



Report

Building paths for youth entrepreneurship

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Acronyms

EADD	East Africa Dairy Development	MENA	Middle East and North Africa
EJN	Emprendedores Juveniles de Nicaragua	MIC	Middle-Income Country
EU	European Union	NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ICS	International Citizen Service	ODI	Overseas Development Institute
ICSE	International Citizen Service Entrepreneur	SACCOs	Savings and Credit Co-Operatives
ILO	International Labour Organization	SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
INPRHU	Instituto de Promoción Humana	VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
KII	Key Informant Interviews		
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices		
LIC	Low-Income Country		

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Executive summary

Youth unemployment is a global concern; the global economy will need to create 600 million jobs over the next 10 years to keep employment rates constant (World Bank Development Report, 2013). Overall poverty globally is decreasing; however, as migration from rural to urban areas continue, the concentration and level of poverty in rural areas is rising. Youth entrepreneurship can be a tool to address these issues and build new opportunities for economic growth and development.

Youth entrepreneurship is still a relatively new area and best practices are still evolving. Each new programme reveals new insights, helping practitioners to ask better questions and seek better answers. Raleigh International is one organisation undertaking this important role, and the emerging findings from its International Citizen Service Entrepreneur (ICSE) programme can be instructive to a number of organisations seeking to work in youth entrepreneurship.

Through the ICSE programme, Raleigh International focuses on developing the skills of rural entrepreneurs in their communities. Participants are connected with local mentors and international volunteers, to make their business ideas a reality. The programme forms part of International Citizen Service (ICS), a UK government-funded development programme that brings together 18 to 25-year-olds from all backgrounds to fight poverty in overseas and UK communities. ICS is led by VSO in partnership with respected development organisations. Raleigh piloted the ICSE programme in Nicaragua and Tanzania, two developing nations experiencing demographic changes in population and faced with high levels of youth unemployment.

This paper reviews the Raleigh International ICSE pilot projects in Nicaragua and Tanzania, after the first year of implementation. It is intended for people seeking to understand better youth entrepreneurship programmes, as a tool to unleash youth potential.

Overall, the Raleigh programme provides two models for addressing rural youth unemployment. Youth

entrepreneurs were exposed to new ideas and different learning methodologies. By combining youth international and national volunteers with local partners, entrepreneurs were exposed to different ways of thinking, exchanging information and ideas that resulted in adaptable and diverse business strategies and skills.

Summary of findings

The emerging findings from the Raleigh International ICSE pilot and the literature review, highlight the importance of:

- 1. Mentorship schemes.** Established business mentors provide valuable advice to support youth entrepreneurs through the programme. They provide practical experience to entrepreneurs, connect them to larger networks and support learning and reflection. This relationship is most successful when based on defined goals and obligations.
- 2. Family and community support** to provide advice and guidance, assist with business operations and help young entrepreneurs access funding. In Nicaragua, most entrepreneurs who have established ventures through the Raleigh programme are supported by family and are involving family members in their business.
- 3. Understanding the local context.** Adaptability can be the lifeline of an entrepreneurship programme, adjusting as situations arise and evolve.
- 4. Finding ways for young people to access finance** is vital to start and operate a small business, but it can be challenging. Raleigh International's provision of seed capital through in-kind grants in Nicaragua has enabled a number of businesses to start-up, and most entrepreneurs felt they would not have succeeded without this access to finance. However, in Tanzania entrepreneurs were reluctant to access finance through repayable loans. There is a range of financial instruments out there, and local variations need to be

taken into account during programme design.

5. Developing business and life skills from which young people can continue to benefit from throughout their careers. Many of the entrepreneurs and young volunteers who took part in Raleigh ICSE projects have identified important gains in skills such as confidence and leadership, business planning and marketing.

These may seem simple, but they are truly complex when putting them into practice. Programmes are made or broken by their adaptability. Contextual factors, such as weather, harvests, economic recessions or security, may affect and the programme must be ready to adapt.

Recommendations presented here are intended to support Raleigh International to improve its ICSE programme before extending it beyond the two pilot projects, but will have relevance to others implementing youth entrepreneurship programmes and to the wider sector.

Summary of recommendations

1. Strengthen the mentorship programmes: Raleigh International should invest efforts and resources into ensuring clear communication and training for mentors and youth entrepreneurs, establishing goals, strategies, terms and expectations. This will foster more solid relationships between mentors and youth entrepreneurs, which will likely achieve better results. Raleigh International should consider establishing peer-to-peer business mentoring, as established youth entrepreneurs may be better able to communicate technical ideas, understand problems, and offer creative solutions.

2. Design financial products targeted to youth and the types of business they are creating: Many young people expressed a need for clearer information on loans and seed capital. Programme design should explore what types of financing are best suited to the local context, including youth business types and stages of development. Mechanisms for accessing appropriate finance should be clearly communicated to the entrepreneurs.

3. Ensure the programme design reflects changing context at all times: Context is key at every stage and level of the programme. To enhance future programmes, Raleigh International could consider ways to include more understanding of the local contexts.

4. Build mechanisms to engage families: An entrepreneur's family is often their most important support network. By better enabling families to advise and assist entrepreneurs, Raleigh International also fosters a support network that could help ventures respond to unexpected changes. Establishing communication with families through outreach and education would be enormously beneficial to young entrepreneurs, and family support should be seen as the backbone of many youth enterprises.

5. Actively promote local entrepreneurial role models: It is important for youth to see first-hand that others have experienced and overcome the same challenges. Raleigh International can use aspects of the current programme to promote entrepreneurial role models, supporting entrepreneurs to learn from their experience and use learning in new ventures.

6. Design and implement follow-up services: Raleigh International should consider providing follow-up services to offer continued support to newly established micro-enterprises as a means to enhance continued operation. Volunteers and partners should be included in follow-up services, creating larger support networks and providing a forum for expertise and experience to be passed to the next generation.

7. Continue to enhance the evidence: Raleigh International is making considerable efforts to capture results through tracking surveys and other tools, but more information should be gathered in the long term. This would enable Raleigh International to gather evidence on sustainability and effectiveness, in order to inform future programmes and reinforce the organisations commitment to the community.

Entrepreneurship can be a tool to help fight youth unemployment; as such there is great merit in the deeper study of youth entrepreneurship programmes such as this. First-person experiences from volunteers and entrepreneurs help personalise the overall lessons. For leaders and policymakers working in youth entrepreneurship, we hope that these findings will be valuable in creating better programmes, policies and projects.

1. Introduction

Employment creation, particularly youth employment, has become a priority for many governments, policy-makers, the private sector, and civil society organisations (ILO, 2015).

Since unemployment disproportionately affects young people, youth entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised not only as a way to reduce youth unemployment and poverty, but also as a means to enable young people to attain a sustainable livelihood both to develop their careers and to contribute to their countries' socio-economic growth (UNDP, 2014). While young people often opt for self-employment because of the lack of job opportunities, the experience can enable them to learn valuable skills that should remain relevant for the rest of their lives (YBI and GEM, 2013).

Since 2014, Raleigh International – a UK-based sustainable development charity – has been implementing ICS Entrepreneur as part of the International Citizen Service (ICS) programme. ICS is a UK government-funded development programme that brings together 18 to 25-year-olds from all backgrounds to fight poverty in overseas and UK communities. It is led by VSO in partnership with respected development organisations. Each year ICS brings young people from the UK together with youth in developing countries to work jointly on development projects. ICS aims to accomplish three main outcomes:

- Development impact through the delivery of sustainable projects in developing countries;
- Personal development of young volunteers through skills and knowledge;
- Creation of active citizens who are advocates for international development and agents for social change in their own communities and beyond.

The Raleigh ICS Entrepreneur programme seeks to create strong, sustainable enterprises in the rural communities in which Raleigh International works. The programme offers volunteers, communities, and local partners the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to support young entrepreneurs and/or enable micro or small



International ICSE programme, Tanzania 2015. Photo by Raleigh International/ Saraya Cortaville

enterprises to succeed. The Raleigh ICSE programme is currently being piloted in Nicaragua and Tanzania, with 200 volunteers from the three countries jointly working to support over 100 local entrepreneurs.

1.1 Study purpose and audience

As Raleigh International continues to expand its entrepreneur-focused work through the ICS programme, it requested the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) to gather preliminary feedback from the pilot projects in Nicaragua and Tanzania on the perceived employability, skills and prospects of national volunteers and community participants.

As part of this study, we addressed the following questions:

- How do entrepreneurs and their parents perceive youth employability? What is their perceived value of business, technical and life skills?

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- What have been entrepreneurs' and mentors' experiences of different components (entrepreneurship training, technical training, mentoring, access to finance) of the Raleigh ICSE programme? What are the perceived strengths? What are the challenges? How have these experiences varied in the two countries? What factors have influenced these experiences?
 - What do parents and community leaders perceive are the benefits of the Raleigh ICSE programme beyond the participants?
 - What may be fruitful areas of future enquiry to better understand the Raleigh ICSE programme?
 - How do Raleigh ICSE alumni (volunteers and team leaders) perceive their employability based on the experience and skills developed in their engagement with ICSE? What is their perceived value of business, technical and life skills?

The paper draws out the main lessons in order to identify factors that might inform Raleigh International's future strategy. It is aimed at programme managers and decision-makers, policy-makers and, donors who seek out new ideas to address poverty and unemployment, and build brighter futures for young people, especially those living in rural areas.

The paper reviews the Raleigh ICSE programme and participant feedback after the first year of implementation. It analyses the importance of entrepreneurship, discusses the nature of the programme and the country contexts, and draws out preliminary lessons. Recommendations come from those to whom entrepreneurship matters the most; entrepreneurs, volunteers, and local communities, all of whom were crucial to the field research.

2. Understanding youth entrepreneurship

The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2015) reports that almost 36% of the world's unemployed – nearly 73.3 million people – are young people. Taking under-employed youth into account triples this total. Furthermore, over 169 million young people earn less than US\$2 per day, representing more than a third of the working poor in developing countries. The number jumps to 286 million if those who earn less than US\$4 per day are included (ILO, 2015).

Youth unemployment weighs heavily on the economies of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), and the European Union (EU), and in some cases is as high as 30% (YBI and Gem, 2013). Young Latin Americans often remain in the informal economy, which accounts for 6 out of every 10 jobs available to them, while 27 million youth occupy poor quality jobs (ILO, 2015). In Nicaragua, 40% of young people are unemployed or work in the informal economy and half live in poverty (UNDP, 2011). Some countries in SSA, such as Tanzania, may have comparatively high employment rates, but jobs are consistently for low-skilled workers; in Dar es Salaam 20% of youth who have completed secondary education are unemployed (World Bank, 2013).

These numbers mask even more disturbing trends. Millions of young people worldwide are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). While there has been a fall in NEET numbers at the global level, there is still a need for strategies to enable the long-term unemployed youth to find jobs (ILO, 2015).

2.1. Defining youth entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a global phenomenon, typically engaged in by young people aged between 24 and 34 years (ILO, 2006). While there is no accepted universal definition of 'entrepreneurship', 'entrepreneur', or 'youth entrepreneurship', here we define entrepreneurship in the broadest sense, following the ILO (Schoof, 2006: 7), which states:

Entrepreneurship is the recognition of an opportunity to create value, and the process of acting on this opportunity, whether or not it involves the formation of a new entity. While concepts such as 'innovation' and 'risk taking' in particular are usually associated with entrepreneurship, they are not necessary to define the term.

This definition emphasises behaviour rather than traits, viewing entrepreneurship as 'a set of behaviours, and an entrepreneur is someone who undertakes these behaviours'. This definition simplifies analysis of what entrepreneurs do and how they do it, rather than identifying and classifying specific 'entrepreneurial' traits and qualities. This definition also avoids any suggestion that entrepreneurs are born and not made (Schoof, 2006).

2.2. Why youth entrepreneurship matters

A combination of factors makes the job market increasingly difficult for young people and leads to high youth unemployment. Young people have access to fewer and poorer jobs, and encounter increasing competition from a booming young population. Those who undertake further education face higher costs, a difficult and unsure transition when they enter the world of work world, and possible skills mismatches. Longer waiting periods before and between employment, even for those with higher education, hampers successful career development (ILO, 2012). While educational attainment across the world is rising, the gap between formal schooling and work-related skills is widening, especially as the time between jobs lengthens. Many employers see the younger generation as lacking in 'real world' skills, which tends to confine them to entry and low-level positions. The perception of a dearth of employable and entrepreneurial skills is heightened by a deficiency of training programmes aimed at overcoming this deficit (Mourshed, Farrell and Barton, 2012).

These perceptions, and the reality of high youth unemployment, may be countered by increased education and training in entrepreneurship (ILO, 2012). Entrepreneurship, combined with the creation of small and medium enterprises, contributes to economic growth, job creation, innovation and structural change (Cooney, 2012). A lack of large firms in developing countries often means that young people have no options other than self-employment. However, this can help young people to develop valuable skills that are relevant to any career, such as: independence, confidence, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and teamwork, and a host of others (YBI and GEM, 2010). These skills combat the lack of 'real world' education, and sustain people throughout their lives. Successful entrepreneurs typically draw talented peers to their ideas, and entrepreneurship can have a positive impact on the employees, partners, businesses, and communities that surround them.

2.3. A viable path

Youth, particularly in developing countries, view entrepreneurship as a viable and desirable career path, but the acceptance and pursuit of entrepreneurship is strikingly varied in different parts of the world. Deloitte (2014) surveyed 7,800 young women and men across 26 countries and found that while 70% of respondents believed that they will work independently at some point in their life, nearly 82% of those in developing countries expected this in the future, compared to 52% in developed countries. This is in line with other perception surveys. According to the YBI and GEM report (2013), SSA is the global hotbed of entrepreneurship, and nearly 60% of youth surveyed in the region see potential business opportunities that they would run and manage.

Young people are not monolithic; they are a diverse group and their different approaches to entrepreneurship and business models reflect this (Ellis and Pompa, 2012). In developed countries, entrepreneurs are typically drawn to perceived opportunity, whereas in developing countries, necessity and lack of alternatives are the main factors in the decision to start a business, particularly in SSA and Latin America (YBI and Gem, 2010). While most young entrepreneurs are self-employed, it is important not to overlook collective ownership and other approaches to setting up and running a business. Young entrepreneurs

often tend to focus on low-skilled, accessible sectors, given that they lack some of the more advanced skills needed to create complex businesses (Green, 2013). Young people with the highest level of education and training may find it easier to seek employment with established firms rather than building their own business, thereby leaving entrepreneurship to those with the least experience (Green, 2013). It is important to provide young entrepreneurs with the business skills, information, mentoring, and financial support they need in order to be successful and to make entrepreneurship a viable path.

2.4. Key challenges

Despite the potential, young entrepreneurs face several challenges and obstacles. While these may be regional or culturally specific, there appear to be some universal barriers (YBI and GEM, 2013). In order to support the entrepreneurial potential of youth, governments, policy-makers, and practitioners need to focus on how to help young entrepreneurs overcome the barriers that prevent them from starting and expanding a business. While access to capital is a fundamental and universal impediment to start-ups, other factors include traditional education that ignores entrepreneurship as an employment option, lack of appropriate business skills and limited access to mentors and networking, negative social attitudes, and market barriers. Such factors discourage aspiring entrepreneurs from starting their ventures.

2.4.1. Educational systems that ignore entrepreneurship

Rarely do traditional education systems teach the skills necessary to become an entrepreneur. Most formal education focuses on skills for conventional careers rather than on those needed to set up and manage a business. In countries that are characterised by weak education systems, high drop-out rates, and low levels of literacy and numeracy, entrepreneurs and employees alike may lack the basic skills to compete in established markets (World Bank, 2008).

2.4.2. Lack of appropriate skills and limited access to mentorships and networks

Young entrepreneurs may have the ability to acquire a wide range of new skills but lack of access to

appropriate training and support systems, and limited access to knowledge and networks, often make it harder for them to start a business. Business success is often determined by experience, knowledge, and managerial skills, which by definition young people lack. Qualified mentors can offer experience and network connections, but many entrepreneurs lack access to them. Social capital and strong networks are difficult to establish and develop, and ventures may fail before the necessary support systems are in place (OECD, 2012).

2.4.3. Limited access to capital

Financial institutions are often reluctant to lend to young people since they have little or no collateral to underwrite their ventures. Without proper financing, businesses can seldom expand sufficiently to provide a viable income, or overcome the perceived risk. This lack of capital prevents young entrepreneurs from establishing themselves in the market, and limits their impact (YBI, 2010).

2.4.4. Social stigma

Young entrepreneurs with little capital justifiably fear failure, and where there are no social safety nets the risks are high. Moreover, there may be a stigma attached to entrepreneurship, coupled with rejection of anyone who fails or is deemed unsuccessful. Many societies have a negative view of business failure and are neither receptive to nor accepting of entrepreneurship. This attitude curtails entrepreneurship and innovation, impedes growth, and causes aspiring entrepreneurs to avoid potential business opportunities for fear of failure. Furthermore, attitudes towards women or ethnic minorities may make it harder for them to set up businesses (Schoof, 2006).

2.4.5. Market disruptions

The difficulties mentioned above mean that young entrepreneurs are more exposed to market disruptions and failures than established businesses. They may not have the capital to weather economic recessions or political crises, challenge corrupt practices or complex regulations, build necessary infrastructure, or overcome a host of other factors. Abuse and corruption are the hallmarks of the informal economy, where many young entrepreneurs work with no form of protection (World Bank, 2008; OECD, 2012).

3. Raleigh ICS Entrepreneur: an overview

The ICS Entrepreneur (ICSE) programme tackles poverty by supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses in developing countries (ICS, 2015). The programme forms part of International Citizen Service (ICS), which is a UK government-funded development programme that brings together 18 to 25-year-olds from all backgrounds to fight poverty in overseas and UK communities. ICS is led by VSO in partnership with respected development organisations.

As part of the ICS consortium, Raleigh International has been delivering the Raleigh ICSE programme since 2014. The following definitions and programme descriptions explain the roles of participants and supporters and the structure of the Raleigh ICSE programme.

In-country volunteers: Local youth, aged between 18 and 25 years from Nicaragua or Tanzania, who participated in the programme as volunteers in their respective countries. Recruitment of in-country volunteers is undertaken nationally, with most volunteers coming from urban areas.

UK volunteers: British citizens aged between 18 and 25 years who volunteered in Nicaragua or Tanzania.

In-country team leaders: Local volunteers from Nicaragua or Tanzania, who participated in the programme in their respective countries as team leaders. While there is no upper age limit to be a team leader, the minimum age is 23 years. Team leaders provide support, supervision, and leadership to the volunteer team. Their duties include conducting regular one-to-one and team meetings, and facilitating group learning and discussion. In-country team leaders usually come from the capital or other major city.

UK team leaders: British citizens who acted as team leaders in Nicaragua or Tanzania. While there is no upper age limit to be a team leader, the minimum age is

23 years. Team leaders provide support, supervision and leadership to the volunteer team. Their duties include conducting regular one-to-one and team meetings and facilitating group learning and discussion.

ICSE alumni: In this report, in-country volunteers and team leaders who have completed the programme are referred to as ICSE alumni.

Entrepreneurs: Young rural Nicaraguans and Tanzanians who receive training as part of the programme. They are the main beneficiaries of ICSE and are aged between 18 and 34 years.

Parents: The parents or legal guardians of the entrepreneurs.

Community leader: A community representative who exercises some form of informal or formal leadership.

Employers: Private firms that are currently employing ICSE alumni.

Project partners: Local organisations working alongside Raleigh International in managing the programme and training participants.

The ICSE programme differs depending on the agencies involved. Raleigh ICSE is aimed at young participants (18 and 25-year-olds) from the UK, Nicaragua and Tanzania. Volunteers are placed in rural communities and are typically organised into groups of eight: four British and four nationals. Each group is supported by two team leaders, one British and one national (Raleigh International, 2014).

Each ICSE cycle lasts for six months and includes two rounds of volunteers, who work with local communities for ten weeks each. Team leaders remain throughout the whole cycle to ensure continuity and coordination in the volunteer teams.

Before their local placement, ICSE volunteers are trained by Raleigh staff and project partners in the methods used to support local young entrepreneurs and enterprises. Once in situ, volunteers train young entrepreneurs in a series of business-related sessions. Volunteers cover one to three communities and work with several entrepreneurs in each one, depending on size and population (Raleigh International, 2014).

Figure 1: Structure of the ICSE programme



2.1. Working with young entrepreneurs

Volunteers support aspiring young entrepreneurs by providing an informal setting for peer-to-peer training as a means to develop and implement a business idea. Throughout the project, entrepreneurs learn how to start and manage a business. Nascent micro-enterprises are helped to develop growth strategies, including the identification of potential external support, in order to maximise the likelihood of sustainable success (Raleigh International, 2014).

Raleigh International's theory of change (see Annex 4) states that by creating their own micro-enterprises, participants will be able to improve their incomes and bring economic benefits to their communities. Raleigh International maintains that supporting young business people enables them to make a crucial contribution to reducing poverty. Furthermore, young entrepreneurs who care about sustainable development can use their business to address local social, environmental and economic issues. Increasing the number of successful community-based enterprises will lead to greater livelihood opportunities and more income for people living in that community. By focusing support on marginalised social sectors, such as youth and women, Raleigh International aims to increase income, employment and livelihood opportunities for those in greatest need (Raleigh International, 2014).

2.1.1. Activities

ICSE outlines a series of sessions between volunteers and young entrepreneurs that cover, through discussion and activities, the following topics (Raleigh International, 2014):

Needs assessment: Young entrepreneurs learn how to gain market knowledge through research and analysis, by recognising market needs, identifying barriers and conducting potential business scoping and feasibility studies. By conducting a needs assessment, entrepreneurs ensure they engage in worthwhile and viable businesses that have the potential to increase their earnings and contribute to the growth of their communities.

Enterprise training: Training content includes conducting market research, understanding context-specific business barriers, developing a business plan, accessing finance, understanding basic finance and management, and promoting community youth leadership to develop the young entrepreneur's skills.

Enterprise development and testing: During this phase, young entrepreneurs develop and test their enterprises. They write business plans, identify potential resources, and have opportunities to develop, share, and test their ideas through activities such as enterprise fairs.

Mentoring opportunities: Individuals with relevant expertise in local communities and nearby towns are identified as mentors to provide assistance and guidance to the entrepreneurs. Mentors typically come from different backgrounds and play different roles:

- *Technical mentors:* Specialists in the specific enterprise who can provide technical expertise, e.g. bakers or milk producers.
- *Business mentors:* Members of the nearby business community who can provide support and advice.
- *Community mentors:* Community leaders or family members who are able to support young entrepreneurs in different aspects.

Linking new entrepreneurs with existing local business owners ensures youth are supported in developing their ideas and expanding their businesses.

Enterprise financing: Enterprises have ready access to finance and are given guidance on how to identify other sources.

Action days: When possible, volunteers also conduct 'Action Days' where they undertake local community projects to increase community solidarity and provide local young entrepreneurs leadership skills and an awareness of local sustainable development issues that they could address.

2.1.2. The role of project partners

Project partners help to identify communities, support implementation, and follow up on newly formed enterprises. In certain cases they also provide technical assistance and identify mentors who will be working with the young entrepreneurs.

In Nicaragua, Raleigh International works with the Instituto de Promoción Humana (INPRHU) and Emprendedores Juveniles de Nicaragua (EJN), and in Tanzania with Heifer International and Technoserve through the East Africa Dairy Development (EADD) programme.

INPRHU is the oldest non-government organisations (NGO) in Nicaragua, having been founded in Managua in 1962. Its Somoto office opened in 1990, and works with vulnerable and socially excluded people, including children, adolescents, families, and communities living in precarious situations.

INPRHU has a long history of promoting cooperative businesses and organisations and providing training and funding to the groups it supports. It has worked at community, municipal, provincial, and national levels, which has given it a strong leadership position (INPRHU Somoto, n.d.).

Emprendedores Juveniles de Nicaragua – EJN (Young Entrepreneurs of Nicaragua) is a non-profit educational association established in 1992, and the first in Nicaragua geared to youth entrepreneurship. EJN focuses on developing young entrepreneurs in three areas: entrepreneurship, employability, and financial education. EJN is a subsidiary of Junior Achievement Worldwide, founded in 1919 and working in over 115 countries promoting entrepreneurial culture (EJN, 2015).

The EADD programme is designed to boost milk production and the incomes of small-scale farmers. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and managed in partnership with Heifer International and

Technoserve, the programme contributes to better dairy production, business practices, and market access by supporting the formation of competitive dairy business hubs and knowledge application (Heifer International, 2015).

2.2. National economic, geographic and political contexts

2.2.1. Nicaragua

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in the Americas after Haiti. Almost half the population is rural, and suffers greater poverty and unemployment than do urban residents. Over 60% of this rural population lives on less than US\$1 per day, a rate heightened by poor access to land and markets; limited social, health, and educational services; unreliable weather conditions for growing seasons; and limited economic growth (IFAD, 2014). While Nicaragua is becoming more prosperous, this wealth remains frustratingly out of reach for the expanding youth population, especially those in rural areas in the *corredor seco* – a region where weather and geographic conditions combine to intensify drought, unstable weather, and poor agricultural conditions (USAID, 2012).

In one of the poorest departments, Madriz, skewed land ownership has dominated the economic and agricultural landscape, leading to indebtedness and limited prospects for youth. Although the coffee market (the major crop in Madriz) has led to increased exports and prices, poor conditions in the drought-ridden department have stymied efforts to improve growth (WFP, 2015). Youth in particular lack the capacity to engage in business, as there are few opportunities for skills or entrepreneurship training in the region, and support networks are similarly lacking (Gutiérrez et al., 2008).

The long civil war in the 1980s left many rural areas of the country wary of the government and without confidence in its institutions, especially the security sector. This, combined with the illicit drug trade and persistent youth unemployment, has led to a rise in criminal activity, which is undermining the country's economic growth. Young women are particularly vulnerable to crime, and some rural families take their daughters out of school once they reach puberty or do not allow them to seek paid employment (USAID,

2012). International migration has also contributed to changes in the family structure, as young people may effectively live in lone-parent households, with grandparents, or on their own (Gutiérrez et al., 2008).

2.2.2. Rural youth in Nicaragua

Any rural programme that focuses on Nicaraguan youth needs to be understood in the context of the agricultural economy. Land tenure in Nicaragua was a source of contention before, during, and after the civil war; access to productive land, the right to own land, the rights and responsibilities of landowners and farmers are a complex feature of the rural economy. An estimated 39% of rural households are landless, with little chance of acquiring land or gaining necessary skills to pursue non-farm activities (USAID, 2011). Nicaragua, especially in the northern regions that were the most affected by the conflict, and still lack many institutions, has experienced environmental degradation because of unsustainable agricultural practices and cattle ranching, illegal logging, and mining. This has rendered much land unproductive, and intensifies the devastation caused by extreme weather events such as hurricanes or droughts (IFAD, 2014).

Young rural Nicaraguans lag behind their urban counterparts in skills, employment, education, and career development. Rural poverty impedes national development, especially in the north, compounded by lack of educational and vocational resources, limited markets, and social problems such as delinquency, early pregnancy, drug abuse, and the exclusion of women and ethnic minorities from services and opportunities (UNDP, 2011). There are, however, some positive trends. Madriz is earning increasing revenue from tourism, which offers an opportunity for non-agricultural economic growth (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014). Programmes focused on improving skills have had some success and have helped to diversify rural youth incomes, both agricultural and non-farm (USAID, 2012).

Rural Nicaraguans face disproportionate levels of poverty, inequality, early pregnancy and unemployment, and a host of other difficulties. These issues are recognised and the government, national and international agencies and local communities are making efforts to tackle them (IFAD, 2014).

The Nicaraguan government, for instance, has made youth education and employment a major issue. Skills development features in the national development plan, and various ministries have shown growing interest in working with and promoting the future generation of leaders and employees. The UN and its specialised agencies, as well as many donors, acknowledge the need to address issues in rural Nicaragua, and have made efforts to do so (UNICEF, 2012).

Despite setbacks, there are many reasons to remain optimistic about Nicaragua's future. Overall poverty is decreasing, as are illiteracy, child malnutrition, and mortality rates. The demographic transition in Nicaragua will also change the structure of many of the nation's social institutions. By 2030, the ratio of dependants (non-working age, i.e. under 15 or over 65 years) to working-age adults will have fallen from 2:2, to 1:2, creating opportunities to improve living conditions, kick-start economic growth, slash poverty, and change the basis of politics and society in Nicaragua (UNDP, 2011).

2.2.3. Tanzania

One of the fastest growing economies in Africa, Tanzania seeks to become a middle-income country (MIC) within the next two decades (USAID, 2014). The growth rate hovers around 7% annually, based on contributions from the construction, trade, agriculture, and transport sectors, while recent off-shore oil and natural gas discoveries may boost further growth (World Bank, 2015). One of the most stable in East Africa, Tanzania's government continues to deepen democracy and is one of the region's main aid recipients (USAID, 2014). On the surface, the future seems bright for the country's population of 47 million.

The favourable statistics mask the reality for many Tanzanians, however. Nearly 73% of the population is rural, which restricts their access to government services such as health and education and offers limited opportunities for non-farm employment. Despite a major decline in the incidence of poverty over the past decade, 12 million Tanzanians still live below the poverty line, particularly in rural areas (Charle and Dhliwayo, 2015; World Bank, 2015). Rapid urbanisation, especially of young people who do not wish to remain in the agricultural sector, is swelling the cities, leading to excessive demands on municipal services, housing shortages, and increased health and sanitation problems (UNICEF, 2012).

The geography of Tanzania has produced a 'breadbasket' in the Southern Highlands districts along the southern border that have optimum agricultural conditions. Sitting in the 'basket', Mbeya is an ideal district in which to increase investment in youth entrepreneurship and training. Eighty per cent of its residents depend on agriculture, while nearly 60% of the land is suitable for production (Government of Tanzania, n.d.). The district can produce surplus food and could potentially boost the production of export crops. While climate change is an issue across East Africa, Mbeya will feel the effects less than more arid districts (Government of Tanzania, n.d.).

2.2.4. Rural youth in Tanzania

The focus on youth is essential in a country where 66% of the population is under 25 years of age, a cohort that is growing by 800,000 annually. As in much of the world, young people are most affected by unemployment and poverty, especially young women, who are less likely to be employed and are in lower-paid jobs with worse working conditions than are young men (Restless Development, 2011).

At 90%, Tanzania's employment rates are high compared to other low-income countries (LICs) (Charle and Dhliwayo, 2015). The figure is slightly misleading, however, since although almost 77% of Tanzanians are employed in agriculture, the sector contributes only 25% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Charle and Dhliwayo, 2015). Agriculture is primarily subsistence, with little emphasis on agribusiness and export, and young people regard it as typically for 'poor, ragged, and weather-beaten farmers' (Kitabu, 2015). Young people view agriculture as a last resort rather than an avenue to growth.

Tanzania recognises that its youth population will steer the nation and two ministries address youth issues. The National Policy on Youth Development states that the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Youth Development is responsible for youth policy, illustrating a nuanced understanding that youth, employment, and growth converge (Youth Policy, 2014). The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has invested in youth training and infrastructure to increase the viability of agriculture (Kitabu, 2015). The 'Big Results Now' initiative focuses on development goals that it is hoped will accelerate Tanzania's attainment of MIC status (Government of Tanzania, n.d.).

Many young people feel that they are left out of decision-making processes; elders tend to make

decisions without their input, even if the decision regards the future generation. Moreover, young people often understand participation in decision-making as simply being present, rather than influencing decisions (Restless Development, 2011). Understandably, this can be viewed as disenfranchising and short-sighted given that younger people will determine Tanzania's future. Entrepreneurship and skills training can adjust this power imbalance, as young people build the self-esteem and confidence they must harness to secure their own future.

2.2.5. The Raleigh ICSE project in each country

As stated earlier, the Raleigh ICSE project is being piloted in Nicaragua and Tanzania. While the programme's main activities – needs assessment, enterprise training, enterprise development mentorship, and financing – remain the same, the two countries have adopted different approaches. The underlying rationale is that adaptation to local contexts and needs provide useful and relevant lessons as the project prepares to expand.

The differences between the two countries' programmes are highlighted in Table 1 below, which encapsulates the practical details of implementation and preliminary results from each country. It is advised not to draw specific conclusions from differing results, as the programme in different countries are at different implementation points and face different challenges in terms of access to finance, community support, and other aspects.

There are, however, interesting notes of comparison and divergence regarding the different approaches. Both were undertaken in rural areas where agriculture was the primary source of income. In Nicaragua, participants tended to be at the younger age range, while in Tanzania they tended to be older – even beyond the initial age cap. The programmes also diverged in their approach to sectors and needs assessment – Nicaragua's focused on community-generated opportunities while Tanzania's was integrated into the larger agribusiness of dairy value-chain investment. Due to local conditions and programme approaches, different methods of financing were considered, which led to multiple ventures in Nicaragua (which featured a more grant-like seed capital loan) and the delay in activity in Tanzania (which aimed to use local 'SACCO') due to difficulties in agreeing on the final terms and conditions of the loan.

Table 1: Distinctive features of each project

	ICSE Nicaragua	ICSE Tanzania
<i>Age</i>	<p>18–35</p> <p>Most participants in younger range, in some cases as young as 15 years of age.</p>	<p>18–35</p> <p>In Tanzania, most participants were in the older range of the programme. In some communities, the programme was flexible enough to include older entrepreneurs ages 35–40</p>
<i>Location</i>	<p>Esteli, Matagalpa and Madriz (3 provinces, 18 communities)</p>	<p>Iringa and Mbeya Regions</p>
<i>Project partner</i>	<p>INPRUH, EJA</p>	<p>EADD</p>
<i>Sector</i>	<p>No sectoral focus. Entrepreneurs may choose any sector or industry.</p>	<p>The sectoral focus is in dairy. Participants are encouraged to start businesses that relate to the dairy value chain.</p>
<i>Needs assessment</i>	<p>The needs assessment seeks to identify potential opportunities to provide goods or services in local communities. Community needs are at the centre of the needs assessment.</p>	<p>Because of its dairy focus, most opportunities are identified across the value chain, such as milk production, distribution and processing as well as animal husbandry and reproduction.</p>
<i>Enterprise Training</i>	<p>Entrepreneurs receive 20 weeks' training in business and life skills offered by volunteers and team leaders. Entrepreneurs receive technical skills training from the local partner.</p>	<p>Entrepreneurs receive 20 weeks' training in business and life skills offered by volunteers and team leaders. Entrepreneurs receive technical skills training from the local partner.</p>
<i>Enterprise Development and Testing</i>	<p>Several enterprises in various sectors were identified and visited during field research.</p>	<p>No enterprises were operating at the time of field research.</p>
<i>Mentorship</i>	<p>Technical and business mentors are identified for the sector/industry in which entrepreneurs engaged.</p> <p>At the time of the study, mentors are continuing to work with entrepreneurs who have started their businesses.</p>	<p>Mentors will be identified through the EADD training centres in each community. They will provide the technical support needed.</p> <p>Mentors had not started working with youth at the time of the field research since no enterprises have yet been set up.</p>
<i>Access to finance</i>	<p>Young entrepreneurs receive seed capital to support their enterprises. After a tendering process, where they present their business ideas and plans, and the best are awarded a start-up fund of up to US\$150. The seed capital is disbursed in kind – following a model closer to in-kind grants than seed capital per se – through the</p>	<p>In Tanzania, the programme works with savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs), and the same acronym is used to refer to microfinance institutions. After a tendering process, where entrepreneurs present their business ideas and plans, the best are offered a loan, guaranteed by Raleigh International in case of default.</p>

4. Methodology

The research comprised the following:

1. Desk-based review of existing information on youth entrepreneurship.
2. Field research to conduct key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) in Nicaragua and Tanzania.
3. Quantitative analysis of Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Surveys 1 and 2, collected by ICS. The focus was on in-country volunteers and team leaders.

4.1. Desk-based review

The desk-based review included a literature review on youth entrepreneurship, in particular on background information regarding sectoral and contextual issues, problem areas and debates, and training methods. The search reviewed academic literature, research and technical papers, government reports, and working papers, all of which were considered useful in understanding how entrepreneurship works, answering the main research questions regarding entrepreneurship, and identifying recommendations.

4.2. Field research

Field research was conducted in Nicaragua 22–29 July 2015 and in Tanzania 8–15 September 2015, during which KIIs and FGDs were conducted with relevant stakeholders.

FGDs were conducted with team leaders, in-country volunteers, and entrepreneurs to understand youth perceptions of the Raleigh ICSE project and to find whether and how the new skills they had gained helped them to obtain employment. All participants in FGDs were of the age of majority.

Informed consent was obtained before starting each FGD, giving participants the opportunity to ask questions regarding the purpose of the activity and the risks or benefits involved. Participants also completed a



*Raleigh International ICSE programme, Tanzania 2015.
Photo by Raleigh International/ Saraya Cortaville.*

socio-demographic form giving information about their age, sex, ethnicity, living conditions, employment, and education.

A discussion guide included open-ended questions to elicit group participation and discussion on specific topics. The FGDs were recorded, with the consent of participants, in order to facilitate their transcription.

KIIs were conducted with community leaders, parents, mentors, employers, and project partners. The interviewees were identified jointly by Raleigh and ODI. The interviews were semi-structured and helped to capture the detail and nuances of the Raleigh ICSE project.

The FGDs and the KIIs were transcribed, analysed, and coded based on predetermined and emergent themes, in the language in which they were conducted. Selected quotes were then translated into English.

4.2.1. Field research in Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, FGDs were conducted in Managua and León, and in the communities of Los Copales, Coyolito, and Sonis in the Department of Madriz.

They were conducted in Spanish by the principal researcher, Claudia Pompa, who is a native speaker.

FGDs with team leaders and in-country volunteers were conducted in a private space in Managua and León. FGDs with entrepreneurs were conducted in the local communities at an entrepreneur's or community leader's house, and lasted approximately two hours. FGDs with entrepreneurs included participants from Cacaui, Sonis, Aguas Calientes, Los Copales, Coyolito, and San Lucas.

The communities selected for the study represent a sample of those in which Raleigh ICSE was implemented. ICSE was implemented in 18 communities across three provinces in rural Nicaragua, where Raleigh have been operating for several years. Communities are characterised by their low economic level, poor access to basic services and remote location, traits of most rural communities in Nicaragua. The selection was made based on location, number of participant entrepreneurs, and project partners.

Participants were convened by Raleigh to match the researcher's selection criteria including: age, gender, level of education, employment status and type of involvement in the ICSE programme i.e. in-country volunteer, team leader, entrepreneur, mentor, etc.

A total of ten FGDs were conducted. Each focus group comprises six to 12 participants. Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the number of FGDs and type of participant.

Table 2. Breakdown of Focus Group Discussions in Nicaragua

Youth group	Number of groups
Team leaders and In-country volunteers	5
Entrepreneurs	5
Total	10

KIIs were also conducted in Spanish. Interviews with parents and community leaders were conducted at their homes or in the community centre. Mentors were

interviewed at their place of work and project partners were interviewed in the local offices. Due to geographical and time restrictions, interviews with employers were conducted by phone.

A total of 20 KIIs were conducted in León, Somoto, Los Copales, Coyolito, and Sonis.

Table 3. Breakdown of Key Informant Interviews in Nicaragua

Interview group	Number of interviews
Mentors	4
Parents	5
Community leaders	5
Project partners	3
Employers	3
Total	20

4.1.1. Field research in Tanzania

In Tanzania, FGDs were conducted in Swahili in Dar Es Salaam, Iloilo, Nkalise, Lukata, and Kyimo by the principal researcher, Claudia Pompa. A member of Raleigh staff, who had no previous interaction with the participants, translated.

FGDs with team leaders and in-country volunteers were conducted in a private space in Dar Es Salaam. FGDs with entrepreneurs were conducted at their local community centre and lasted approximately two hours.

In Tanzania the ICSE programme is being implemented in the Iringa and Mbeya regions and the communities visited represent a sample of those in which Raleigh International is operating. All ICSE communities rely heavily on agriculture as a source of income and are currently involved in the EADD diary project. These communities were characterised by engagement in agriculture, their low-income levels and remoteness -

characteristics shared by most communities in the region where Raleigh operates.

Raleigh convened participants according to the researcher's selection criteria, based on: age, gender, level of education, employment status and type of involvement in the ICSE programme i.e. in-country volunteer, team leader, entrepreneur, mentor, etc.

A total of eight FGDs were conducted. Table 4 below provides a breakdown of the number of FGDs and type of participant.

A total of nine KII were conducted in Mbeya City, Nkalise, Lukata and Kyimo.

Table 4. Breakdown of Focus Group Discussions in Tanzania

Youth group	Number of groups
Team leaders and In-country volunteers	3
Entrepreneurs	5
Total	8

Table 5. Breakdown of Key Informant Interviews in Tanzania

Interview group	Number of interviews
Mentors	1
Parents	5
Community leaders	2
Project Partners	1
Total	9

4.3. KAP 1-2 Surveys

Quantitative data from the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) surveys was used to analyse in-country volunteers' perceptions of their skills and the knowledge gained during the placement in Nicaragua and Tanzania. The KAP surveys were collected online from all in-country and UK volunteers and team leaders participating in all ICS programmes before the placement (KAP 1), after the placement (KAP 2) and a year after completion (KAP 3).

The analysis focused only on in-country volunteers (i.e. excluding UK volunteers as they were not focus of this study) who had participated in the Raleigh ICSE programme in its first year. The results from the KAP 3 survey could not be used because none of the ICSE cohorts had completed it by the time of the study. Thus, it is not possible to assess long-term changes in skills or perceptions at this stage. Furthermore, due to the small sample size, which increased the margin of error and decreased the confidence level, the preliminary results should be treated with caution. The table in Annex 3 includes information on the number and countries of in-country volunteers who completed the KAP 1 and 2 surveys. In view of the very small sample size, any sub-group analysis (e.g. comparing results by country or sex) was not seen as useful or feasible.

Only a selected number of questions from the KAP 1-2 surveys were used for this study. The questions were chosen for their relevance (whether they answer the key research questions and support the analysis) and validity and strength (how were the questions formed, whether they were asked both in the baseline and after the placement, and whether the scales used were balanced). See table in Annex 3 for the list of questions analysed. The analysis was carried out by using STATA statistical software.

This descriptive analysis focused on statements about perceptions of soft skills, which were asked in both surveys. The volunteers assessed their level of skills using a 5-level Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. As they estimated their skills before and after the placement, it was possible to map changes against the baseline and see whether these had changed as a result of the placement by calculating the differences in Likert scale scores.

A couple of other questions from the KAP 2 were also included in the analysis (see table in Annex 3), but as with the soft skills, the results should be read with some caution.

4.4. Data sources used to answer each research question

Table 6. Questions and corresponding data sources

Question	Methods used
How do entrepreneurs and their parents perceive youth employability? What is their perceived value of business, technical and life skills?	Desk review, FGDs, KII
What have been entrepreneurs' and mentors' experiences of different components (entrepreneurship training, technical training, mentoring, access to finance) of the ICSE programme? What are the perceived strengths? What are the challenges? How have these experiences varied across the two countries? What factors have influenced these experiences?	Desk review, FGDs, KII
What do parents and community leaders perceive are the benefits of the ICSE programme beyond the participants?	KII
How do ICSE alumni (in-country volunteers) perceive their employability based on their experience and skills developed through their engagement with ICSE? What is their perceived value of business, technical and life skills?	Desk review, FGDs, KAP

4.5. Limitations

As in all studies, research is subject to certain constraints that affect reporting. Self-reporting and survey answers are necessarily somewhat limited because they rely on self-perception and differing attitudes and individual sentiments. Respondents were selected by Raleigh, which could lead to organisational bias. Since the programme has been underway for only a year, the short timeframe limits the ability to gauge mid- and long-term effects on skills development.

5. Findings

5.1. Perceptions of youth employability and the value of skills learned

This section addresses the first research question: How do entrepreneurs and their parents perceive youth employability? What is their perceived value of business, technical and life skills?

Raleigh ICSE adopts a 'wrap-around services approach', which has helped the programme achieve considerable results in terms of implementation, in a short time. Participants recognise the importance of the range of support services they receive.

This is a very complete programme, providing training and funding, and although it is not much, the seed capital is good.

Male entrepreneur, Nicaragua

With the resources provided, young entrepreneurs are able to start up a business. In doing so, they can earn their own income, separate from family allowances or wages, which can be ploughed back into their enterprise activities or used to fund other endeavours (such as education or investment).

Before I participated in the programme I didn't contribute a penny to the household. Today I have my business, I have a strong clientele, strong demand for my services, and I can help provide an income to my family. My expenses don't need to be covered by my dad any more, who was the only one working. This has changed things for my family.

Female entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Many young people also see a new business as a source of self-employment, thereby remaining economically active and avoiding unemployment. Through self-employment, youth continue to develop personal and work skills that can benefit their venture or make them more employable if they find paid work.



Raleigh International ICSE programme, Nicaragua 2015. Photo by Rachel Sture/Raleigh International

5.1.1. Perceived gains in business, technical and life skills

5.1.1.1. Life skills

Young entrepreneurs recognised important gains in life skills after participating in the training programme. This was supported by comments from volunteers, parents, and village leaders.

Gains in confidence and self-esteem were at the forefront of skills. Believing in oneself, communicating in public, and working in teams were all extensively reported. As stated by a volunteer and an entrepreneur respectively:

Raising their heads, speaking when looked at, losing the shyness – before the programme they had no confidence. But by the time they had to do the pitching, it was a great surprise for all the volunteers – they were able to speak in public, in front of a lot of people, about their business, which they had never done before; it was remarkable.

Female team leader, Nicaragua

I have discovered many abilities: how to speak in public, how to make a business plan, I can now tell people what I learnt.

Male entrepreneur, Tanzania

In particular, the volunteers who worked with the young entrepreneurs for several months saw considerable attitudinal and behavioural changes among them. One said:

The very nice thing about the programme is to see how, in the end, they became another person, they changed completely: they opened their minds, they are motivated, they believe in themselves and in their potential. And all of this in a very short time.

Male in-country volunteer, Nicaragua

5.1.1.2. Business skills

Participants were able to articulate and explain the skills they gained through the training. The most commonly cited skills were development of business plans and marketing campaigns, business branding, and profit and earnings management. Training has also strengthened knowledge, skills, and business practices, which may accrue benefits to entrepreneurs and their enterprises over time.

We have learnt a lot during the process; we learnt things I didn't know about such as how to start a business, how to do a business model, how to make a SWOT analysis, how to market your business, and how to organise the business.

Female entrepreneur, Tanzania

Many participants saw the training as one of the most important components of the programme, mentioning they now know how to apply the new skills to future ideas or ventures.

What we value are not the material things but what we learnt, which stays with you for life. Who will come to teach you business classes for free?

Male entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Many participants also mentioned that working side by side with British volunteers was a valuable experience that helped them learn about other cultures, have access to ideas, exchange information, and develop important skills.

Seeing how they came from another country, to live here with us, under the same conditions in which we live was incredible. They helped us value what we have but also realise the things we need to improve. We learnt a lot working with them; they showed us different methodologies and helped us improve our presentation skills.

Female entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Working with the British volunteers was really useful. They have a different way of doing things and we learnt from that. Punctuality, preparation, how to do a business plan, how to make a market research...we learnt many things

Male entrepreneur, Tanzania

5.2. Programme experiences

This section addresses the second research question: What have been entrepreneurs' and mentors' experiences of different components (entrepreneurship training, technical training, mentoring, access to finance) of the ICSE programme? What are the perceived strengths? What are the challenges? How have these experiences varied across the two countries? What factors have influenced these experiences?

5.2.1. Entrepreneurship training

The idea of 'contextualising' and 'customising' training was an important component of Raleigh ICSE.

The concepts that you are developing, you need to make sure they understand them and that they are relevant to [entrepreneurs'] context.

Female team leader, Tanzania

Each group of volunteers had the flexibility to adapt the content of the training sessions to local realities and needs, and to choose the best way to provide it.

We are from Managua but we came from an urban environment to a rural one, which is quite different, especially in business. Things that might work in Managua don't necessarily work in the communities. You need to see what might work and what not in partnership with the community and the project partner.

Female team leader, Nicaragua

One of the strengths of the programme is the simple methodology it uses. To trust the leaders and volunteers to adapt something very technical to make it simple, and to creatively allow for understanding.

Male volunteer, Nicaragua

This seems to have translated into relevant and highly practical training which facilitated the absorption of key concepts by participants.

5.2.2. Technical training

Technical training is an important part of ICSE, and in the case of Raleigh International, local project partners assist with providing it.

In the case of EADD, it is intended that training should be provided directly by their training centres or networks of experts. INPRHU provides regular training programmes from which entrepreneurs can benefit. EJJN acts in partnership with other organisations in order to provide the necessary training.

In Nicaragua, entrepreneurs were offered technical training across a broad range of skills including cooking, baking, bee keeping, tailoring, and dressmaking. In Tanzania, EADD committed to provide training in areas such as milk production, animal husbandry, and artificial insemination, but participants mentioned they had not yet received technical training.

Technical training was recognised as an important component to help entrepreneurs improve their skills. While most had clear business ideas, not everyone had the technical skills necessary to put these into practice.

I didn't know how to sew before this project. I took a course and learnt how to make shirts, blouses and skirts. Now I'm learning how to make sheets and curtains.

Female entrepreneur, Nicaragua

The lack of specialised technical skills influenced the types of business young entrepreneurs select. In several cases, entrepreneurs mentioned changing initial ideas after realising they did not have the necessary skills.

At the beginning, I thought about starting a mill because here there is only an electric mill, and when there is no electricity in the community it doesn't work. However, later on, I settled on a poultry farm because there are people with experience in this who can help me.

Female entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Technical training is provided throughout the project, but many entrepreneurs wanted even more. When asked about what type of support they need in order to sustain or expand their businesses, most mentioned technical training.

5.2.3. Mentorship

Mentors are perceived by entrepreneurs to play a critical role in the programme. They provide guidance and support to the entrepreneur, and the relationship enables the latter to develop both as an entrepreneur and in personal terms. In Nicaragua, mentors have started working with entrepreneurs. In Tanzania, hub members should provide the necessary mentorship for different aspects of the value chain once the entrepreneurs start their businesses.

They brought people to talk to us, mentors, so we could learn from their experience. It helped us have more confidence and helped us learn from other people's experience.

Female entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Mentors motivated us to share experiences. It was good to see other young people like us who also have businesses and are successful and to speak to them about their experiences.

Male entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Mentors have access to technical and business information and networks that are relevant and useful

to entrepreneurs. Their practical experience is seen as a crucial complement to the training provided by the programme. As mentioned by one of the mentors:

The social goal of my business is to teach other small bakeries how to do business. I have assisted a group of girls interested in setting up bakeries with information about providers, how to have a good product, how to use different ingredients and so on. I will also teach them to make some specific products.

Female mentor, Nicaragua

Mentoring relations can play an important role in facilitating feedback loops – helping the entrepreneurs to reflect on their learning and mistakes and to develop strategies that are informed by these.

[Being a mentor] Is a unique experience, especially in the way you relate to youth from the communities. You know the area, you know how to deal with youth, how to start a dialogue with them taking into account their specific problems, you need to understand why they want to start this business, what motivates them in order to attract them. You need to not only tell them that the business is highly profitable but they also need to understand the advantages and disadvantages and the risks the sector has.

Male mentor, Nicaragua

The mentor–entrepreneur relationship is not only useful to young entrepreneurs; mentors also reap rewards. One mentioned:

Often we [mentors] also need some immediate support either in terms of labour and or skills, if we help train the entrepreneurs they can eventually help us when we need it.

Female mentor, Nicaragua

The mentor's expertise, experience, knowledge of the entrepreneur's specific context, and availability are fundamental to strengthen the relationship.

As an adult we can help with our experiences to the youth. We can provide recommendations based on our experiences and we know the communities and the local problems.

Male mentor, Nicaragua

Another mentor, interviewed for the study mentioned:

Many of [the entrepreneurs] have a very similar background to mine. They came from a very low-income background, but in my case I had no one to support me or to help me with follow up. I have seven years of experience, I know different methods and the advantages and disadvantages. Youth-to-youth exchange is very helpful.

Male mentor, Nicaragua

By strengthening its mentorship programme, Raleigh International could achieve substantial gains, as there is extensive evidence on the design and structure of effective mentorship programmes.

There is also a very clear need to increase the pool of mentors in order to prevent exhausting existing collaborators. As one volunteer said:

Mentors were hard to find but had a great impact.

Female volunteer, Nicaragua

A male mentor in Nicaragua stated; *We need to involve more mentors; there is high demand for support from different communities and I can't cover everything.*

Clear communication to outline and discuss the aims of the programme with mentors and young entrepreneurs could reduce potential misunderstandings about their respective roles and expectations. The project needs to provide more information about the frequency and structure of meetings and establish clear exit strategies.

As the programme evolves, Raleigh ICSE should also consider engaging young entrepreneurs as peer-to-peer mentors. Adding to this would be the establishment of peer-to-peer support groups to deal with common business challenges. As a young mentor mentioned:

There is nothing more fulfilling than to provide peer-to-peer support: there is trust, you speak the same language, you come from the same communities.

Male mentor, Nicaragua

5.2.4. Access to finance

Young entrepreneurs identified the possibility of obtaining finance as a crucial aspect of the project.

Raleigh International decided to test different approaches to funding young entrepreneurs. In Nicaragua, it currently provides seed capital in the form of in-kind grants while in Tanzania it plans to work with SACCOS to provide loans, guaranteed by Raleigh.

In Nicaragua, most businesses supported with seed capital had started up, but those that did not obtain financial support were finding it difficult to acquire the necessary resources. Most entrepreneurs interviewed for this research thought they could not operate without the seed capital they received.

In Tanzania, entrepreneurs expressed significant concerns about the implications of working with SACCOS. One mentioned:

When you talk about SACCOS in the communities is like you are talking about prison.
Male entrepreneur Tanzania

Another male entrepreneur asked: *Would I go to jail if I don't pay?*

In one community, entrepreneurs refused to go through the pitching process because of concerns about working with SACCOS. Furthermore, due to difficulties in establishing the terms and conditions of loans with local SACCOS, no loans have been disbursed, which has severely limited the ability to start enterprises and create the first cohort of entrepreneurial role models. This has fostered negative images of the programme in some communities; and in some cases, this perceived failure has been viewed as a breach of trust.

Moreover, the SACCOS model seems quite complex with several risks attached. Despite Raleigh International's loan guarantees, there remain several questions: What are the practical implications of a default by young entrepreneurs? Will defaulting affect their credit history and financial future? Depending on the implications, what message is being sent to other young entrepreneurs and community members? And the larger question – are loans the best option for young, first-time entrepreneurs?

In both Nicaragua and Tanzania, clear communication about the terms and conditions to obtain seed capital or loans would help to prevent misunderstanding and confusion. In both countries entrepreneurs and volunteers mentioned that the lack of clear, concise information created difficulties.

5.2.5. Sectoral focus

Raleigh International has tested two approaches to sectoral focus. In Nicaragua, entrepreneurs can pursue any business idea in any sector, provided they develop a business plan and show that the idea is feasible. While the project is developed in rural, often isolated, communities, very few young entrepreneurs chose to engage in agriculture.

In Tanzania, the sectoral focus is the dairy value chain. While training young people to take part in this makes sense in terms of integrating into existing economic opportunities and established support systems, concerns were raised about the project focus. In all communities visited, entrepreneurs expressed the desire to expand the programme to focus on wider opportunities in the community. This sentiment was strongly backed up by in-country volunteers and team leaders.

In my village only two of 11 entrepreneurs wanted to do something in dairy. Most people wanted to do something else. Some people left the programme because of that.

Male volunteer, Tanzania

Young people want different things and if is only about dairy many will not join the training.

Female entrepreneur, Tanzania

Business needs to be about something else because dairy is a very seasonal business. From January to June there is a lot of milk, but after that not so much, so what will you do if you only do milk?

Male entrepreneur, Tanzania

The sectoral focus of the Tanzanian programme raises questions about youth engagement in agriculture. While there are opportunities for building assets and income, the sector does not seem to attract young people. In Tanzania, the average age of a farmer involved in dairy is 52–65 years, fostering the perception that the dairy sector is for 'older people' and not the younger generation. Most young entrepreneurs, as well as parents and village leaders, mentioned youths' need of 'quick returns', i.e. young people want to start businesses or activities that promise to offer a positive financial return in a relatively short time. The dairy sector is viewed as requiring patient investment, requiring longer-term timelines to show returns, which might deter some young entrepreneurs.

My family has a cow, but I thought about starting a M-pesa business because it will help me make money more quickly. I prefer to start with M-pesa, and after two years, when I make some money, then I can buy my own cow.

Female entrepreneur, Tanzania

In this specific case, starting a business with M-pesa is seen as a means to obtain quick financial returns. At the same time, the related ventures demonstrate a rather sophisticated ability to create a diversified business portfolio with different income streams. These particular findings are aligned with the emerging research around the issue of 'mixed livelihoods', which states that most young people are actively pursuing a variety of income streams, focusing on business activities and agriculture (including cultivation of crops, livestock and gardening for household consumption). The pursuit of mixed livelihoods is seen as an explicit strategy for minimising risk and maximizing income (MasterCard Foundation, 2015).

Concentrating businesses in only one sector also raises questions about competition and market saturation. With so many entrepreneurs providing the same services – artificial insemination remains the most popular – it becomes increasingly difficult for any one business to achieve a critical mass of customers and generate profit.

Contrary to initial expectations, young people did not concentrate on milk production and collection, but were more interested in bovine artificial insemination and other more technical aspects. This could be related to the need to reap quick returns as mentioned above, but also could demonstrate the perception that setting up a business in artificial insemination is of higher status than becoming a milk producer, with more advanced technical requirements and mobility among communities.

A sectoral focus also raises doubts about technical training and capacity. Most young people mentioned that neither they nor sometimes their family owns a cow, which gives rise to reservations regarding their ability to make the business viable. Participants said they would feel more comfortable if there was someone they knew who had experience in the business. Some indicated that they selected their businesses because their family members had experience in the sector. These findings are highlighted by experiences in Nicaragua, where the family environment provided crucial support to entrepreneurs.

As observed in Nicaragua, expanding the project's sectoral focus could help communities both to obtain access to products and services that are not locally available and support an income to youth.

Below we look at how the different components of the project work, and the benefits accruing to entrepreneurs, their families, and the wider community.

5.3. Role of parents and perceived programme benefits to parents and wider community

This section focuses on the experiences of parents and community leaders and the perceived benefits of the programme in order to address the third research question: What do parents and community leaders perceive are the benefits of the Raleigh ICSE programme beyond the participants?

The importance of family support was clear in Nicaragua, where enterprises started by the programme are already functioning. In most cases the ventures have become family enterprises, involving various family members. The importance of family support to start and operate a business was often mentioned as one of the most influential factors in the ability of entrepreneurs to make headway.

One (male) volunteer noted: *In almost all cases, the young entrepreneurs who received funding were the ones who had their parents' support. The parents supported them, reminded them of activities, helped them in certain cases. Those who were not selected were often the ones who had problems in the household or whose parents didn't support them because they thought the programme was a waste of time'.*

Another (female) volunteer observed: *If the family doesn't agree with what the entrepreneur is doing, it will be hard for him/her to succeed.*

One parent, a community leader, said: *The family needs to be involved in the business. Many of them [the entrepreneurs] are still studying, and we can help them with the responsibilities of the business. If one client comes to the house and the entrepreneur is not there, the mum or dad can still help and make sure you don't lose the sale.*

On many occasions, parents provide advice and guidance on how to conduct and manage a business:

My daughter sells clothes. And I support her because she is also studying at university. We buy things together in Somoto, and when need we go together to Estelí to get cheaper things. I go with her to help her buy the things for the business. She has her own clientele who make their orders. We set a date and we take orders before travelling. My daughter says it is important to get my help because I know what to buy for the adults. She knows what to buy for young people, but I know what to buy for the older women and men. As mothers we need to support our children in business and also provide them with ideas. The entire community benefits from this project.

Mother of entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Several people interviewed also noted that the programme has in some cases helped to improve and strengthen family relations. One parent said:

Parents had the chance to get to know their children better. I always said my son is very shy and quiet, but to see him pitch his idea in front of so many people, he is like another person and I'm thankful for this opportunity to see this dormant side of him.

Mother of entrepreneur, Nicaragua

One volunteer, himself a father, said:

The programme helps parents trust and see the potential of their children. Many didn't believe they would get the funding.

Parent, male, Nicaragua

In Tanzania, most businesses have yet to start up and it is difficult to see the role of the family beyond the support parents showed during training.

Considering the importance of family support in ensuring the entrepreneurs' progress and growth, Raleigh International should consider engaging more meaningfully with the entrepreneurs' families. Visiting families to provide information about the project and clarifying questions or doubts or conducting town hall meetings where parents can learn about the ICSE are relatively simple initiatives that could enhance the project's image and increase community engagement. This is particularly important in communities where ICSE is being introduced as there is often significant scepticism regarding the outcomes of the project.

Sometimes parents don't understand the project and see this as a waste of time and don't see the benefits, discouraging youth to continue, and this can affect the dropout rates.

Male entrepreneur, Tanzania

Very specific gains at the community level were noted, particularly in Nicaragua, where enterprises are already in operation. Enterprises are providing 'access' to products or services that would otherwise not be available to the community. The word 'access' resonated among communities and entrepreneurs.

In my community one of the entrepreneurs wanted to start a bakery; in this community they only consumed tortillas, bread was not available and not a possibility within the community. This entrepreneur is now selling bread in the local community, providing something that people didn't have access to before.

Male volunteer, Nicaragua

As one young (male) entrepreneur put it: *The community didn't have access to some basic products and this was an opportunity to provide them. Here we couldn't find some products locally, and we now provide them.*

Access to products and services has enabled community members to make considerable savings in terms of time and money:

Before the programme we needed to go to San Lucas or Somoto to buy maize. Today we have access to that in the community. We save in time and costs. Going to Somoto costs 30 pesos plus the day's work, which is about 100 pesos, making maize really expensive. Now we can obtain maize, here in our community, at a fair and reasonable price. This has been a big achievement for our community.

Male community leader, Nicaragua

Another community member said:

Many of us can't buy large quantities of grain. Often we can only afford 3lbs, or even just 1lb. You can't go to town to get only 1lb, now here you can get it. We also feel we are preventing making the rich richer. If you don't have options, you end up buying at the same place and only

one person or big company makes all the profit. Now these profits are going towards our own young people and the resources are staying within the community.

Female community leader, Nicaragua

In another community a respondent mentioned the case of a young entrepreneur working as a barber:

He charges 20 pesos for the haircut. If I go to town, it's 40 pesos, plus the cost of transport and the time I'm losing. This is not only helping the young entrepreneurs make some money but also helping the customer. The customer is now spending less money and time.

Male community leader, Nicaragua

Some volunteers and community members also believe in the larger economic benefits the enterprises can create: Small businesses will create a greater flow of money in the communities and in the entrepreneurs' families.

Small businesses are starting to provide steady income to the entrepreneurs, often enabling them to continue their studies or help the family to meet other needs.

My daughter wants to become [economically] independent. She will help herself, but will also help us since we won't need to support her any more to pay the university or buy her stuff and we will be able to use the money for our other children.

Mother of entrepreneur, Nicaragua

A few serial entrepreneurs – those who repeatedly start new ventures – have been identified, and in certain cases some small businesses are starting to employ people outside the immediate family circle.

My son works with the entrepreneur from the bakery. Once he leaves school, he helps distribute bread. He is already learning how to negotiate and has created his own clientele. He is conscious about money and the importance of earning money.

Male community leader, Nicaragua

This business also generates employment, we employ a woman who help us slaughter and clean the chicken.

Female entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Furthermore, young participants are starting to share the knowledge and skills they gained with their family and other community members, thus spreading the benefits of the programme.

I'm studying business administration and accounting but until now I had never made a business plan. When we started doing it, I didn't know how to- the steps, and the importance of it, how to establish a marketing plan, why it was important to have a logo and business cards. Thanks to the programme I have learnt about all this: why my logo is important, how to use my cards, why I need to have a phone number where people can reach me. The programme taught me things I didn't know about.

I now have my business and I am also able to help my dad. He didn't know about marketing, and I made him business cards and created a Facebook page for him. The things I learnt, I'm teaching my dad, and he can see the impact because he is seeing more clients and the business is better known in the locality.

Male entrepreneur, Nicaragua

Young entrepreneurs also reported that the project helped to motivate them, break their sense of isolation, and develop a deeper sense of responsibility and community development.

Before the programme I was very sad, but now thanks to Raleigh and the programme, I'm very motivated. Before we didn't participate in activities, people didn't listen to us, they said we were too young and we were not able to participate. Now I feel I can belong to something, I don't feel isolated any more.

Female entrepreneur, Tanzania

We come from isolated communities and do not often have the opportunity to participate in events; the programme helped us to overcome shyness and to learn.

Male entrepreneur, Tanzania

Another community leader said: *The programme helped youth get organised, get training and become more united. It is very important to be organised at the community level in order to promote community development.*

5.4. Perceptions of employability by programme alumni

This section focuses on the experiences of in-country volunteers and team leaders in order to address the fifth research question: How do in-country alumni perceive their employability based on their experience and skills developed through their engagement with Raleigh ICSE? What is their perceived value of business, technical and life skills?

In both countries, Raleigh ICSE alumni evaluated the programme positively. ICSE is seen as a positive experience both in professional terms and at the personal level. As stated by one volunteer:

The programme is structured in a way that provides a personal and professional development experience for both the entrepreneurs and the volunteer. It is a very complete programme. It provides you with the opportunity to develop as a person.
Female in-country volunteer, Nicaragua

These results also came through from KAP 2 survey where 93% of the in-country volunteers thought that the programme had been very useful for their personal development, and 83% it had been very useful for their professional development.

During their time volunteering, young people had the opportunity to be exposed to new and enriching experiences, become more self-confident, and expand their social networks. One volunteer mentioned:

This is not a simple internship for school, but an experience that can strengthen personal aspects where you can develop specific skills.
Female volunteer, Nicaragua

5.4.1. Perceived value of the programme to employability

Several volunteers said that one of their main motives for joining the programme was to gain skills that would help them obtain employment or better jobs.

One of the main reasons why I joined the programme was to gain work experience that could help me in my professional career.
Female volunteer, Tanzania

Both the literature review and the field research suggest that the volunteering experience is viewed as providing better understanding of the knowledge, abilities, and attitudes required to succeed in a work environment. Volunteering often provides young workers the chance to assume greater responsibility than they might do in a typical work environment. Most volunteers reported that the experience facilitated the development of specific skills that would help them to gain employment.

English language skills are required in interviews and we were able to improve our language skills in the programme. Employers also like confidence and leadership skills, which you also get in the programme as well as work experience. All this will help us getting a job.

Male volunteer, Tanzania

After their volunteering experience, young people described feeling better prepared for employment, and that it had helped to enhance their professional profile:

Employers are looking for experience and the programme provides a lot of practical experience.

Female volunteer, Tanzania

For many young people volunteering was seen as an opportunity to gain initial work experience. For many, it was the first time working in teams in a supervisory structure in order to take responsibility for achieving specific project goals. The experience gave them this new exposure.

Most volunteers in both countries cite the experience as a valuable addition to their résumés, now including not only their specific achievements, but also the training they received and the skills they gained. Several mentioned that they can now use concrete, relevant, real-life examples in job interviews, considerably improving their chances of obtaining employment.

During job interviews a common question you get is have you ever had a time when you had to work in a cross-cultural environment? Or do you have any leadership skills? Or problem solving skills? All of these are skills Raleigh offers and which now we can use in our interviews.

Male volunteer, Tanzania

In one of the most unexpected findings, several Raleigh ICSE alumni reported that, in the light of their experience, they now see entrepreneurship as a viable career option. Some have already taken the necessary steps to put their business ideas into practice.

Of those interested in pursuing entrepreneurship, some mentioned that before the programme they had only a vague idea of the skills needed. The experience helped them to gain the business knowledge and skills they think are relevant to starting a business. Part of the training content, such as the business model canvas and the principles of marketing and accounting, were particularly helpful.

You learn to teach concepts that you have seen in university for many years, but you need to teach it to people with very low levels of education, and the fact that they can understand it and be able to make a business plan also helped me understand I could do it as well.

Male volunteer, Nicaragua

I had an idea to start a business before the programme, but I was so scared, after learning about entrepreneurship skills in the programme it helped me feel more confident about starting a business.

Male volunteer, Tanzania

Others said they had never considered becoming entrepreneurs before, but the experience made them realise that if young people just like them in remote villages could start a business, so could they.

To know that if entrepreneurs without resources and education could do it, if they could develop a business, I also could do it.

Female volunteer, Nicaragua

5.4.2. Perceived value of gains in business, technical and life skills

5.4.2.1. Life skills

The greatest gains were seen in the acquisition and strengthening of life skills. Self-confidence and self-esteem, decision-making, leadership, communication and public presentation, and the ability to work in a team were some of the most cited skills. The ability to work under pressure, to manage conflicting priorities, to

resolve conflicts, and to achieve high standards with limited resources was also recognised.

Often people told me I had leadership skills but I never saw that. The opportunity to lead a group of volunteers, Nicaraguans and those from the UK, to teach youth, to make decisions, to reflect about what people will think about those decisions helped me increase my self-esteem.

Male team leader, Nicaragua

The statements made during the FGDs are aligned to some extent with the results from the KAP surveys in which volunteers self-assessed their skills before and after placement, which made it possible to map changes against the baseline. Most volunteers assessed their overall skills after placement at a similar level as before, but with some skills a substantial number of volunteers felt that their skills have improved during the volunteering experience.



Raleigh International ICSE programme, Tanzania 2015.
Photo by Raleigh International/ Saraya Cortaville

The largest increases (the proportion of participants whose perception of their skills changed from reported baseline) were in:

- Coping in a new and difficult situations (48%)
- Feeling confident making decisions and taking charge of a tasks (38%, 4% significant increase)
- Motivating and supporting other people (38%, 4% significant increase)
- Listening carefully to others (28%, 10% significant increase)
- Being able to analyse a new situation and decide on the best way forward (35%, 4% significant increase)

Interestingly, there are cases where post-placement participants estimated their skills or capabilities as falling below the baseline. The decline ranged from 4% to 17%. The largest drop was coping in new and difficult situations (interestingly, also the skill with highest percentage increase), thinking about one's own behaviour and how it affects others, and expressing opinions and feelings. One likely explanation is that participants overestimated their skills before the placement, and after working in a challenging new situation with a multi-cultural team, they have a more realistic perception of their skills.

A small number of respondents also said that their volunteering experience helped them to improve other aspects of their lives, mostly tackling negative behaviour.

I was able to apply the knowledge I have acquired through my studies, but also I learnt more about myself. This helped me change things that were not very good. I stopped being so selfish and started thinking more about the others. I had a lot of personal growth.

Male volunteer, Nicaragua

I used to be very impulsive, because I have a lot of energy. ICSE helped me realise it was good to have a lot of energy but that could upset people. I learnt to manage my energy.

Male volunteer, Nicaragua

5.1.1.1. Business skills

A significant number of volunteers underlined that the ICSE experience had helped them develop their business skills. Commonly cited skills were developing a business model, branding and marketing, financing and accounting, and report writing.

We learnt business skills, how to manage a business, how to keep records, and how to make a marketing plan.

Female volunteer, Tanzania

Through their experience, volunteers were able to put the theoretical knowledge gained during their studies into practice, and thus identify gaps. Some volunteers also mentioned the experience helped them to reassess the value of their studies and to consider continuing their education.

Before the programme I didn't like my career. I felt I was studying due to an obligation. But seeing and experiencing the good things that could be done with the knowledge I had helped me understand my career choice is good, and changed my expectations about what I want to do with my life at the professional level and the academic level. Before, I didn't think about pursuing further studies like a master's or specialisation, but now I do.

Male team leader, Nicaragua

5.2. Areas for future enquiry

This section focuses on the fifth research question: What may be fruitful areas of future enquiry to better understand the Raleigh ICSE programme? It discusses some key themes that were raised in the interviews, that weren't the explicit focus of the review but that represent interesting avenues for future enquiry.

5.2.1. Enterprises remain vulnerable to external factors: can we help them?

As mentioned in the literature review, enterprises remain vulnerable to external factors. While issues about corruption and bribery were not raised during the course of the study, concerns about climate change and its implications were raised at the community and enterprise level.

As one female entrepreneur in Nicaragua said: *You need to understand the economic situation of the community. If it doesn't rain, there is no harvest; if there is no harvest, there is no money to buy anything.*

In the future, Raleigh International could further explore what are the best strategies to support young entrepreneurs when they are faced with adverse situations and how to help businesses to develop strategies to build resilience to cope with economic hardships.

5.2.2. Individual versus group business

Another point to consider is the discussion of individual versus group businesses. In some communities, there was a push to promote group businesses, while in others individuals were allowed to present individual ideas.

There are several issues to take into account in promoting any particular business model, such as technical expertise and capacity, resources, and personal relations. Starting a business is difficult, and deciding to do so with other people can either help in dividing responsibilities and pressure or increase complications.

There was no consensus among entrepreneurs or volunteers on the best approach. One entrepreneur mentioned: *Many businesses fail because they are group businesses and they jeopardise the entire work that has been done.* But another said: *Group business involves the community. Yes, conflict is created, but you can work on how to solve the conflict.*

It would be revealing for Raleigh International to select a few businesses that have adopted different approaches and to track them over a period of months as a means to understand what works, what does not, and why. It would also be interesting to better understand the relationship between various factors (e.g. mentorship, family support) and individual or group businesses and what these might mean in terms of starting up and sustaining a venture. This could help shape the project strategy in terms of business models.

Figure 2. Volunteers' perceptions of soft skills before and after placement



6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

The Raleigh ICSE programme provides a two models for addressing rural youth unemployment. The programme adopted distinct approaches to take into account local circumstances in Nicaragua and Tanzania. For this reason, the recommendations are nuanced, but it is possible to draw general conclusions from the results of the survey and field interviews.

Overall, most participants found the programme useful – particularly those directly involved such as volunteers and entrepreneurs. Youth entrepreneurs were exposed to new ideas and different learning methodologies. In Nicaragua, those who had started businesses had the basic skills needed to run and operate their business and were better equipped to face the challenges of being an entrepreneur. Local communities, particularly in Nicaragua, were mostly enthusiastic about the new micro-enterprises and the fact that they provided new goods and services.

The 'international meets local' aspect of combining British volunteers with in-country partners added a degree of alternative thinking to the programme. Both groups exchanged information and ideas, resulting in adaptable strategies and lessons for young entrepreneurs. By increasing the programme's diversity, Raleigh ICSE casts a wider net in terms of training in hard and soft skills, and brainstorming new ideas.

The overall conclusions of the study help to inform the recommendations. Many of the conclusions echo emerging global research on youth entrepreneurship. While there is a need for more research and evaluation in specific areas in order to build the evidence of 'what works, where and why', the following conclusions should be taken into account when designing programmes aimed at rural youth entrepreneurs.



*Raleigh International ICSE programme, Nicaragua 2015.
Photo by Rachel Sture/Raleigh International*

Family and community support are critical to the viability of young entrepreneurs. Communities that see entrepreneurship as beneficial and worthwhile are more likely to be supportive and so draw a larger proportion of youth into entrepreneurship; the same goes for the entrepreneur's family, who may act as mentors, employees, advisers, and financial supporters. To date, however, most youth entrepreneurship programmes have focused on the entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurship ecosystem, without taking into account the role and importance of the family. The ICSE experience suggests that for rural youth entrepreneurship programmes to start and operate, it is crucial to seek the engagement and support of families and the wider community.

Business, technical, and life skills matter, and developing them could help young entrepreneurs throughout their careers. While many young people often turn to entrepreneurship due to the lack of job opportunities, the experience helps in developing skills that will bring increasing returns throughout their careers. This includes life skills that can be combined with entrepreneurship and technical training.

Many volunteers and entrepreneurs noted the importance of life skills, such as confidence and leadership, developed throughout the programme, and staying with the young person into adulthood. Employers look for employees who can work in a team, demonstrate effective leadership, and speak confidently – all aspects developed by the programme. In addition, youth benefit from technical skills training – they learn either specific technical skills such as tailoring, baking or bovine artificial insemination, and business skills such as how to develop a business and marketing plan, accounting and recording, all transferable skills.

By adding skills training, these skills can be used beyond the end of the project, and makes the programme more attractive to youth, their families, and their communities, as they see a tangible benefit even if they do set up a business. Given that most education systems are unable to deliver the skills required for the workplace or to become an entrepreneur, skills development should be seen as an integral part of any youth entrepreneurship programme, particularly in rural areas.

Access to finance is key, but young entrepreneurs face obstacles to obtaining it. For young entrepreneurs, obtaining access to capital is essential in order to establish and expand their business. There is a range of financial instruments, reflecting the nuances and complexities of each context, and the same principles should apply to the instruments available for youth entrepreneurs.

Access to capital varies from one country to another, and these variations should be taken into account in programme design. Furthermore, youth businesses will have different needs for capital depending on the sector and stage of development. Some may need just slight amounts of finance – for example, a home-based dressmaking business – while others may be entering a sector that requires significant investment, perhaps building veterinary clinics or agribusiness processing. Obviously the requirements will differ greatly, as should the repayment methods. A business cooperative will not approach investment in the same way as small self-employed enterprise, for instance. The availability and cultural acceptability of financial instruments are also important factors. Stakeholders need to make a thorough examination of and comparison between different financial models depending on the context.

Questions about what types of financing are best suited for each context, keeping in mind the type of business and its stage of development, remain unanswered.

Mentorship is vital. Effective mentors help youth to examine their business plans and ideas, obtain critical business information, and consider investments as necessary. They connect them to larger networks, act as sounding boards and role models, and demonstrate models of success. The literature indicates that in order to be effective, mentors and youth entrepreneurs must have a healthy relationship based on defined goals and obligations in order to realise the full potential.

Different contexts may require different approaches. While rural poverty has some universal characteristics, the problems youth entrepreneurs face require locally grounded solutions. Youth, who are more vulnerable to external shocks (climate change, economic crisis, political and social changes, etc.), may have different needs and aspirations, depending on their local environment. Adaptability and adjustability can be the lifeline of a programme, as situations arise and evolve.

In order to improve the programme before extending it beyond the two pilots, we offer the following recommendations, many of which were raised in the course of field research.

6.2. Recommendations

Strengthen the mentorship programme and increase access to mentors

Mentorship is important in helping young entrepreneurs to succeed, whether through passing down knowledge and expertise, acting as a sounding board for ideas, or connecting to larger support networks. In Tanzania, mentorship has yet to begin, and in Nicaragua, there are still gaps in communication and outreach that may hamper development.

Raleigh International should invest efforts and resources in ensuring clear communication and training for mentors and youth entrepreneurs, establishing goals, strategies, terms, and expectations. This will foster more solid relationships between mentors and youth entrepreneurs and so is likely to achieve better results. In this vein, Raleigh International should also consider establishing peer-to-peer mentoring, as youth may be better able to communicate ideas, problems, and creative solutions with peers than with older people.

This was not a part of the programme, but could be easily integrated in the future.

Raleigh International could also help to develop knowledge, enhancing the evidence-based understanding of 'what works' in business mentoring for young entrepreneurs, and how different mentoring models and initiatives interact to meet the needs of youth and shape entrepreneurship opportunities.

Design financial products targeted to youth and the types of business they are creating

Youth entrepreneurs may have a wealth of ideas, but are rarely wealthy and need access to finance. Different approaches were employed in the two countries, but many young people reported the same need for more detailed and clearer information regarding the terms and conditions of loans and seed capital. Finance is a key technical skill for any entrepreneur – training in general financing, explanations of different mechanisms, and breakdowns of different sources of financing would all be informative and potentially empowering.

Raleigh International should explore what types of financing are best suited to each context, keeping in mind the type of business entrepreneurs are creating and their stage of development. It should incorporate larger lessons about how young people can obtain access to finance into its programme, and clearly communicate and explain the technical details involved in any financing undertaken in the programme.

Ensure the programme design reflects changing context at all times

An understanding of the local context is what separates good programmes and ventures from failures. This understanding takes into account local practices, hardships, stigmas, and resilience. For example, in Tanzania local youths were more interested in starting ventures that turned a quick profit rather than long-term investment – better understanding of the local context would have helped team leaders and volunteers prepare specific lessons and ideas that focused on more rapid-turnaround businesses. In addition, with knowledge of the relevant context, a programme can identify potential hardships that are beyond an entrepreneur's direct control. Context will also help to ascertain whether a business or sector is suitable, or if it would be better to adopt a different approach.

Context is key at every level, and the more effort put into understanding it will enhance future programmes.

Build mechanisms to engage families

High levels of adaptability and the ability to develop coping strategies can support an entrepreneur in the face of economic hardship or other adverse events. An entrepreneur's family is often their most important support network, and crucial to the viability of the venture. Families can assist with a business by contributing labour, advice and experience. By better enabling families to do so, Raleigh International also enables ventures to be more resilient. Establishing communication with families through outreach and education would be enormously beneficial to young entrepreneurs, and family support should be seen as the backbone of many youth enterprises.

Actively promote local entrepreneurial role models

Youth, families, and communities at large are more inclined to believe in a project's strength if they have a clear entrepreneurial role model. Raleigh International can use aspects of the current programme to promote local role models through peer-to-peer mentoring, role-model mentoring, lessons, and other means. It is important for youth to see first-hand that others have experienced and overcome the same challenges.

Creating entrepreneurial role models will require learning how to deal with business failure. 80% of small and medium-sized enterprises fail within five years, therefore it is important to support young entrepreneurs to learn from their experience and to use the learning in new ventures. This will help shape the narrative about what entrepreneurship is, in and help create powerful role models.

Design and implement follow-up services

Raleigh International should consider providing follow-up services to offer continued support to newly established micro-enterprises as a means to support the long-term sustainability of businesses. Such services could range from increasing mentoring and financial assistance to technical training and specific advisory services depending on the needs of young entrepreneurs. Follow-up services also ensure continuity and foster trust in the community, and may help with all previous recommendations. Volunteers and partners should be included in follow-up services, creating larger support networks and providing a forum for expertise and experience to be passed to the next generation.

Follow-up services could also contribute to understanding the survival rate of businesses and related factors and help to manage business failure.

Continue to enhance the evidence

Stakeholders interested in youth entrepreneurship need to capture results, both to improve the programme and to contribute to the relevant literature. As youth entrepreneurship evolves there is a need for more evidence on what works best. Raleigh International is making considerable efforts to capture results through tracking surveys and other tools, but there are still information gaps. Follow-up long after the conclusion of each programme should be conducted as a means to gather evidence on the sustainability of businesses and effectiveness of the programme. How many businesses are still in operation? Which have scaled up production? Which have failed, and why? The answers to these questions will inform future programmes, and reinforce the organisation's commitment to the community.

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Annex 1. Socio-demographic questionnaire

Please answer the following questions. Complete the blanks or tick in the spaces next to the category that best describes your situation.

1. Today's Date: __ __/__ __/__ __ __ mm dd yyyy
2. How old are you? __
3. Gender: Male__ Female__
4. What is your present marital status?
Never married ☐
Married ☐
Consensual union ☐
Divorced/Separated ☐
Widowed ☐
5. What is the highest grade you completed in school?
6. Are you currently working?
Yes ☐
No ☐
7. If yes, how long have you been working?
6 months ☐
6 months – 1 year ☐
Over 1 year ☐
8. Is your work... (check all that apply)
Self-employment Yes ☐ No ☐
Working for a business or for somebody else Yes ☐ No ☐
Seasonal or irregular (agriculture, helping out a friend or a relative) Yes ☐ No ☐
9. If you are not currently working, how long have you been unemployed?
Less than 6 months ☐
6 months ☐
6 months – 1 year ☐
Over 1 year ☐
10. If you are not currently working, would you like to work (are you actively looking for work)?
Yes ☐
No ☐

Annex 2. Focus group discussion guide

Background

Hello and welcome [Introduce self and co-moderator]

Thank you for taking the time to join our discussion about the ICSE programme. Everyone here today was invited because of your knowledge and experience about the programme. Our goal is to how the programme works and its benefits to volunteers/entrepreneurs/community. There are no right or wrong answers, because everyone experiences things differently. We are interested in the full range of experiences, so please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said.

Discussion group rules

Before we begin, let me suggest some guidelines or rules that will make our discussion more productive.

- Please speak up – but only one person should talk at a time. We're recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. If you have trouble hearing any of the comments, please let the group know.
- In the discussion, we'll be on a first-name basis. In our reports of the results no names will be attached to any comments. Your name will be kept confidential. We are using name badges just to help us remember each other's names during our conversation.
- My role here is to ask questions and to listen. I won't be actively participating in the conversation, only guiding it. I want you to feel free to talk to the group and not just to me. I'll move the discussion from one question to the next to try to keep us on track so that we can finish by [insert time].
- Sometimes, people in focus groups think of things they want to say after the discussion has moved on to other questions. If you would like to add to your comments after the group, we will be around to talk with you privately.
- Please do not share what has been discussed today with people outside of the group. We want everyone to feel free to speak openly during our discussion together.
- Any questions before we begin?

Questions for discussion

Employment opportunities and constraints

1. How did you learn about the programme and why you decided to join?
2. What is the job/employment situation like here for young people? How do they earn money? Find a job? What influences their decisions about what job to take?
3. How do you think the programme can helped you improve your livelihood?
4. What are some of the things that you have learnt? Could you name specific skills you learnt?
5. When young people hear the word "entrepreneurship", what do they think of? How does it make them feel? Why?
6. What opportunities does entrepreneurship offer to young people in this region?
7. What are the barriers that prevent the youth of your community from becoming entrepreneurs? What could help address these barriers?
8. How do you think we can improve the programme or make it more attractive to young people?
9. Is there anything else that you would like to say pertaining to the discussion that we have just had?

Annex 3. Survey response information

ICSE programme in-country volunteer responses to KAP 1 and 2 surveys

Cohort	Number and country of people who filled in KAP 1 survey (baseline)	Number and country of people who KAP 2 survey (after the placement)	Response rate
Q10 July – September 2014	13 in Nicaragua: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 in-country volunteers 2 in-country leaders 	5 in Nicaragua: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 in-country volunteers 	38%
Q11 October – December 2014	11 in Nicaragua: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 in-country volunteers, 1 in-country team leader 	9 in Nicaragua: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 in-country volunteers 	90%
Q12 February – April 2015	14 in Nicaragua: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 in-country volunteers 3 team leaders 11 in Tanzania: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 in-country volunteers 2 team leaders 	7 in Nicaragua: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 in-country volunteers 1 team leader 8 in Tanzanians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 in-country volunteers 	60%
Total	49	29	59%

Questions analysed from KAP 1 and 2 Survey

Questions and statements used	Scale used	Included in KAP 1 and 2 surveys
<p>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</p> <p>1. I am a confident person who is (on the whole) comfortable with myself.</p> <p>2. I find it easy to cope when I am in new or difficult situations.</p> <p>3. I think about my own behaviour and how it affects other people.</p> <p>4. I am organised and manage my time well.</p> <p>5. I listen carefully to others so that I understand what they really mean.</p> <p>6. I find it easy to express my opinions and talk about how I am feeling.</p> <p>7. I feel confident making decisions and taking charge of a task.</p> <p>8. I feel confident when leading a group of people for a specific task.</p> <p>9. I am able to motivate and support other people.</p> <p>10. I am motivated to set goals in my own life and work towards achieving them.</p> <p>11. I am able to make valuable contributions when working in a group.</p> <p>12. I understand the importance of negotiation and compromise when working in a team.</p> <p>13. I am able to analyse a new situation and decide on the best way forward.</p> <p>14. I am good at thinking of creative solutions to problems.</p>	<p>5-level Likert scale:</p> <p>Strongly Agree (1)</p> <p>Agree (2)</p> <p>Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)</p> <p>Disagree (4)</p> <p>Strongly Disagree (5)</p>	<p>Yes,</p> <p>Q12 in KAP 1</p> <p>Q23 in KAP 2</p>
<p>Overall, how useful do you think the ICS volunteer programme has been for you in terms of:</p> <p>1. Personal development.</p> <p>2. Professional development.</p>	<p>3-level scale</p> <p>Very Useful (1)</p> <p>Useful (2)</p> <p>Not Useful (3)</p>	<p>Q25 in KAP 2</p>

Annex 4 Raleigh Theory of Change

Raleigh International Citizen Service Entrepreneur programme: Theory of Change

RATIONALE				
<p>Youth unemployment is a global concern. In the UK, over one million young people are unemployed. Globally, approximately 73 million young people were estimated to be unemployed in 2013, and the ILO estimated that youth are three times more likely than adults to be unemployed. Because of population growth, young people are a significant proportion of populations, yet most countries cannot and will not be able to offer employment opportunities to these young people. Entrepreneurship and skill development needs to be promoted as an additional way of allowing youth into the labour market and promoting job creation. Jobs need to be created which use sustainable solutions to address community needs in order to build a sustainable future to strengthen social, economic and environmental resilience of communities.</p>				
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	LONGER TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACTS
<p>Teams comprising 4 UK and 4 in-country volunteers, and 1 UK and 1 in-country team leader (200 overall) selected on the basis of aptitude, skill, and/or experience in addition to ICS selection criteria</p> <p>Resources and expertise needed for implementation of activities</p> <p>Context specific training to volunteers to support local entrepreneurship and enterprise development;</p> <p>Project Management through Raleigh International and Project Partners</p>	<p><u>Needs Assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market research to discover the needs, opportunities, and feasibility of enterprises to support entrepreneurs <p><u>Awareness Raising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values and benefits of entrepreneurship /enterprises - Importance of youth engagement in enterprise - Opportunities available <p><u>Training and coaching to entrepreneurs/ enterprises:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business planning & business models - Sustainable finance access - Business leadership & life skills - Importance of income diversification - Value of enterprises addressing social needs - Sales & marketing strategies - Community youth leadership - Enterprise development & testing <p><u>Development of business plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of marketing and promotional material - Enterprise fairs <p><u>Identification and training of supporting mentors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Network building and support - Guidance and continuous mentorship <p><u>Enterprise Financing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to enterprises to understand finance options available and how to access them 	<p><u>Community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased skills amongst youth entrepreneurs - Increased number of viable enterprise opportunities identified and business plans developed by young entrepreneurs - Support structures for youth enterprises in targeted communities established - Young entrepreneurs are more motivated to drive the enterprise forward <p><u>Partner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthened delivery capacity for all project partners - Strengthened organizational and management capacity <p><u>Volunteer</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skills, knowledge and attitudes increased leading to active engagement of volunteers in supporting communities and/or own enterprise development/employability 	<p><u>Community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased number of successful youth-led enterprises established - Increased youth employment opportunities - Enterprise successfully impacts positively on entrepreneurs and their community (income generation, sustainable social businesses) <p><u>Partner</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen overall organisational capacity to deliver their Mission and Vision - Run or support social enterprises - Increased employability <p><u>Volunteer</u></p>	<p>Poverty alleviation in targeted rural communities</p> <p>Social, economic and environmental resilience increased</p> <p>Increased active citizenship</p>
<p>ASSUMPTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and a sufficient number of youth are interested in entrepreneurship and enterprise development • Political context remains peaceful such that the local environment remains safe for ICSE teams • Group dynamics within ICSE teams (particularly UKV - ICV interaction) are cohesive and positive • Continued availability and support from project partners • Sufficient number of ICVs and UKVs can be recruited 				



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