose the unhealthy environment surrounding youth livelihood in the region. The study contributed to existing theory by validating empowerment theory by (Zimmerman, 1995, 2000) through emphasising the importance of asset building, skilling, psychosocial support, and teambuilding, which are tenets of youth empowerment. Collectiveness was instrumental in study since the study population comprised of youth under YIGs. In addition, the study contributes significantly to the debates in the PYD framework through unpacking the socio-economic factors limiting the health, productivity, connection, youth engagement and contribution (Lerner et al., 2000).

Similarly, the study acknowledges the role of external actors in the successful formation and performance of youth enterprises. More still, the study uncovers the power of politics in youth entrepreneurial programmes and thus contributes to literature through locating political communication in livelihood studies. PYD and empowerment are silent about the work of political environment in the youth empowerment. Furthermore, it has been established that parental mentorship and family guidance in directing the kind of enterprise to operate, and inspiring young ones are an integral part of this study. Therefore, the issue is the incessant integration of the construct of the family environment and its involvement in youth empowerment programmes design and implementation. However, these frameworks ignore parental role on empowering youth, yet the proposed framework captures it.

The study confirms theories on social cohesion, participation, and connectedness, and contribution through uncovering the social capital embedded in YIGs (Jennings et al., 2006; Lerner et al., 2000). Linking youth to the local resources and building of assets leads to entrepreneurship development and empowerment. The study recognised government youth livelihood interventions as social entrepreneurship which literature had considered as practise for only third sector and private sector.

Theoretically, therefore, the study validates the theoretical propositions of the power of contextual variables, at micro, meso, and macro levels at shaping a policy, programme or intervention in any space and time.

Implications for policy and practice

The main aim of this study was to investigate the contribution of social entrepreneurship towards youth socio-economic empowerment. Specifically, YLP is destined towards harnessing socio-economic potentials and income levels (MoGLSD, 2013). I have done this through interviews, FGDs, field observations and project site visits on YIGs, whereby youth are knowledgeable about their own activities. Accordingly, the first major practical contribution of this research is that it provides the much-needed empirical data on nature of enterprise formation, youth income generating activities and actual youth livelihood challenges in the area. It goes ahead to highlight the fact that a negligible percentage of youth accrued benefits from the intervention yet, all groups received the revolving fund. Therefore, the study established that most youths were unprepared to utilise the funding, yet they faced challenges of unemployment, poverty, attitude, lifestyle, institutional, and socio-cultural factors. The youth are misinformed about the programmes, and hence, perceptions of ‘free government money’. Youth generally felt cut off from the deliberation, initiation, and implementation of youth programmes. This information is important to practitioners given that other previous comparable studies were only focusing on unemployment challenges, and poverty, yet my study reveals more than these socio-economic challenges. These challenges necessitate special consideration by the social workers in future in implementing youth entrepreneurship and empowerment initiatives. The professional social workers should mobilise, sensitise, coordinate, refer, train, and counsel the youth in their welfare endeavours. These practices promote an inspired entrepreneurial generation in Acholi subregion.

More still, social work, as a profession, has many faces; it is deeply entrenched in socio-economic as well as political influences because it deals with policy that guides social welfare. This study challenges the notion of focusing on only social welfare but undertaking social entrepreneurship to change the youth. Therefore, the social workers need to appreciate and incorporate the principles of social entrepreneurship in building the capacity of the young generation. Social development should go beyond addressing social problems but inspiring and supporting innovative youth. Additionally, the social worker professionals should play an important role in youth enterprises formation in their societies.

Perhaps, the most important implication of my study derives from the finding on the uniqueness of family involvement and responsibility in fostering entrepreneurial success of youth enterprises. My findings point to the need for family encouragement, mentorship, financial socialisation, parental availability and influence towards children's success in business and self-employment. As discussed in chapter four, family and the family environment play an important role in socialisation of children into the business world. The parents understand their children's needs, capabilities and aspirations better than other stakeholders do. Parental involvement provides background information necessary for effective project planning, and selection of determined youth and appropriate enterprises. Furthermore, parents act as monitoring agents during project execution and ensure success of the youth enterprises. Parents and other family members, provide feedback/recommendations about the performance of their children. . Similarly, parents act as social guarantors for the borrowed funds, and ensure social accountability. However, there is a need for clear definition of parents' roles to prevent conflict of interest and exerting control over youth income generating activities.

Another important practical implication is that the language used in most interventions encourages youth dependence. The responses from all key informants, youth leaders and youth themselves, were predominantly referring to 'beneficiary' 'expert' 'technical staff' 'monitor' 'donor' 'official' 'their programme' 'their project', 'government fund' and TPC. Thus, such language excludes the youth, creates a tendency of labelling the projects, a feeling of isolation and widens the gap between youth and project implementers. The youth depend entirely on the funding without personal contribution to the projects. Basing on the empowerment theory, the study introduces a shift from 'beneficiary', 'expert' 'technical staff' to 'collaborators' 'partners', contributors or 'agents'. The youth recognise themselves as agents of change than being at the receiving end. This aligns with principles of social entrepreneurship such as

inclusiveness, responsibility, sustainability, and empowerment. This language enhances psychological satisfaction, positive identity, responsibility, patriotism, and development of positive beliefs about the future. More so, youth contribute holistically towards development and sustainability of youth enterprises. In this section, I acknowledge the involvement of professional social workers at all levels of government to undertake the tasks and responsibilities of ensuring inclusive language in all youth entrepreneurship interventions.

The MoGLSD should come up with a youth social entrepreneurship policy to encourage, enhance and protect youth enterprises. Youth entrepreneurship programmes from the current nomenclature to ‘social entrepreneurship’ programmes. The practice of social entrepreneurship pronounced more in third sector and philanthropy, but the studies recognise government-oriented youth entrepreneurship interventions as social entrepreneurship. The components of empowerment, inclusiveness and sustainability enshrined in social entrepreneurship spreads the impact in society. The policy should handle areas of access to sustainable financing, market opportunities, business development services, protection from foreign, and big commercial enterprises and further research. This YSE policy creates an enabling eco-system for youth develop enterprises, gain resilience, create jobs, and improve on the quality of services. The policy would be important in popularising social entrepreneurship among the youth. The study established that the youths do not even understand its meaning, and how it operates, that is why most YIGs collapses in a period less than one year. Most youth started YIGs with the main agenda of making quick gains than the social mission embedded in social entrepreneurship. The ministry should specifically position this policy to Northern Uganda youth, since the war eroded the social and economic fabrics of life. The policy would promote inclusive growth, nurture local social capital, and contribute to youth socio-economic empowerment.

7.3 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations for government, civil society actors and community.

To Government

- This study recommends a six-month comprehensive entrepreneurship training for both educated and uneducated youth before funds are availed to the YIGs. The training should capture both the technical component of enterprises and business management skills. The training should first focus on district officials (TOTs) who are trained to

train youth and implement the programmes. Thus, the study recommends a-Training-Needs Assessment-Compete-Training-Funding-Training strategy. Youth are fully prepared for social entrepreneurship interventions.

- More still, the government needs to establish youth cooperative movements (and or youth bank) in form of Youth Saving and Credit Empowerment Cooperative (YUSACECOs) specifically to handle youth enterprise funds, and funding needs at subcounty levels, and channel youth enterprise funds through such institutions. Here, the financial and loan management procedures are friendly compared to mainstream commercial banks. A watertight accountability system at such youth bank ensures financial management, sustainability, and accountability among group members.
- Basing on the magnitude of youth challenges, and need for empowerment, this study recommends the employment of professional social workers at the District Community Office and lower structures of government (such as subcounty, and parish levels) to do the professional tasks of counselling, coordinating, referring, mobilising, training and psychotherapeutic services to the youth. However, this also requires strong support and capacity building by government to institutions that train social workers such as Makerere University, Nsamizi Training Institute of Social Development, Uganda and other certificate and degree awarding institutions.

To Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) need to conduct regular and continuous research, sensitisation, and training of youth at all levels through community mentors. This is through recruiting and deploying community mentors at grassroots to have a direct contact with the youth. CSOs can organise and hold regular community meetings with youth, parents, and other opinion leaders, and deliberate on issues affecting youth.

To the community

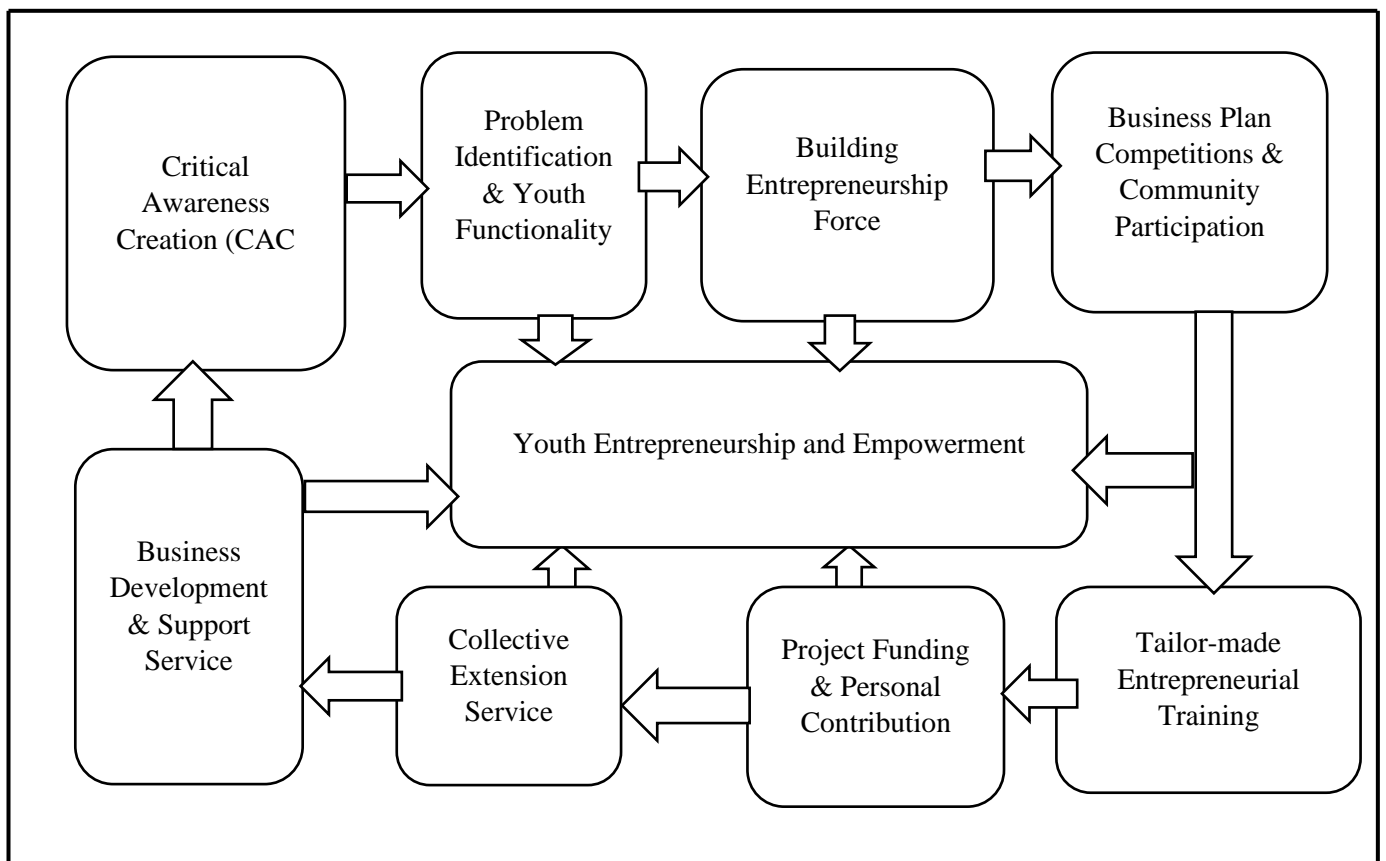
- The community need to participate in identification of youth with potentials, unique traits, innovative ideas, and recommend them to the development workers/practitioners, government for support. The community should put in place appropriate measures for monitoring mentoring, availability, successful, quality of youth projects in the

community, and feed the government officials or third sector with accurate information about youth competences.

- Establishing cultural mechanisms that promote equity among all children and challenge any sort of injustices that hinder youth participation in entrepreneurship and socio-economic development. The community committees should ensure that children enjoy equal rights over land ownership and utilisation, monitor, mentor children and parent discipline, quality education, and access to employment by both genders.

Basing on these recommendations, study further recommends a framework.

Figure 7.1 Proposed Youth Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Framework



Source: Author's diagram, 2021

Explanation of the proposed framework

In this section, I present contestation of theory and practice, that is, how theory links to findings and points of disagreement. This forms a basis for key takeaways in the proposed framework. The theoretical framework explains part of the research and grounds it firmly in theoretical

constructs (Adom, Hussein, & Agyem, 2018; Kgomotso, 2020). The explanation makes the study findings more meaningful, acceptable and ensures generalisation. The framework is the 'Youth Entrepreneurship and Empowerment (YEE)' and its components derived from the contestation between theory and practise. The current proposed framework for youth socio-economic empowerment in its design strategically and rightly places war generation in the most important positions in the utilisation of entrepreneurship interventions. However, the success of young entrepreneurs in the framework depends on whether policy actors are in direct touch with YIGs, and the social, political, and economic environment. The findings have indicated that youth natural talents, potentials and local resources were untapped. The focus was more on government funding than linking young people to local resources. Another weakness is the lack of critical awareness among the youth of Gulu district.

The new framework proposes systematic training, from general to specific technical projects. In the following discussion, a proposed framework is presented as a guide for strategic actions needed towards enhancing effective youth participation in entrepreneurship. I argue that youth in Acholi sub region are unique from youth in other parts of Uganda due to two decades of civil conflict (discussed in Chapter One), hence necessitating a unique framework for SEE. I further argue that government interventions are more placed than other actors in success of entrepreneurship and youth employment programmes, but critical awareness of their needs and potentials is key in influencing self-confidence and motivation. The interplay between the theoretical underpinning and empirical findings provided a basis for the formulation of this framework. The framework components are interconnected and continuous for successful youth entrepreneurship. The components of the recommended framework as discussed below:

Critical awareness creation and confidence building

The PYD posits that there are ecological assets in community, and youth strengths can be tapped to exploit such assets (resources) from the environment (Damon, 2004). The entrepreneurship intervention aimed at creating awareness and building youth assets. The socio-economic empowerment in this study embeds the critical element of linking the youth to local resources and building their capacity. The approaches aim at developing the youth holistically, while social entrepreneurship addresses the situation and needs of youth, these frameworks may be suitable paradigm for social entrepreneurship in the promotion of social change. The PYD approach assumes that the youth are aware of these assets and that they are strong, competent, possess positive qualities and motivation to utilise available resources. PYD

framework does not focus on the deficit negative perspective on youth, but only recognises youth strengths and positivity. Damon (2004) argues that youth have a noble purpose and are always striving as indicated by engagement in pursuits that suit common welfare and meaningful contribution to communities. The current study however, established that most youth in Gulu district of Acholi sub region were less committed, lazy and had negative mindset towards work most especially in agriculture and other blue-collar pieces of work.

Furthermore, the current study found youth ignorant about value of resources, incompetent, and weak in executing both personal and group goals. Contrary to PYD assumption that youth go beyond own self-centred needs to pursuing world goals what is termed as 'youth purpose', many youths in the study area focused on their own needs, evidenced by the composition of YIGs dropping from fifteen members to one, and while others failed. As I interacted with youth in Awach, Unyama, and Paicho sub counties, I discovered that most youth enterprises had few members, while many had failed in their operations. The sharing of money meant for development among members, disappearance of many executives with project cash demonstrated youth who were selfish, and self-centred were actions contrary to the PYD propositions. Furthermore, most youths lacked connection to the ecological resources, and had limited appreciation for available resources. The youth did not perceive the available land, social capital, personal energy, and environment as resources for empowerment. Most of them only got attracted to monetary assets to form enterprises and enjoy the government-oriented funding presented as revolving fund. Thus, the 'youth purpose' embedded in PYD could not hold in my study. Therefore, the awareness creation embedded in the new proposed framework is aimed at motivating, understanding, and building the confidence, and correcting behaviours of the youth. Empowered youth could be critically aware, reformed thus involvement in decision making (Zimmerman, 2000). The awareness creation in my new framework focuses the resilience and connecting youth to the local resources hence promoting entrepreneurship and empowerment.

Furthermore, Lerner, Lerner, et al. (2005) stress spirituality and religion in positioning youth purpose. Lerner and Colleagues add that spirituality is what today youth talked about and recognise them as factors behind positive youth development. Youth participation and contribution in community is shaped by character and behaviour. The view on religiosity and spirituality, however, is more psychological and applied more on adolescents than the youth in my study. At Laban Produce Traders, the most successful youth enterprise in Gulu district,

members talked of trust, commitment, hard work and cooperation yet they failed to recognise the importance of religion and spirituality in their successes. Most youth talked of social and financial motivations of profit making and improving social welfare. The proposed framework does not recognise the role of religion and spirituality in positioning youth for social entrepreneurship and empowerment in despite its value in shaping youth behaviour and purpose. The youth should understand, believe, appreciate themselves, and become aware of their surrounding thus, motivation to exploit the available resources.

Needs, problem identification, and youth functionality

Understanding the youth needs, problems and dynamics of living is important in empowering young people. PYD perspective ignores the fact that youth are not potential problems that need to be straightened before they harm others or themselves (Damon, 2004; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2005). Damon believes every child has unique talents, strengths, interests, and potential. Yes, the study agrees with this proposition, however, such uniqueness is confirmed by first recognising that youth are problems to themselves and to others. Therefore, a needs assessment and problem identification in the proposed framework focuses on navigating youth behaviour, understanding weaknesses, problems, in addition to personal interests and functionality. The proposed framework suggests first understanding these youth; handle the risk factors before economically empowering them. This is possible if needs, problems identification are prioritised first before embarking on training and financing youth projects.

More still, PYD embraces youth as resources not problems for the society. PYD recognises adversities and development but desists from conceiving of the development process as an effort to overcome deficit. YLP that adopted this angle by only training, financing youth as resources registered more failures YIGs in the area. Correcting and treating the malpractices tendencies, what Damon calls ‘disabilities’ is what underpinned in the proposed framework. The setting where youth were born, grew up is so complex that youth require treatment first before considering them as resources. The breakdown in family structures, community fabrics, and life in camps, loss of parents and relatives posed deficits of education, investment, employment hence poverty, frustration and trauma thereby calling for an approach that addresses them. Therefore, problem identification goes beyond understanding their needs but involving parents and other community members in understanding youth as problems to position them as resources thus promoting functionality.

Building an entrepreneurial force

The PYD assumes that youth/child is/ are naturally competent and inclined towards prosocial engagement. Youth possess internal assets that are personal characteristics such as commitment to learning, positive values, social skills, and positive identity (Damon, 2004). The approach emphasises care/compassion, competence, character, connection and confidence as other internal assets youth demonstrate (Anyon & Jenson, 2014). PYD aims at developing youth holistically, yet, it fails to spell out how this is achieved, more so, the natural component in the approach is questionable as evidenced in the study findings. The proposed framework agitates for early preparation through inclusive holistic entrepreneurship training to foster caring/compassion, positive character, social cohesion and bonding, confidence. Nonetheless, this does not mean that youth are having the natural abilities. The training revokes and reenergises them to promote contribution. Damon (2004) citing Benson (1997) stated such competences require support from community as part of external development assets for optimal youth development. The point of agreement in this study is that one case study of Project A-Produce Traders successfully executed its mandate because parental support was paramount in guiding them on sources of produce, financial management and teamwork.

Furthermore, the training in the proposed framework requires parents' and influential community members' participation since they are a critical asset in youth empowerment. Although this would seem expensive and unnecessarily out of context, community as an asset understands its children well, young people serve in community, and gives youth crucial roles. Thus, community understands youth training needs, and service youth offer to the community (Benson 1997 cited in Damon, 2004). This overcomes the discrimination and exclusion in decision making and programme designs highlighted in chapter six. Youth's ability to sense, act on opportunities, and thinking out-of-the-box with a unique brand of determination motivates them to create something new to the world (Tunde, 2015). The failure by most youth groups to create something new for the world highlights the absence of application of PYD and empowerment approaches in the study. Once youth mindset is changed and entrepreneurial force built, the proposed framework suggests tailor made training.

The tailor-made entrepreneurial and project training targets specific technical aspects of enterprise. Zimmerman postulates that the process is empowering if it helps people develop skills and become independent problem solvers and decision makers. Psychological and technical empowerment ensures critical awareness to analyse and understand one's social,

economic, and political situation. Intrapersonal personal and interactional psychological empowerment promote locus of control, and motivation, and influence their environment. The study reveals that youth lacked the confidence, business skills, knowledge, and experience about their projects even after training, funding, and commencement of IGAs. Only three executive members were trained in general business management, financial management, production, marketing, and other business aspects in only one day, some youth reported only three hours of training in district hall.

The findings established many enterprise options of LS, SD as stated in the YLP programme document; hence, training in one line of business management was not sufficient. This method and duration of training was inadequate to foster independent decision making, workplace management, and learning of new skills, and gaining experience, identify resources and develop social change strategies as stipulated in the two approaches. PYD and empowerment approaches fail to indicate the duration and stage of training and awareness creation, thus my study builds on this weakness to propose specific entrepreneurship training for three to six months for both technical and mindset change.

Youth participation in enterprise inception and formation

Today's youth require an environment, which foster participation in planning their own activities. Zimmerman in his empowerment theorising argues that citizen participation in mutual help groups and other neighbourhood associations promotes a sense of competence and control, and increases activism, and involvement thus reducing alienation. Similarly, Damon posits youth as naturally competent, which is exercised through participation in community organisations. From the study, youth worked in groups which are associations as proposed by Zimmerman at community level empowerment. Nevertheless, the study established lack of control of the development processes surrounding youth in Acholi subregion. Citizen involvement in activities such as planning, accessibility to resources such radio, televisions, town hall meetings pose an additional cost implication to planning units in Gulu district.

More still, the value orientation of empowerment suggests goals, aims and strategies for implementing social change. It is agreeable that YLP intervention's overall objective is to empower target youth in Uganda to harness their socio-economic potential and increase self-employment opportunities and income levels (MoGLSD, 2013). Zimmerman's empowerment is contextual and population specific, however, youth under study operated under youth interest

groups (YIGs), implying individual goals, needs and interests were overshadowed by group ones. The findings in this study revealed age, gender, and education composition of all youth enterprise formations. The disagreements, conflicts at the start, during and after inception of youth enterprises and departure of most youth with unmet goals called for an approach that recognises different forms of empowerment for different people in different contexts. As Zimmerman stated: “The behaviour necessary for 16-year-old mother to become empowered are different from the behaviours for a recently widowed-middle-aged man” (Zimmerman, 2000, p.45). Therefore, youth participation and needs are influenced by the age demographic.

Additionally, the language emphasised in both my study and approaches is different. Although all focus was on positive youth development and empowerment, my study established that in YLP, the language of beneficiaries, technocrats, technical planning committees, experts dominated findings and entire project. Youth referred to themselves as beneficiaries, helpless, while government officials called themselves technocrats, experts, and implementers. PYD and Zimmerman’s theory suggest that this professional language limited discovery of indigenous resources and reduces the likelihood of helping each other. To Zimmerman, empowerment goes beyond ‘client’ and ‘expert’ to ‘participant’ and ‘collaborators’. This way, learning is promoted, and youth are able to appreciate and value themselves, hence contributing to development process.

From my study, CDO, POs, subcounty Accountants, Senior Administrative Secretaries/subcounty chiefs, youth focal persons were regarded as points of expertise and knowledgeable, thus not learning from participants’ worldviews, cultures, and lifestyles. This accounts for failure of many YIGs, despite conducting training on some youth. Basing on this, the proposed framework prioritises learning from environment, clients, parents, opinion leaders as resources to the community. This ensures information and knowledge exchange, understanding of youth needs, collaboration thus facilitating training.

Project funding and recognition of personal contributions

Citizen participation as highlighted in the two approaches entails involvement in decision-making. Whereas Zimmerman stresses youth activism and active participation in planning, crime prevention, and problem solving, PYD focuses on contribution toward community development. Their specificity on contribution is however not defined, in my findings; youth contribution was not well streamlined and defined. Therefore, due to interventions’ failure to

define youth contribution, youth used part of revolving fund to construct pigpens, poultry houses and buying tools and equipment, thus leaving less for feeding birds and animals. Such capital development consumed most of the finance that would have facilitated smooth running of the business.

The empowerment theory advances the organisation level construct of resource mobilisation and participatory opportunities, however, in this study youth felt government funding covered all the working and fixed capital requirements, hence perceiving own sources of finance were negligible. As such, most YIG members never wanted to contribute towards project activities. No sooner had the leaders demanded for contribution from fellow youth to meet initial registration requirements (opening bank account, stationery) than most youth had left YIGs. In most FGDs, most youth complained of officials demanding for cash contributions, yet the entrepreneurship intervention meant to benefit but not to exploit youth. The departure of most youths suggests most of them were disconnected from the larger social, political environment, and opportunities (Zimmerman, 2000). Rural extension and social support would have cemented bonds and commitment among youth interest groups.

Collective extension service to youth enterprises

Youth enterprises demand for a regular and consistent helping hand from the technical expertise to stand firm and generate reasonable returns. According to Zimmerman, empowered persons develop responsible and participatory communities. Since YIG is an empowerment at community level, theory has it that success depends on government accessibility, media, and other community resources. Cognisant of youth operating in groups of 10-15 members, group cohesion was lacking in most youth groups and the youth failed to appreciate and operate under organised communities, implying lack of technical and institutional support (TIS) and preparation. In Unyama subcounty, for example, the youth received funding, and immediately all members left the enterprise apart from chairperson who had assumed powers over everyone.

Even those YIGs registering successes, individual contribution was key, in R B Mould and Concrete Making, a single person championed the success. My study established individual responsibility, full participation and success although most youth complained of absence of technical expertise such as veterinary, accounts, CDOs, DPOs to support youth enterprises. Furthermore, media coverage was so poor and some areas such as Omel Parish, Palaro Sub County and some parts of Awach subcounty lacked the necessary networks, and education

programmes. This forms the basis of departure from Zimmerman's propositions on accessibility media and community resources. Zimmerman's framework fails to recognise the failure in technological networks in most communities in Gulu of Northern Uganda, and different development levels. Northern Uganda is poor in technology thus my study recommends community radio programmes, music and drama, and community dialogue than mainstream media proposed by the theory. Therefore, my proposed framework deals with community outreach, and engagement through means suggested above, and continuous assessment and monitoring of youth activities. Youth centres at parish level would avail timely and reliable information to youth than the media embedded Zimmerman's theory.

Business Development and Support Service (BDS)

Business development and support services embedded in my proposed framework is what the youth in the region require to succeed in their socio-economic lives. Both theories recognise youth as resources not problems in society. Zimmerman emphasises asset building, and psychological empowerment i.e., beliefs about one's competences, efforts to exert control and understanding socio-political environment. Identifying their power, resources, and connection to the environment is key in building youth assets. Whereas PYD presents the 5C's, (Lerner, 2003), Zimmerman focuses on skilling, to enhance contribution. The youth in my study either experienced the war or had memories of the war. Thus, the 5Cs plus Zimmerman's active participation propositions are difficult to achieve since war eroded away the care/compassion, education and supportive environment needed for socio-economic empowerment. Therefore, any programme meant for socio-economic empowerment may not influence youth contribution if basic needs are not met and youth are not psychologically prepared. Having BDS at local level addresses this need through continuous flow of information, mentorship, guidance, collaboration, training, building networks, monitoring changes in behaviour and inspiring the youth.

7.4 Limitations and Implications for Further Research

Every research has its own strengths and weaknesses, it is normal to express a number of methodological limitations in the study; such as in formulating research questions, selecting design, data collection, analysis and presentation. Therefore, the limitations provoke further research to fill the gaps; In all, the research process is cyclical: This section presents the limitations and questions for future studies:

Limitations of the study

The study adopted the exploratory and case study designs using qualitative approaches to understand the contribution of social entrepreneurial interventions on youth empowerment in Gulu district Acholi subregion, northern Uganda. The study relied more on research questions yet using a mixed method would have provided balanced findings, doing this would have made it easier to draw valid conclusions and generalisations of results.

Although the research was done on post-conflict Gulu district in Northern Uganda, and several aspects of the war on YLP were mentioned, the study did not undertake any specific analysis to determine the relationship between the LRA war and post-war youth activities. This aspect could best be handled quantitatively by future researchers.

The study was only limited to the youth benefiting from government programme of YLP funding only youth interest groups (YIGs) in Gulu district, northern Uganda. It did not cover other youth interest groups supported by the third sectors such as NGOs, CSOs, and other government interventions such as *Emyooga*, and NUSAFIII. YLP was the only youth specific current intervention at the time of the study. Furthermore, the study would have considered individual innovations funded by other agencies or parties. Given that these programmes also employ social entrepreneurship principles to promote socio-economic empowerment, it would be important for future studies to include them in the sample, as there may be issues unique to such enterprises the present study could have missed especially at individual and third sector level.

Suggested Areas for future research

Considering the above limitations and findings of this study, this research has posed many questions in need for further investigation. Therefore, I propose that further research be taken on the following research areas:

It would be interesting to assess the influence of the political economy on government-oriented youth empowerment programmes and the understanding of social entrepreneurship. The findings established with concern that politics influenced the formation and performance of most youth interest groups. The failure of most YIGs was attributed to political influence in form of political propaganda, timing, and conduct. Some youth followed politicians' guidance and information to form enterprises without entrepreneurship acumen. Therefore, it is

necessary to conduct studies that investigate the influence of political timing, political space on youth entrepreneurship, political intentions, and youth empowerment, and generally the role of politics on youth entrepreneurial intentions.

Additionally, a comparative study between YIGs in Northern Uganda and YIGs in other regions can be conducted using qualitative methods. The studies would help to investigate criteria, extent of benefit, youth perceptions, and success stories from both.

A study should be conducted on development actors' and stakeholder's communication strategies and youth entrepreneurial intentions. The specific questions could include the communication channels employed to relay on programme messages to youth, communication packages, and content of message and process of communication.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Distribution of Participants

Category of Participants	Method of data collection	Number of participants
YIGs	FGDs	10
Youth leaders	KII	4
Experts and Professionals in YDE	KII	2
YLP Government officials	KII	5
YIG leaders/Managers	In-depth Interviews	6
Youth councils	FGDs	2
Youth Interest Groups	Case Studies	2

A. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS			
FGD CODE	IDENTIFIER	GENDER	NO OF PARTICIPANTS
FGD MYC	Municipal Youth Council	Both	11
FGD DYC	District Youth Council	Both	10
FGD BUNGL 001	Bungatira subcounty-Laliya	Both	12
FGD AWA002	Awach subcounty	Male	10
FGD UNY003	Unyama Subcounty	Both	7
FGD PAIO 004	Paicho-Omel	Both	6
FGD PAIS 005	Paicho-subcounty H/Qs	Both	8
FGD AWA 006	Awach	Both	6
FGD CUS007	Custom corner	Both	8
FGD BUNGA008	Bungatira-Agonga	Both	9
FGD PEC009	Pece Division	Both	8
FGD PAT010	Patiko subcounty	Both	7
B- KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS			
KIIs	DESIGNATION	SEX	ORGANISATION
KII 1YC	Youth Councillor	Male	District Local government-Paicho
KII 2FP	Probation Office/YLP Focal Person	Male	District
KII 3DYC	District Youth Chairperson/Leader	Male	District
KII 4PM-T	Partnership Manager	Male	Technoserve
KII 5CDS	Community Development Officer	Female	Awach subcounty/Paibona
KII 6ACDS	Assistant Community Development Officer	Male	Not disclosed
KII 7BSO	Business Skills Officer	Male	Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative
KII 8CDM	Community Development Officer	Female	Pece Division

KII 9YFPM	YLP Focal Person	Male	Municipality
KII 10YFC	Female youth Councillor	Female	District
KII 11 MYC	Municipal Youth Chairperson	Male	Municipality
C- IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS			
IDI 01YIG-P	YIG Manager/Chairperson-School Road Carpentry	Male	Carpentry and Joinery
IDI 02YIG-L	YIG Manager-Layibi	Male	Mold and concrete manufacturing
IDI 03YIG-P	YIG Chairperson-Patiko	Male	Piggery
IDI 04-YIG-UN	YIG leader-Unyama	Male	Piggery
IDI 05-PWD	YIG-PWD	Female	Tailoring & Salon
IDI 06-PV	YIG Manager-Layibi	Male	Boda boda/Salon

Source: Field Data 2019/2020

Appendix B: Consent to Participate in Research

Informed Consent Form:

Name: Kitambo Enos

Phone No. +256777484119

E-mail Address: kitambo.enos@yahoo.com

Study Title: Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Socio-economic Empowerment in Acholi Sub-region, Northern Uganda.

Introduction

I am Kitambo Enos a second year PhD student of Makerere University School of Social Sciences, Department of Social Work and Social Administration (SWASA). I am here to conduct academic research on the study entitled “**Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Socio-economic Empowerment**”. It is a fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Degree of Philosophy (PhD) in Social Work of Makerere University. This study is sponsored by Makerere University and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and will take one year.

Background information

After the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) war in northern Uganda, government and other stakeholders initiated social entrepreneurial interventions such as Youth Livelihood Programme to empower the youth. These programmes were geared towards effecting social change among the youth (18-30 years). Despite this, the socio-economic status of the youth in the region remains questionable. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate effectiveness of social entrepreneurship programmes towards changing youth livelihoods. The focus is on socio-economic challenges facing the youth, nature of entrepreneurial programmes, and how best the youth can be made to benefit from social entrepreneurial programmes. The research will involve questionnaire, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.

What the participant would be asked to do

I want to find out that successes registered by the youth, such as self-employment, increased income, self-esteem and participation in decision-making, the enterprises the youth engage in, the understanding and definition of success, challenges faced, and recommendations towards youth empowerment. The face-to-face interviews will take between 50 minutes to 1 hour.

Risks and benefits of being in the study

There may be minimal risks to the individual for example one may feel sad or remember difficult moments of the past, scenarios which are annoying, or conflicts may develop during discussions. I will offer the guidance, advice and control the situation if it happens. The findings may assist the youth improve on their entrepreneurial skills, the youth voices may be heard by government and other stakeholders. This will assist in designing suitable and sustainable youth entrepreneurship programmes.

Confidentiality

Codes and pseudo names will be used to protect the identity of participants. Views, ideas will only be quoted and included in the work than names. The interviews will be recorded using audio recorder, written in notebooks, transcribed and analysed for presentation. All recordings, field notes and transcripts will be kept safely in a locked wardrobe. All data is collected, spread and stored in accordance with the Ugandan laws for data protection.

Voluntariness

Taking part in this study is entire voluntary, you are free to participate or withdraw from this study. Would you allow me to record or take a photo during this discussion? **YES OR NO**. You have a right to stop the interview at any stage, withdraw from the study after the interview. However, once data analysis has started, it will then be too late to remove your data from the study.

Compensation /Reimbursement

The researcher will locate the participants in their respective communities and neutral places such as schools, trading centres and health centres shall be venues for interviews. Therefore, a compensation of shs 5,000 will cater for transport from their homes to meeting places.

Refreshment:

During FGDs, refreshments shall be availed to participants. Since the discussions will take more than one hour, a total of shs 10,000 is for refreshments. With Key Informants Interviews, shs 20,000 is for allocated, due to the nature of their responsibility and expertise.

Feedback/Dissemination

I will avail copies of final thesis to the Community Development Office Gulu district, Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. I will organise a dissemination workshop with district youth leaders.

Ethical Clearance

I have thought clearance from MAKSSREC and NCST, after they have reviewed all the documents. If there are any queries, you can forward your complaints through the contacts below.

Contacts and Questions

The researcher(s) conducting this study are mentioned below. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have any questions later, you may contact them at:

1. Kitambo Enos

Makerere University, School of Social Science Department of Social Work and Social Administration
+256777484119

If you would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) about; (1) concerns regarding this study, (2) research participant rights, (3) research-related injuries, or (4) other human subjects' issues, please contact:

Dr. Stella Neema

The Chair

Makerere School of Social Sciences

Research Ethics Committee
Telephone: +256- 772 457576
E-mail: sheisim@yahoo.com

Dr. Julius Omona
Principal Supervisor
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And,

Dr. Peter Ndemere
The Executive Secretary
The Uganda National Council of Science and Technology,
Kimera Road. Ntinda P. O. Box 6884 Kampala, Uganda
Telephone: (256) 414 705500
Fax: +256-414-234579
Email: info@uncst.go.ug

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information or had the above information read to me. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I consent to participate in this research. I am at least years of age.

Name of participant:
Signature or thumbprint/mark of participant: Date:

Name of Person obtaining Consent:
Signature of person obtaining consent: Date:

Witness of person in case person is Illiterate:

Name of Witness:
Signature or thumbprint/mark of witness: Date:

Include the below information only when the research includes additional interviews

Statement of consent to participate (in case of additional interviews)

I have read or have had the information read to me about additional interview. I have received answers to the questions I have asked. I am at least years of age.

Yes, I agree to participate in additional interview about at each follow up if selected as eligible. I understand that I can change my mind and refuse the additional interview

I do not agree to participate in an additional interview about at each follow up visit if selected as eligible.

Name of participant:
Signature or thumbprint/mark of participant: Date:

Name of Person obtaining Consent:
Signature of person obtaining consent:
Date:

Witness of person in case person is Illiterate:

Name of Witness:
Signature or thumbprint/mark of witness: Date:

Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Youth Interest Groups

I would like to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers in this discussion. We are interested in knowing what each of you think; please feel free to share your opinions.

1. Introduction and setting ground rules.
2. Would you kindly let me know your thoughts on this topic that has brought us here? **(Youth social entrepreneurship and socio-economic empowerment)**
3. Please indicate your socio-demographics on the list provided (explain to them what they are)
4. What category of enterprise do you operate? **(Probe on activities/products)**
5. When did you establish this project
6. How did you form this enterprise **(probe on procedures, criteria, funding, sustainability)**
7. What motivated you to participate in this enterprise?
8. How much fund did you receive from youth livelihood programme?
9. Other than funding, what other support services did you obtain from government-oriented social entrepreneurship intervention?
10. Have you ever benefited from NGO (purpose is to probe on additional services, and compare)
11. Show some of the benefits from these interventions **(probe more)**
 - a) Are you different from before you joined this group?
 - b) What have you achieved so far from this entrepreneurship intervention?
 - c) Do you think these interventions have met your expectations?
12. As youth what challenges do you face amidst the entrepreneurship interventions region **(probe on each)**
13. What challenges do you face in accessing support from this entrepreneurship programme
14. Why has your YIG failed **(for only failed groups if any)**
15. What do you think the government can do to make the youth optimally benefit from the intervention (YLP)? **(Probe each recommendation provided).**
What about the NGOs?
16. Any other comment that can help improve this study.

THANK YOU SO MUCH

Appendix D: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Youth Councils

I would like to remind you that there are no right or wrong answers in this discussion. We are interested in knowing what each of you think; please feel free to share your opinions.

1. Introduction and setting ground rules.
2. Would you kindly let me know your thoughts on this topic that has brought us here?
(Youth social entrepreneurship and socio-economic empowerment)
3. Please indicate your positions on the list provided
4. As youth leaders are you aware of YLP **(probe on their role)**
5. What youth enterprises does the intervention support **(probe on activities)**
6. What category of youth involved in the programme do you operate?
7. How did youth form YIGs **(probe on procedures, funding)**
8. What motivated youth to participate in this programme?
9. Other than funding, what other support services did youth obtain from government-oriented entrepreneurship intervention?
10. Do you think youth expectations have been meet?
11. Show some of the benefits from these interventions **(probe more)**
12. Are there some youth groups which have failed? If YES, WHY?
13. What challenges do youth face in this area
14. What do you think the government can do to make the youth optimally benefit from the intervention (YLP)? **(Probe each recommendation provided).**
15. Any other comment that can help improve this study.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Appendix E: Interview Guide for Key Informants

1. Introduction and seeking for consent
2. May I know the name of this organisation (**optional**)?
3. Would you kindly let me know your role in this organisation (district is as well referred to as organisation)?
4. What is your comment on this topic (**social entrepreneurship and youth socio-economic empowerment in Northern Uganda**)?
5. Have you ever heard government oriented-entrepreneurship intervention (YLP)
6. What are the youth enterprise supported under YLP (**for local government officials only**)
7. Are you able to support all the youth? (**Why?**)
8. What categories of the youth do you support (probe more)?
9. Show the opportunities available for the youth after your support?
10. What is your understanding of youth empowerment? (probe)
 - a) Are there testimonies of youth empowered under your programme (probe on cases?)
 - b) Are there youth who have failed to progress despite your intervention? (**WHY**-probe more)
11. What are some of the benefits of your programmes on the youth (Probe on some testimonies)?
12. Are there some socio-economic challenges facing the youth (probe on each challenge, its causes and consequences)?
13. What challenges do you face while empowering the youth (probe more)?
14. How best can the youth be made to benefit from youth social entrepreneurship interventions i.e.
 - ✓ Current programmes (probe on option)
 - ✓ Future programmes (probe on each)
15. Any other comment as regards youth socio-economic empowerment in the region?

THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT

Appendix F: Interview Guide for YIG Leaders/Chairpersons

1. Introduction and seeking for consent
2. May I know the name of your group (optional)?
3. Would you kindly let me know your role in this project
4. What is your comment on this topic (social entrepreneurship and youth socio-economic empowerment in Northern Uganda)?
5. Kindly let me know the composition of your group (probe on membership i.e., age, sex, education, duties)
6. When did you start these enterprises (probe more)
7. How much fund did you received from YLP
8. Why did youth get motivate to join this project
9. Other than government funding, what other services did you obtain from YLP?
10. Have you ever received support from NGO or any other organisation (probe more)
11. Do you think this entrepreneurship programme has met your expectations? (Probe on YES or NO answer?)
12. How have you benefited from YLP
13. Amidst this programme, what challenges are you facing as youth?
14. What problems do you face in your project (also probe on challenges face when accessing funding).
15. How best can youth be capacitated to benefit from any youth social entrepreneurship interventions
16. Any other comment as regards youth socio-economic empowerment in the region?

THANK YOU SO MUCH

Appendix G: Observation Guide

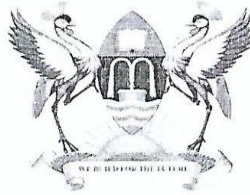
1. How is the YIG implemented
 - a) Who is taking part
 - b) Number of participants
 - c) Nature of economic activity
 - d) Location of economic activity

2. How are the participants undertaking the activity?
3. What is the evidence that youth have benefited from the intervention
 - a) Size of the business
 - b) Quantity of the stock or numbers of animals, birds, garden
 - c) Books of accounts (records)
 - d) Number of members in the activity
 - e) The premises where the activity is operated

Appendix H: Ethical Clearance from MAKSS REC

MAKERERE

P. O. Box 7062,
Kampala, Uganda
Cables: MAKUNIKA



UNIVERSITY

Tel: 256-41-545040/0712 207926
Fax: 256-41-530185
E-mail: makssrec@gmail.com

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Your Ref:

Our Ref: MAKSS REC 06.19.302

27th September 2019

Kitambo Enos
Principal Investigator (MAKSS REC 06.19.302)
Makerere University, Department of SWASA
P O Box 7062, Kampala
Telephone contact: +256 777 484119
Email: kitambo.enos

Dear Madam,

Initial review – Full Board

Re: Approval of Protocol titled: “Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Socio-economic Empowerment in Acholi Sub-region, Northern Uganda”

This is to inform you that, the Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (MAKSS REC) granted approval to the above referenced study. The MAKSS REC reviewed the proposal using the full board review on **20th June 2019**. This has been done in line with the investigator’s subsequent letter addressing comments and suggestions.

Your study protocol number with MAKSS REC is **MAKSS REC 06.19.302**. Please be sure to reference this number in any correspondence with MAKSS REC. Note that, the initial approval date for your proposal by MAKSS REC was **20th June 2019**. This is an annual approval and therefore, approval expires on **19th June 2020**. Please note that, **final approval should be done by Uganda National for Science and Technology. You should use stamped consent forms and study tools/instruments while executing your field activities at all times.** However, continued approval is conditional upon your compliance with the following requirements.

Continued Review

In order to continue on this study (including data analysis) beyond the expiration date, Makerere University School of Social Sciences (MAKSS REC) must re-approve the protocol after conducting a substantive meaningful, continuing review. This means that you must submit a continuing report Form as a request for continuing review. To avoid a lapse, you should submit the request six (6) to eight (8) weeks before the lapse date. Please use the forms supplied by our office.



Please also note the following:

- No other consent form(s), questionnaires and or advertisement documents should be used. The Consent form(s) must be signed by each subject prior to initiation of your protocol procedures. In addition, each research participant should be given a copy of the signed consent form.

Amendments

During the approval period, if you propose any changes to the protocol such as its funding source, recruiting materials or consent documents, you must seek Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee (MAKSS REC) for approval before implementing it.

Please summarise the proposed change and the rationale for it in a letter to the Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee. In addition, submit three (3) copies of an updated version of your original protocol application- one showing all proposed changes in bold or "track changes" and the other without bold or track changes.

Reporting

Among other events which must be reported in writing to the Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee include:

- i. Suspension or termination of the protocol by you or the grantor.
- ii. Unexpected problems involving risk to participants or others.
- iii. Adverse events, including unanticipated or anticipated but severe physical harm to participants.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to the protection of human subjects in research.

The legal requirement in Uganda is that, all research activities must be registered with the National Council for Science and Technology. The forms for this registration can be obtained from their website www.unsct.go.ug

Please contact the Administrator of Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee at mak.ssrec@gmail.com or bjjulied@yahoo.co.uk or telephone number +256 712 207926 if you counter any problem.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Stella Neema
Chairperson
Makerere University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee



c.c.: The Executive Secretary, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

Appendix I: Ethical Clearance from UNCST



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

Our Ref: SS 5112

11th November 2019

Mr. Enos Kitambo
Principal Investigator
Makerere University Kampala
Kampala

Dear Mr. Kitambo,

Re: Research Approval: Social Entrepreneurship and Youth Socio – Economic Empowerment in Acholi Sub – Region, Northern Uganda

I am pleased to inform you that on **31/10/2019**, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above referenced research project. The Approval of the research project is for the period of **31/10/2019** to **31/10/2020**.

Your research registration number with the UNCST is **SS 5112**. Please, cite this number in all your future correspondences with UNCST in respect of the above research project.

As Principal Investigator of the research project, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the research protocol or the consent form (where applicable) must be submitted to the designated Research Ethics Committee (REC) or Lead Agency for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. UNCST must be notified of the approved changes within five working days.
3. For clinical trials, all serious adverse events must be reported promptly to the designated local IRC for review with copies to the National Drug Authority.
4. Unanticipated problems involving risks to research subjects/participants or other must be reported promptly to the UNCST. New information that becomes available which could change the risk/benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for UNCST notification after review by the REC.
5. Only approved study procedures are to be implemented. The UNCST may conduct impromptu audits of all study records.

LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE

*Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda
P.O.Box 6884
KAMPALA, UGANDA*

COMMUNICATION

TEL: (256) 414 705500
FAX: (256) 414-234579
EMAIL: info@uncst.go.ug
WEBSITE: <http://www.uncst.go.ug>



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

6. An annual progress report and approval letter of continuation from the REC must be submitted electronically to UNCST. Failure to do so may result in termination of the research project.

Below is a list of documents approved with this application:

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Research proposal	English	2.0	August 2019
2.	Consent form	English	N/A	N/A
3.	Key informant interview guides	English and Luo	2.0	August 2019
4.	Questionnaire	English and Luo	2.0	August 2019
5.	FGD guide	English and Luo	2.0	N/A

Yours sincerely,

Isaac Makhuwa
For: Executive Secretary

UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Copied to: Chair, Makerere University School of Social Sciences, Research Ethic Committee

LOCATION/CORRESPONDENCE

Plot 6 Kimera Road, Ntinda
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