

Report

Young women in the agricultural sector in Uganda

Lessons from the Youth Forward Initiative

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A woman prepares garden soil for planting vegetables in rural Uganda, 2014.
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Acronyms/Glossary

ACDP	Agriculture Cluster Development Project
ASSP	Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan
BMAU	Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DRT	Development Research and Training
DYNAMIC	Driving Youth-led New Agribusiness and Microenterprise
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCS	family case study
FOWODE	Forum for Women and Democracy
IDI	in-depth interview
IGT	intergenerational trio
ILO	International Labour Organization
IYET	Initiative for Youth Empowerment and Transformation
KII	key informant interview
M4P	making markets work for the poor
M4Y	making markets work for young people
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MFI	microfinance institution
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
NAEP	National Agricultural Extension Policy
NAES	National Agricultural Extension Strategy
NCBA/CLUSA	National Cooperative Business Association/Cooperative League of the USA
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OWC	Operation Wealth Creation
PSA	private sector actor
PPP	purchasing power parity
SACCO	savings and credit cooperative societies

SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
SRH	sexual and reproductive health
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCA	Uganda Census of Agriculture
UCDW	unpaid care and domestic work
UGX	Ugandan shilling
UWEP	Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
YETA	Youth Empowerment Through Agriculture
YLP	Youth Livelihood Programme

Executive summary

Overview

Women and adolescent girls comprise, on average, 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries (FAO, 2011). In agricultural households in Uganda, more female adults (88%) than male adults (78%) are primarily engaged in agriculture (UBOS, 2020). Women working in agriculture face more challenges than their male counterparts, in part due to discriminatory gender norms that limit their access to productive resources (such as land, labour, equipment and economic resources), their greater involvement in unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) and their exclusion from leadership and decision-making positions at all levels (FAO, 2020a). Women are often engaged in work that is insecure, poorly paid or not covered by formal social protection, forcing some into child marriage as an exit from economic insecurity and poverty (ibid.). If women accessed the same productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20%–30% (FAO, 2011). By closing this ‘gender gap’, governments and decision-makers can produce significant gains for society, improving agricultural productivity, reducing poverty and hunger, and promoting economic growth (ibid.).

This report, written as part of ODI’s work as Learning Partner to the Mastercard Foundation’s Youth Forward Initiative, looks at youths (aged 18–29) in the agricultural sector in Uganda, focusing particularly on the challenges young women face by virtue of their youth and gender, and the opportunities for them, especially in the agribusiness sector. In Uganda, the Youth Forward Initiative reached over 174,000 young people in 14 districts in the Northern and Western regions through two programmes: Driving Youth-led

New Agribusiness and Microenterprise (DYNAMIC) and Youth Empowerment Through Agriculture (YETA). Both programmes used distinct approaches, and this had an important effect on the experiences of the young women and men enrolled. YETA was spearheaded by the international arm of the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA), namely the Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA), which leveraged collective action through youth associations and cooperatives. DYNAMIC, on the other hand, led by the humanitarian organisation GOAL Uganda, adapted the ‘making markets work for the poor’ (M4P) approach (also known as market systems development) to economic and social youth inclusion.

Conceptual framework

To analyse the effects of the Youth Forward Initiative on the lives of young women compared to young men, we draw on an integrated socioecological model exploring a range of factors at individual, household, community, state and global levels, unpacking the ways in which they interact and contribute (or not) to young women’s livelihoods and well-being. We also draw on the well-being framework (White, 2009), which identifies seven domains or pathways to well-being: (1) Access to economic resources; (2) Building social connections; (3) Sustaining close relationships; (4) Exercising participation/agency; (5) Experiencing self-worth; (6) Enjoying spiritual well-being; and (7) Enhancing physical and mental wellness and security. Our study uses these domains as a starting point to understand youths’ perceptions of well-being as a result of the Youth Forward initiatives.

Study methodology

This study is not a quantitative impact evaluation and is not statistically representative of the Youth Forward population. While some interesting findings did emerge and are presented here, the relatively small number of interviews (40) with young women and men in the four field sites allows for only cautious inferences to be drawn from these findings. Primary qualitative data collection was carried out between September and October 2020 in Masindi and Dokolo districts (YETA) and Gulu and Kaabong districts (DYNAMIC). A total of 85 qualitative interactions were conducted across the four sites, including young women and men, their parents and close relatives, as well as local government representatives.

Their perceptions around these following research questions were analysed:

1. How do young women experience the agricultural sector compared to young men and why?
2. How and why are young women growing their business and what challenges do they encounter compared to young men?
3. What factors at the macro (policies and programmes), meso (community) and micro (individual and household) levels are affecting young women's participation in agricultural projects compared to that of men?

Findings are situated within the wider literature from Uganda and, given that this is a qualitative study, the main aim was to capture the realities of a particular group of people in specific locations rather than to generalise. Descriptive quantitative data from YETA and DYNAMIC is incorporated when data is available. This data was collected while YETA and DYNAMIC were still being implemented. For YETA, data includes

baseline and postline (collected one year after participants graduated, i.e. two years after baseline). We mainly focus on data from cohort 1 (for YETA those enrolled between 2016 and 2017, and for DYNAMIC those enrolled in 2017), as all our participants belonged to that cohort. For DYNAMIC, data includes baseline data only as postline was not conducted.

Descriptive quantitative data from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) is used throughout the report, especially results from the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), the 2018 Annual Agriculture Survey and the National Household Survey 2016/2017. Despite of certain limitations, the team reached data saturation using a variety of tools and triangulated the qualitative data with quantitative data from YETA/DYNAMIC and government sources. As such, our qualitative data does serve to interpret the quantitative findings of the sources that we use, and we also feel able to make recommendations based on wider findings from the study.

Findings

This report finds that a range of influencing factors across multiple scales determine the extent of young women's participation in agricultural projects within the Youth Forward Initiative. Macro-, meso- and micro-level dynamics are found to significantly impact rural livelihoods and in turn shape women's agribusiness trajectories with evidence of gender-differentiated outcomes.

Macro level

Macro-level factors influencing the effects of the Youth Forward Initiative include policy- and national-level programmes, as well as underlying contextual factors. These were

examined from a youth and gender perspective, for example exploring the extent to which the Ugandan constitutional requirement of gender mainstreaming across policy enhanced rural livelihoods for women. Despite the key role of gendered social norms in shaping women's experience in agriculture, from the narratives of our key informants, there was no indication that such government programmes were discussing gender norms directly with young women and men as part of their activities.

Another core finding was that there was limited knowledge among youth participants on policies and/or government programmes specifically for young women in agriculture. Yet, youths did show more awareness of programmes implemented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including faith-based organisations. However, programmes under our review showed limited or non-existent content on harmful gender norms that affect young women in agriculture. In fact, some livelihood programmes were designed around prevailing harmful gender norms related to expected kinds of work for men and women. Key informants considered that existing programmes were tackling gender norms only because they included women, or because women were aware of being potential beneficiaries. Similarly, there was a lack of awareness among participants of what gender norms are and their implications for women's well-being and that of their households. The lack of awareness reflects the reality that, although some programmes (such as YETA) touch on issues regarding harmful gender norms, young women still lack awareness of what these entail, how they manifest themselves, and how they may affect their lives.

Covid-19 emerged as a key external factor that was negatively affecting the livelihoods of youths. Price fluctuations, closure of markets and

government restrictions limiting group or market activities were challenging the positive effects of Youth Forward Initiative. The Youth Forward Initiative also generated feedback effects at the macro level. Government ministries and local districts responded to Youth Forward by helping to create an enabling environment for young people to participate in agriculture. For example, the Initiative for Youth Empowerment and Transformation (IYET) in Uganda was launched in February 2017 to establish links between the Youth Forward Initiative, national policy, youth and influential stakeholders - with results including the simplification of the registration process for youth associations and cooperatives.

Meso level

At the community level, findings show positive outcomes for Youth Forward participants in terms of gaining increased access to economic resources and building better social connections with those in their local context. In terms of economic resources, greater access to inputs, technology, education, learning and financial services meant the Youth Forward Initiative helped participants to diversify income sources and build different kinds of livelihoods. Postline YETA data indicates that the proportion of youths involved in an income-generating activity increased from 74% to 94%, mainly driven by an increase in the proportion of youths engaging in farming activities.

The qualitative findings indicated improved economic empowerment of young women and men through increased access to livestock and inputs through group enterprises (YETA) and connections to input and output companies (DYNAMIC). Participants also increased their knowledge of agricultural and entrepreneurial skills through YETA and DYNAMIC and indicated that they continued applying such knowledge and

skills in their businesses as well as sharing lessons with others in their community, indicating the sustainability of the programmes.

Findings also highlighted that, through YETA and DYNAMIC, participants took the opportunity to save, access credit and borrow money when needed because they belonged to, or established their own, Villages Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). Quantitative data from YETA shows that the proportion of individuals saving increased from 61% to 78% between baseline and postline, with savings usually invested in their businesses, families or future plans such as building a home.

In terms of Youth Forward Initiative's effect on building social connections and close relationships, such as with group members, parents, mentors and peer educators – as well as the wider community, including the private sector, the study found that when young women were members in groups that delivered economic benefits, this worked to challenge harmful gender norms in the region. For example, participation in a group gave young women the opportunity to challenge barriers related to norms around decorum and mobility. Young women indicated that they were working in agricultural businesses outside of their homes, raising their voice during VSLA meetings, and engaging with other women in sports activities. Belonging to a group also allowed young women to challenge barriers related to norms about women's financial autonomy, where those who lacked family support were able to access loans and credit from their VSLAs to buy or hire land, buy seeds and/or hire labour to start profitable agricultural businesses.

Direct benefits of YETA and DYNAMIC included bonding social capital among participants, specifically peer learning that led to perceptions of increased soft skills (such as conflict resolution

and collaboration with other youth members through their participation in VSLAs) and the encouragement to participate in social and leisure activities for young women in DYNAMIC. Young women (and to a lesser extent young men) also benefited from the formation of bridging social capital through their new relationships with mentors (YETA) and peer educators (DYNAMIC). Young women and men reported that their relationship with mentors under YETA helped them to acquire further knowledge and shape new aspirations, including the possibility of continuing to grow their businesses and to attain life goals through higher incomes. Additionally, peer educators under DYNAMIC were perceived by young women as inspiring role models in terms of mastering agribusinesses.

Key findings also revealed challenges to implementation ranging from gendered participation barriers to limitations of programme sustainability. For example, regarding access to education and learning, some participants reported that training failed to incorporate child-friendly user facilities for young women. Other young women also struggled with transport costs for training attendance, particularly when trainings were organised in venues away from where they lived. In terms of access to financial services, young women spoke of challenges regarding their inability to make the initial or weekly contributions to the savings groups and competing priorities over whether to allocate earnings to the groups or the needs of their businesses.

During implementation, some youths received inputs (such as sunflower seeds and cassava stems) but were not given the necessary training to grow them, or these did not produce good yields, and livestock illness and the death of animals was also mentioned. After the end of the programme, youths experienced reduced access

to inputs such as a continued lack of pesticides and veterinary drugs for livestock, especially for youths from YETA. Gaining sustained access to economic resources also remained a challenge as most youths did not have linkages with agro-inputs/outputs companies or stakeholders beyond the end of the programme, nor were they able to have their ongoing training needs met such as a chance to refresh learnt skills. Challenges around belonging to a group were also identified by Youth Forward Initiative participants. Youths mentioned the emergence of conflict (e.g. disagreements among group members, theft of group savings, hoarding of inputs provided by programmes) leading at times to group disintegration. When this was the case, young women tried to make the most of their accomplishments and continued to evolve and use the skills they learnt while in their programmes. Yet young women also indicated they struggled at juggling YETA/DYNAMIC group activities with their paid and unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW).

Micro level

We assessed the effects of the Youth Forward Initiative on individuals and the relationships between them and their households. Our participants considered agriculture a livelihood that offered them the opportunity to thrive and achieve their life aspirations, despite the literature showing that the lack of formal employment and educational attainment of some youth motivates them to work in agriculture. This could be attributed to the economic benefits they gained through YETA and DYNAMIC activities, including different agricultural techniques and business skills. Countering these positive financial benefits, it was found that youths face serious challenges in agriculture, such as limited ability to accumulate

assets and resources, a responsibility to contribute to household needs, or limited ownership and control of land.

Young women face additional challenges due to their gender, including having less access to extension services (which is attributed to costs of transport, limited information availability, and the dominance of men in the sector - as extension service agents prefer to travel to male farmers who can cover the cost of their visit), and to land compared to men, or their cultivation of less profitable crops.

Furthermore, our findings indicate that gender norms play a very important role in driving women's engagement in the agricultural sector, mediating the outcomes of the Youth Forward Initiative. The norms identified by this study are:

- norms on the gender division of labour dictating the kind of work assigned to men and women in agriculture
- norms on ownership, control and utilisation of land
- norms on ownership of non-land assets
- norms on decision-making power including control of farming proceeds, and ability to command family labour
- norms on women's financial autonomy
- norms on decorum and mobility
- norms on marriage and childbirth.

The Youth Forward Initiative had an important effect on three domains at the individual and household levels. First, young women identified positive changes in **exercising voice and individual agency**. Rather than focusing on marriage and relationships, young single women shifted their attention to their business/agribusiness and their goals to increase their earnings. Enhanced decision-making power for

young women was reflected in their increased awareness of their economic contribution to their households and growing influence on decisions around allocation of earnings and control of resources. If young women had to overcome household critics to participate in YETA/DYNAMIC, their family role in household decision-making increased. Young men observed that they gained greater respect from older relatives through their increased financial independence and the new knowledge that they had obtained, strengthening their ability to participate in family decisions that were previously taken by fathers or older relatives.

Second, YETA and DYNAMIC improved the competence and **self-worth of participants**. Young women and men indicated improvements in their confidence and their ability to exercise leadership, although the study found that young women still face barriers when it comes to accessing leadership positions in their groups and in the community. It was also observed that participants reported increased feelings of pride due to perceived improvements in skills and positive behaviours, and enhanced aspirations for the future.

Third, participants indicated positive effects of YETA and DYNAMIC on their **physical and mental health** and overall well-being through their participation in group programme activities and positive changes around perceptions of increased income-generating capacity. In YETA sites, young women indicated improvements in knowledge about sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and family planning. Young women and men voiced positive changes in their nutrition and that of their children, and in the case of DYNAMIC participants this extended to improved personal hygiene and cleanliness. Youths from both programmes also voiced positive changes in their mental health and psychosocial well-being.

Recommendations

The study identified four broad action areas that are cross-cutting and can be adapted to district and local realities. These are:

Policy

- Provide additional economic support during economic shocks. Young people's progress and income-generating capacity can be severely challenged by covariate shocks (e.g. climate change effects coupled with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic) and idiosyncratic shocks (e.g. illness of a family member). Economic support to youths during difficult times will help lessen such setbacks and ensure that progress is not lost.
- Maintain linkages and collaborations between stakeholders at different levels and across the life cycle of initiatives. Interactions between local government programmes, financial service providers, VSLAs and commercial institutions, input and output companies or private sector and NGO partners both during and after initiatives can generate long-term sustainability. Ensure young women are also able to create and benefit from such connections.
- Promote youths' continuous learning with support from local government and partners. Stakeholders and local governments are well placed to provide mentors, peer educators and youth with continuous learning opportunities in collaboration with other stakeholders (e.g. extension services provided by local government and/or the private sector).
- Encourage youth group formation to encourage learning and economic activities. Key informants at the government level considered group formation as beneficial to accessing learning and knowledge from different government programmes and to negotiating with

middlemen. Group activities such as these could be encouraged in future policy programming.

- Use human-centred design approaches with youths at the centre of policy and programming. Incorporate youth perspectives about their own needs to help mainstream young people's insights into similar programmes and policy initiatives.
- Awareness-raising of existing policies and programmes. If young people are made aware and can access information on existing government policies and livelihood support programmes, they can benefit from what they are entitled to (individually or as a group) – and young women can gain a better understanding of their rights and entitlements.

Programmes

- Develop economic empowerment strategies that benefit young men and women equally: Future initiatives similar to Youth Forward that are supported by local governments should use gender-sensitive analysis and data collection around gender norms from the outset, to help identify women's current and potential roles within agriculture, including their involvement in different value chains and kinds of products.
- Further research and programming is needed on understanding, measuring and strengthening youth resilience. This will be crucial to sustaining programme achievements during covariate and idiosyncratic shocks. Mastercard Foundation's guidance note on measuring resilience (Kamel and Haraszko, 2020) should be offered as guidance to resilience programmes implemented by the government and other partners.
- Strengthening training capacities and functions of programme staff such as peer educators and mentors. Include training courses on management approaches, motivation, performance, and improving supervision.
- Factor in soft skills learning and development of programme participants. Communication, problem-solving and leadership are highly valued by youths as they can be implemented outside the immediate project settings. Enhancing knowledge on health, SRH and nutrition is also important to youths to complement their new skills.
- Decentralise trainings. Use venues that are more accessible to youths, such as their farms/ fields, and cover transport costs for those living further away.
- Work in groups. This was highly valued by youths as they could support, motivate and work with each other.
- Prepare programme staff to deal with conflict resolution. Group members depended on the ability and engagement of parent mentors in YETA and peer educators in DYNAMIC. In future initiatives, making sure programme staff have the right skills and are specifically engaged to mediate can help resolve conflicts that arise in groups.
- Provide financial support. This may be necessary to encourage young people's initial contribution to VSLAs, as well as individual or group enterprises. This support should be tailored to location and young people's needs, paying attention to the activities that they are undertaking, their input needs and other existing barriers that may hinder their enterprises (e.g. transport costs).
- Reach vulnerable youths. Providing financial and other kinds of support to vulnerable youths (e.g. orphans, those living in female-headed households, those suffering from household shocks) can help ensure that the most marginalised are not left out and do not struggle to start their businesses. Group members may be in a good position to decide who is in more need and should receive such support.

Gender

- Pay more explicit attention to gender norms. Discussing gender norms as key parts of project activities can cement learnings around gender for both men and women. Such discussions should also involve programme stakeholders who work closely with youths, including mentors and peer educators, who may have their own gender beliefs as to what women and men can do or achieve. Identifying, discussing and documenting shifts in gender norms among programme stakeholders can also promote change in youths themselves.
- Tackle the systemic barriers women face. Design programmes and policies to address harmful gender norms by tackling structural hurdles including ownership of land; ownership of non-land assets; decision-making power, including control of farming proceeds and ability to command family labour; women's financial autonomy; decorum and mobility; and/or early marriage and childbirth.
- Involve both young women and young men. Addressing gender norms with both sexes in training activities is key. Not only does involvement of young men promote their participation in UCDW (which is largely carried out by women), but without them the ability of young women to bargain with their partners and husbands about decisions on family planning or use of contraceptive methods is challenged. For example, while YETA's sessions on SRH and family planning were attended and valued by young women (and YETA data indicates that around 90% of young women and men were referred to and attended SRH services), young men in our sample did not recall any benefits.
- Provide additional financial support to young women. This will encourage young women to participate and help persuade others in their household who are initially opposed (mainly their fathers, mothers and husbands). Additional financial support may help young women rent land and access inputs to similar levels as their male peers.
- Timings and venues for trainings and meetings. Decisions must take into account the needs of young women to ensure their active participation (such as in VSLAs) and well-being. Factors to consider include ease of access, hygiene standards and childcare support services.
- Involvement of female peer educators and parent mentors. They are crucial in conflict resolution, and they can motivate young women and strengthen their aspirations. The research showed that young women respect female mentors and peer educators highly and see them as role models.
- Promote group activities among women and tailor group enterprises to their needs. Considering their business interests, time preferences and childcare needs is essential. For example, some young women considered that they would rather work with other women than men, as they would have more bargaining power to decide the kinds of crops they want to grow, the kinds of business they want to pursue and the type of knowledge they think would benefit them most.
- Encourage young women's participation in other leisure activities. Group recreation such as sports, dancing and singing improves mental health and psychosocial well-being.
- Build allyship. Engage parents, local and traditional leaders (such as chiefs or religious and clan leaders) and youth leaders as key allies in promoting new norms.

Longer-term sustainability

- Improve programme exit strategies. Link youth to local government and/or other funding partners to help promote synergies and the sustainability

of future programmes. Ensuring that young people know when programmes come to an end, and deliberately working with them and other partners towards programme closure, can help ensure achievements are sustained.

- Ensure refresher learning sessions. Once specific initiatives have ended provision of refresher knowledge sessions to youths is important in ensuring that they continue to benefit from skills trainings.
- Conduct trainings at village level. Private sector and other implementing partners are advised to conduct trainings at local level to enhance take-up and sustainability.
- Provide monitoring and support to newly established VSLAs. Sustainability through further involvement of YETA mentors and DYNAMIC peer educators could ensure that young women and men continue to benefit from them once the programmes ended.
- Monitor youth enterprises (both agricultural and non-agricultural). Offer support to youths whose enterprises may be at risk of failure once programmes come to an end. This can be done by improving collaboration among different stakeholders, such as YETA mentors and DYNAMIC peer educators or YETA and DYNAMIC partners, including those in the private sector.
- Continuous mentorship. Youth who develop good relationships with mentors, peer educators and other points of contact for youth should be helped to continue this to provide them with further mentorship once programmes come to an end. The ability of youths to continue learning or solving issues in agriculture depends on these relationships. Provision of continuous mentorship also motivates youths and helps them overcome potential challenges.

1 Introduction

Women make up 40% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, ranging from 20% in Latin America to 50% or more in Africa and Asia (FAO, 2020b), according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Despite their contribution to the agricultural sector, rural women globally experience more challenges than their male counterparts, as they face more restricted access to productive resources and assets, financial services and social protection (ILO, 2020). At the same time, social norms and laws limit their involvement in profitable work and their participation in workers' and producers' organisations (ibid.).

Young rural women face even greater challenges. Data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) shows that young rural women (aged 15 to 24) globally are at a greater disadvantage than young rural men in terms of their participation in employment (30% and 47% respectively) and in education or training (34% and 40% respectively) (ILO, 2020). Young rural women also have a higher tendency to be neither in employment nor in education or training compared to young men (36% compared to 40%), suggesting again that gendered social norms have detrimental effects for young women who are more likely to participate in UCDW. In several contexts (Nepal, Botswana, India, Ghana) it has been observed that in peri-urban areas young men and women share agricultural tasks, as farming is becoming increasingly commercial. However, in rural areas there is a stricter gendered division of labour due to gender norms (e.g. around suitable work for women and men in agriculture and the household) or young women's comparative lack of access to land and capital (Hovorka et al., 2019).

This report looks at youths (aged 18–29) in the agricultural sector in Uganda, and it particularly focuses on young women's involvement, including the challenges they face by virtue of their youth and gender, and the opportunities that may be available to them, focusing on the agribusiness sector. The agribusiness sector, according to the FAO (2017: 1), covers the entire value chain, including the supply of agricultural inputs, the production and transformation of agricultural products, and their distribution to final consumers. Exploring the role of young women in the agricultural sector in Uganda is vital, since smallholders are usually male (under one-third of family farms are headed by women) (FAO, 2018a). Furthermore, Uganda has a very young population, with over 20% aged 15–24, of which slightly over half (52%) is female (CIA, 2020). At the same time, the agricultural sector, which is mainly subsistence, is the dominant economic activity, engaged in by 72% of Uganda's workforce – 76% of females (rural women), and 65% of males (FAO, 2018b). A large proportion of youth working in agriculture are engaged in subsistence farming for their own household consumption. The Uganda National Household Survey 2016/2017 found that 68.4% of those aged 14–17 and 48.5% of those aged 15–24 work in subsistence agriculture, an increase since the 2012/2013 survey (from 62.7% and 44.6% respectively) (UBOS, 2018a).

Looking more broadly at women working in agriculture, the evidence shows that they also face greater inequalities than their male counterparts. Value-chain analyses typically identify women as carrying out most of the agricultural work using rudimentary practices and technologies (such as manual land preparation; digging, weeding and harvesting with simple manual tools; sorting

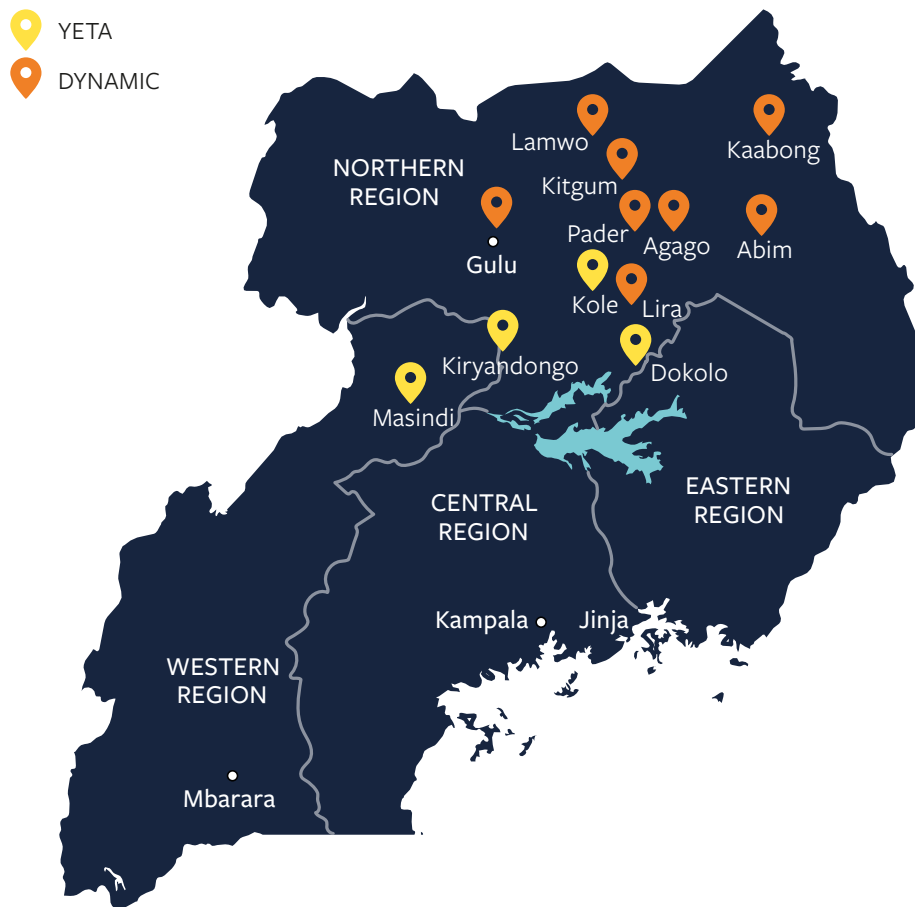
by hand (coffee and a variety of grains), while men make use of labour-saving technologies (machinery) and dominate higher-value activities such as processing, marketing and trading (FAO, 2018c). Women tend to earn less; for instance, on average women earn 18,000 Ugandan shillings (UGX) for harvesting, compared to UGX 36,000 earned by men (FAO, 2018). Women involved in agriculture are also more likely to be casual labourers paid per day/hour (9.8%) than men (5.9%) (UBOS, 2018a). Women are also less likely to own assets, including land and productive resources (*ibid.*). For example, 48.7% of men living in agricultural households are owners or hold rights over the agricultural land they cultivate, compared to 31.1% of women, as shown by the 2018 agriculture survey (UBOS, 2020). These inequalities are more pronounced among rural communities, where traditional gender norms and cultural practices (such as patrilineal inheritance practices) are more prevalent, hindering equal access to and use of productive resources (FAO, 2018b). Rural Ugandan women are also likely to have lower levels of educational attainment and literacy, and to bear a higher burden of UCDW compared to their urban counterparts (OECD, 2015; UBOS, 2018b). They are also more likely to believe that domestic violence is acceptable (*ibid.*). The basic challenges that women face in the agricultural sector in Uganda are well understood (Njuki et al., 2011; Peterman et al., 2011; Ssewanyama et al., 2019; Rietveld et al., 2020). However, the factors and dynamics that affect rural young women and how these explain the current opportunities and challenges that they face is less well understood.

This report is written as part of ODI's work as Learning Partner to the Mastercard Foundation's Youth Forward Initiative. In Uganda, the Youth Forward Initiative aims to reach over 174,000 young people in 14 districts in Northern and Western Uganda through two programmes (see Figure 1),¹ the DYNAMIC consortium and the YETA consortium. See a full description of both consortia in the following section (1.1).

The Youth Forward Initiative recognises that integrating understanding of dynamics around women's work in agriculture, as well as norms that affect women in their households and communities, can facilitate the achievement of programmatic objectives, including the enrolment, retention and graduation of young women. Accordingly, consortia have incorporated SRH, as well as a gender equality module into their training curricula. Looking to inform the Mastercard Foundation's current and future programming in this sector (70% of the beneficiaries of which will be young women), this research has sought to focus on responding to the following research questions: (1) how do young women experience the agricultural sector compared to young men and why?; (2) how and why are young women growing their business and what challenges do they encounter compared to young men?; and (3) what factors at the macro, meso and micro levels are affecting young women's participation in agricultural projects compared to men?

While there is a large body of literature on women in agriculture and in value chains (FAO, 2016; Coles and Mitchell, 2011), the ways in which the experiences of

¹ DYNAMIC started with 12 districts. Over the course of programme implementation, two sub-counties that had been part of DYNAMIC districts (Gulu and Kaabong) were inaugurated as districts (Omor and Karenga).

Figure 1 Youth Forward sites in Uganda

Source: Löwe et al. (2016).

young women are unique, and how opportunities are available or denied to them, are less well understood. Beyond providing an analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by young women compared to young men in the agricultural sector and the role of the Youth Forward Initiative (YETA and DYNAMIC programmes), the report also seeks to provide key findings from an action-oriented research programme looking at the intersection between gender and women's experiences in the agricultural sector, with a focus on smallholder farming businesses.

This study is based on two main components: a literature review, and key findings from qualitative data collected in Masindi, Dokolo, Kaabong and

Gulu districts. This first chapter provides a short description of YETA and DYNAMIC. Chapter 2 briefly presents the conceptual framework, and in chapter 3 we describe our methodology and provide a brief description of the study sites and the socioeconomic characteristics of Youth Forward youths. Following this, the report presents an analysis of the factors at the macro level (policies, programmes and external factors), meso level (community) and micro level (individual and household) that explain the opportunities and challenges that young women experience compared to young men, based on the available literature and data provided by our respondents. Chapter 4 explores the macro level, looking at the national policies

and programmes relating to rural livelihoods with a youth and gender perspective that could complement Youth Forward, as well as youths' awareness of their existence and implementation. It also examines external factors, particularly the role of Covid-19 in the lives of Youth Forward participants, and finally it explores the impact of Youth Forward on the macro level. Chapter 5 examines the meso level (community), focusing on the close relationships and connections that youths formed as participants of Youth Forward with other members of YETA/DYNAMIC, their mentors and peer educators and other stakeholders in the community, such as the private sector and community members. Chapter 6 analyses the micro level (the individual and the household). It begins by describing the situation of youths in the agricultural sector in our study sites and the existing gender challenges. It then examines the individual effects of Youth Forward relating to young women compared to young men, and other changes experienced at the household level. Chapter 7 presents conclusions and recommendations for policy and future programming to contribute to the realisation of young women's and men's empowerment, rights and needs.

1.1 The Youth Forward Initiative in Uganda: YETA and DYNAMIC

The Youth Forward Initiative is a partnership led by the Mastercard Foundation, ODI, Global Communities, Solidaridad, NCBA, CLUSA International and GOAL. Its focus is to help young people find good jobs in the agriculture

and construction sectors in Uganda and Ghana,² or to help them start their own businesses. This \$73.2 million initiative ran from 2015 to 2020 and reached more than 200,000 economically disadvantaged young people aged 15 to 24. The Youth Forward Initiative takes a holistic approach that combines market-relevant skills training, mentoring, internships and access to financial services to help young people transition out of poverty and into sustainable livelihoods.

In Uganda, the Youth Forward Initiative consists of two consortia (YETA and DYNAMIC). The consortia pursued the twin goals of improving livelihoods for Ugandan youth by addressing the high youth unemployment rate and encouraging young people's economic and social inclusion. They identified very similar challenges facing their participants, namely low levels of agricultural productivity, struggles in accessing land and productive resources, and low skill levels. Both programmes ran for the duration of the Youth Forward Initiative, from 2015 until 2020.

These consortia worked on similar issues but took very different approaches to addressing them. YETA was spearheaded by NCBA CLUSA, an organisation that has supported the cooperative movement for more than 100 years in the United States and across the world. DYNAMIC is led by GOAL (with consortium members including Mercy Corps, Restless Development and Voluntary Service Overseas, which brought experience in developing markets for the poorest and most vulnerable members of society (the M4P approach) to bear on its programming. As these approaches

2 In Ghana, Youth Forward is also made up of two consortia: Youth-Inclusive Entrepreneurial Development Initiative for Employment (YIEDIE), which works to create opportunities for young people in construction, and MASO, which focuses on the cocoa sector. In addition, the initiative facilitates the Youth Sector Engagement Group (Y-SEG), which brings the challenges faced by YIEDIE and MASO participants to a wider audience. For learning reports on these two consortia see 'Creating opportunities for young women in Ghana's construction sector: what works?' (Lowe, 2019), 'Aspirations matter: what young people in Ghana think about work' (Boateng and Löwe, 2018) and MASO impact evaluation (Pinet, 2020).

are distinct and had an important effect on the experiences of the young women and men enrolled in each programme, the rest of this section is dedicated to describing the two different approaches in some detail.

1.1.1 YETA

Given NCBA CLUSA's long experience of working with cooperatives and producer associations, YETA's primary approach to youth employment and inclusion was to facilitate a network of youth associations. Over the course of five years, YETA worked with over 27,000 out-of-school youth between the ages of 15 and 24 across the programme sites identified above to form new youth associations and/or strengthen existing youth associations. Their participants were trained in four separate cohorts, each over an initial period lasting six months. This initial training covered a range of skills, including numeracy and financial literacy, governance and life-skills training, agricultural best practices, entrepreneurship, business and group management. The youth associations served as laboratories for youth to test ideas and learn skills. Through them youths could gain confidence to start their own businesses as Community-Based Solution Providers (participants who mastered skills from programme training and demonstration and provided paid services in the community) or as part of a smaller group offering land preparation services. Using this model, YETA helped youths to start 6,469 Community-Based Solution Provider businesses (benefiting 3,716 males and 2,753 females).

Formal training was followed by a programme of mentorship. YETA employed several mentorship models to help youth vision and achieve their goals, improve decision-making, challenge their assumptions and build their self-confidence.

These models included reflection circles (small groups of 5–7 youth) as well as peer-to-peer and traditional adult–youth mentorship. Reflection circles were a formally organised form of peer-to-peer mentoring where youth typically organised themselves based on their interests, geographic location, gender, age group and enterprise type. These circles were safe spaces for youth to come together and find solutions to each other's problems; they discussed challenges around their businesses as well as relational issues they may have with their spouses, friends or parents. Challenges that could not be resolved at the circle level were elevated to the larger group, including an adult mentor, for additional support. YETA's adult–youth mentorship model was a formal six-month relationship between a mentor and youth association that began after the youth completed their technical and foundational skills trainings. Foundational skills training included a 'savings for a purpose' component to ensure savings were allocated to productive investments. Although some mentors and mentees kept in touch after the six-month period, it is important to note that the relationship had a beginning and an end. Groups had two mentors (male or female), chosen by the group from among respected community members or local agribusiness entrepreneurs, or a 'model youth', who had set up their own agricultural businesses (Naphtal Etyang, n.d.).

YETA also emphasised access to finance, both formal and informal, as a pathway out of poverty and towards business success. Groups received training and a starter kit (consisting of a savings box, padlocks and stationery) to help set up a VSLA, and were assisted by YETA staff and their mentors to develop their VSLA rules and share-out procedures. However, the approach was not solely focused on economic concerns: YETA also considered young people's psychosocial well-being and confidence, seeking to enhance these

through group membership and by demonstrating that positive change is possible. This was further encouraged through training in SRH, future planning and visioning exercises.

Once a group and its VSLA were formed and functioning, groups were encouraged to choose a group enterprise to put the skills learnt during training to use. Where necessary, YETA helped groups to access external resources by linking VSLAs to banks, government services including extension, concessionary loans and private sector actors (PSAs). Groups were guided to choose their enterprise based on the project value-chain assessment,³ which included crops (sunflower, soybeans, maize and horticulture), livestock (pigs, poultry, goats and animals for traction) and trading.

Beyond ensuring that association members and leadership were balanced according to gender (43% of the 27,130 youth who were mobilised into youth associations were women), several features of the YETA programme may have been instrumental for young women, in terms of their participation and the impact on their livelihoods and empowerment, including changes in gender norms. YETA addressed gender mainstreaming through the following activities: gender-sensitive messages during mobilisation of participants; issuing consent forms for husbands, guardians/parents to encourage the participation of women and girls; recruiting female mobilisers to encourage other women and girls to join YETA; ensuring all staff understand and implement YETA's Child Protection Policy, so females with

children have access to babysitters during trainings (not fully operational for cohort 1 participants, but for later cohorts); supporting youth in following leadership selection guidelines so females have equal opportunities in the process; when selecting peer leaders for each youth association, ensuring members elect one female and one male; and using the peer leader referral network to support women and girls to access government SRH services and testing for sexually transmitted diseases, encouraging couples to do this together. These referrals may have provided opportunities for couples to discuss decision-making and family planning. Furthermore, YETA encouraged young women and men through their groups to jointly take decisions around selecting their leaders, selecting their businesses, or deciding to join together with other associations to form a cooperative.

Some groups were dominated by young women, which allowed them to work together to realise their aspirations. Through reflection circles facilitated at group level, the women occasionally met separately to discuss their concerns and to plan for their individual businesses. It is also possible that the care through mentorship that YETA took around the psychosocial well-being of its participants may have helped young women to develop and vision their aspirations, making success more likely. Finally, one downside of the YETA approach was that very few female mentors could be identified to work with groups because there were fewer women in the community with enterprise skills, thus perpetuating the impression

3 For example, according to periodic project reports, in 2015 the most common value chains in which youths were already engaged included maize, beans/legumes, sunflowers and vegetables, as reported by NCBA CLUSA. Youths also mentioned the challenges they faced to start up or to reinvest in a business, including: lack of capital (15%), price fluctuations (12%), pests and diseases (10%), weather (7%), inadequate knowledge of business skills (5%) and access to land (4%) (NCBA CLUSA, 2015). The value-chain assessment during 2016 showed that youths gave preference to maize, soybean, sunflower, pig-farming, poultry, and horticulture as potential enterprises (NCBA CLUSA, 2016).

that men are more suited to business, success or certain types of work. Similarly, in the case of elected peer leaders, less than half were women (44% of 1,789).

Among all the activities conducted by YETA, our respondents did remember certain activities more than others, or they participated in some with more frequency. According to respondents, YETA activities included: group enterprises specifically on keeping animals and planting crops; training in agricultural and business skills, and financial literacy; VSLAs; and the opportunity to become peer leaders. Among these activities, participation in training and group enterprises was the most mentioned, followed by membership of VSLAs.

1.1.2 DYNAMIC

The approach taken by DYNAMIC to economic and social youth inclusion is grounded in the ‘making markets work for the poor’ (M4P) approach, also known as market systems development (Pasanen and Njambi-Szlapka, 2018). The aim of this approach is to find market-driven opportunities for helping the poorest and most vulnerable members of society so that they benefit from economic growth and development beyond the duration of a project. The approach is essentially aimed at addressing market failures, so that poor and underserved communities are able to access the services they need and engage profitably with the market. The rationale is that larger groups of beneficiaries can be reached in this way, and that gains made are more likely to be sustainable and scalable if they are driven by the private rather than the public or NGO sector as there will be financial gains.

DYNAMIC has adapted the M4P approach to address the challenges faced by young people in Northern Uganda. The consortium has called its

approach ‘making markets work for youth’ (M4Y), with a sole focus on youth aged 15–24, adopting the following principles: (1) a peer education model that delivers financial literacy, business and life skills and mentoring; (2) market-facing skills development – both institutional- and private-sector led; and (3) youth as key market players – building skills and confidence for youth to be credible players in the market. The approach looks at both supply-side and demand-side constraints and opportunities in agriculture, poultry and livestock production systems and agribusiness markets, and facilitates the deeper and more profitable involvement of youth in these systems. Key aspects of the programme are training, financial inclusion and engagement of PSAs to achieve its goals (Pasanen and Njambi-Szlapka, 2018).

Therefore, under the M4P logic, DYNAMIC first conducted an extensive assessment of the market conditions to assess where market failures are excluding young people from productive engagement in the agricultural sector. The second step was then to create incentives for PSAs to work with youth, for example by addressing the benefits of selling to youth who need their products and services. An extensive assessment of various value chains in Northern Uganda was also undertaken to determine where opportunities exist for young people to profitably engage in agricultural production for the market.

In the course of their market research, DYNAMIC identified similar barriers to entry for young people as those identified by YETA: lack of access to high-quality seed, limited knowledge, particularly around market-based production and the addition of value, limited access to practical and tailored training, difficulty accessing formal credit, and ownership of land. However, as an M4P programme, DYNAMIC did not directly

address these issues by training or engaging young people, but facilitated both supply-side and demand-side opportunities and the removal of barriers to youth employment in agriculture. This was done through interventions that facilitated more effective and efficient agricultural market systems that demanded the deeper involvement of skilled youth for their growth and success. Particularly, DYNAMIC developed partnerships with private and public sector actors to accelerate the facilitation of their roles in training, mentoring and linking youth to market opportunities, thereby supporting sustainable livelihoods. At the same time, PSAs shared costs on initiatives to open up markets for youths.

In order to address gaps in knowledge and training, DYNAMIC created a cadre of over 630 peer educators (aged 18–24) (30% women) who were recruited and trained to deliver a range of manuals, including life skills, business development skills and VSLA methodology, market linkages, group dynamics and financial literacy training (DYNAMIC Uganda, 2019). Peer educators received monthly stipends for engaging youth, and consortium staff were responsible for monitoring and mentoring them throughout their work. After approximately nine months, these peer educators went on to graduate if they passed the criteria, and became Private Service Education Providers who would then earn an income from providing training and information services to other youths. The programme also forged partnerships with private sector vocational training providers to create new short-term agricultural training programmes that would allow poor, semi-literate youth to access training in specialised subjects, rather than taking a standard long-term vocational course. Similarly, it facilitated interactions between financial service providers – banks and microfinance institutions (MFIs) – by linking

about 4,237 youths, so demonstrating the value of the youth market to these providers. Some financial service providers were able to increase their presence in the youth market by providing financial literacy training to potential young customers, and so close a training and knowledge gap. Similar collaborations were facilitated between young farmers and input and output companies, which had not previously considered how best to provide services to this demographic. At the same time, PSAs and vocational training institutes cost-shared on initiatives that facilitated access to agricultural inputs, extension services, market linkages and access to finance to open up markets for youths.

DYNAMIC sought to encourage the participation of young women and to ensure that they were not excluded from either the training courses available or from the new services provided by PSAs. Female peer educators may also have had a positive impact on the ability of young women to envision an alternative future for themselves. However, only a few participants mentioned they had a female peer educator or were peer educators themselves, probably because, as with YETA, there were fewer women than men with the necessary skills or time to dedicate to these activities.

Our DYNAMIC respondents remember or participated in some activities more than others, again as was the case with YETA. According to respondents, DYNAMIC activities included: receiving training from peer educators; short-term agricultural training; soft skills training in business and business skills, financial literacy and saving; VSLAs; group enterprises; and connecting with input/output companies. Among these activities, participation in training (with peer educators and other PSAs) was the most mentioned, followed by membership of VSLAs.

2 Conceptual framework

To analyse the effects of Youth Forward on the lives of young women compared to young men from a qualitative perspective, we drew on an integrated socioecological model. The analysis explored a range of factors at individual, household, community, state and global levels, unpacking the ways in which they interact and contribute (or not) to young women's livelihoods and well-being compared to those of young men. Taking this approach, but also engaging with the well-being debate (White, 2009), we drew on the well-being framework, which identifies seven domains or pathways to well-being: (1) Access to economic resources; (2) Building social connections; (3) Sustaining close relationships; (4) Exercising participation/agency; (5) Experiencing self-worth; (6) Enjoying spiritual well-being; and (7) Enhancing physical and mental wellness and security. The study used these domains as a starting point to understand youths' perceptions of well-being as a result of the Youth Forward Initiative. These perceptions were analysed after speaking both to young women and men, and also to people around them, including their relatives, other community members and key informants.

Factors at the macro (policies and national-level programmes as well as external contextual factors), meso (community) and micro (individual and household) levels play a key role in shaping the experiences of young women in agriculture. Part of the analysis involved unpacking these factors, as they also shaped young women's ability to achieve well-being and their full potential. At the micro level, we followed Samuels and Jones (2017) and applied a social norms lens to these frameworks. Social norms affect all domains in the lives of young women, including issues related to access to economic resources, control of profits, health and well-being, and agency or voice. Samuels and Jones (2017) argue

that overlaying a social norms lens helps both to contextualise and understand the various pathways to well-being over the life course, the kinds of challenges that young men and women face in trying to achieve them, and also the kinds of interventions that may be necessary in order to address these barriers and challenges. These include norms relating to: ownership of land; ownership of non-land assets; decision-making power, including control of farming proceeds and ability to command family labour; women's financial autonomy; decorum and mobility; and marriage and childbirth. Thus, we argue that only where policies and programmes are appropriately integrated and targeted towards young women will they achieve their full potential as individuals and their economic empowerment.

In this framework young women are placed centre stage, surrounded by key well-being domains. Young women themselves are then situated within their households or families (micro level), their communities (meso level) and the state (macro level). These different layers are in turn influenced to varying extents by a changing global context, including global trends (such as climate change or the Covid-19 crisis), and learning with regards to young women's programming and agriculture programming that could potentially benefit them. We focused most attention on the individual and household levels since gender inequalities often originate within the household, and individual agency and power are also influenced and affected by intra-household dynamics (FAO, 2016). Similarly, gender roles and responsibilities are assigned within the household, determining how and to what extent household members are involved in the agricultural value chain, who makes decisions and who controls the benefits of this participation (*ibid.*).

3 Methodology, socioeconomic characteristics of Youth Forward youths and study site characteristics

3.1 Methodology

The research proposal and instruments were reviewed by the ODI research ethics committee, and their comments on both the tools and ethics protocol were addressed in the final tools, which were pretested before data collection. With appropriate consent, all interviews were recorded, translated and transcribed. The study team jointly developed a coding structure, and all interviews were coded and entered into MAXQDA (data analysis software). Data from the coded segments was summarised according to agreed themes, and the analysis also explored differences emerging from different variables, including site/location, gender, education, occupation and programme participation.

Primary qualitative data collection was carried out between September and October 2020 by a research team comprising members of ODI (remotely) and in-country Development Research and Training (DRT) staff working with district-based Research Assistants. Piloting of the data collection tools was carried out in Masindi and tools were adapted further. Researchers, in consultation with Youth Forward Initiative consortia and with further guidance from the district local government, selected and collected data in two sites for each of the programmes,

Masindi and Dokolo districts as YETA sites, and Gulu and Kaabong districts as DYNAMIC sites (see Table A1 in Appendix 1 for the list of sub-counties selected for each of the districts). These sites were selected to elicit the views of programme participants and to identify differences between urban and rural experiences, and because they had not been included in previous Youth Forward Initiative studies, specifically for the YETA sites. Qualitative tools (see Tables A2 and A3 in Appendices 2 and 3) included In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with young women and young men, intergenerational trios (IGTs)/family case studies (FCS) – where different generations or different members of the same family are interviewed – and key informant interviews (KIIs). To enrol participants in the study, DYNAMIC provided researchers with a list of youth while YETA provided a list of youth associations from which youth were selected randomly based on their availability.⁴

There were 85 qualitative interactions conducted across the four sites, including young women and men, their parents and close relatives, as well as local government representatives.⁵ The different kinds of qualitative tools that we employed (see Table 1 for the rationale behind their use, the areas of enquiry and the target group) allowed us to reach data saturation, eliciting the situation of different kinds of participants (e.g. those living in

⁴ During data collection, consortia activities had ended, but researchers worked with staff who had previously supported programme activities in the selected sub-counties and were able to provide lists of Youth Forward youths.

⁵ From these, 40 in-depth interviews were conducted with programme participants, as shown in Table A2.

female-headed households, working on different kinds of agricultural and non-agricultural business, with different marital status, with and without children), illustrating the situation, trends, and changes experienced by Youth Forward youths.

Table 1 Qualitative tools, rationale behind their selection, areas of enquiry and kinds of participants

Instrument	Purpose/rationale	Areas of enquiry	Participant(s)
In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)	IDIs are useful not only for providing information but also for generating understanding and in-depth insights into underlying <i>why</i> and <i>how</i> questions (Guest et al., 2013). Most importantly, IDIs are not surveys and are not designed to measure quantitative outcomes or to establish prevalence and frequency of behaviours (ibid.). Instead, IDIs provide depth, nuance and meaning. IDIs are useful to provide data on individuals' processes, norms, decision-making, belief systems, mental models, interpretations, motivations, expectations, hopes and fears (ibid.), which were all aspects of interest to this research. Participatory approaches were also used during interviews (timelines and body maps) to allow for people's voices to come through and to show the perceptions of young women and men regarding changes in their lives before and after YETA/DYNAMIC.	Areas of enquiry included underlying social and gendered norms which may affect rural livelihoods and access to resources for young women compared to young men; changes observed with programme participation (life before and after Youth Forward) in different areas such as access to land, economic resources and savings, mental health and psychosocial well-being, agricultural skills and other soft skills, social networks, ability to exercise voice and agency and other domains of interest to this research.	Programme participants (young women and young men).
Intergenerational trios (IGTs)/ family case studies (FCS)	In order to explore intergenerational continuities and changes in social norms surrounding rural livelihoods, the study employed FCS and/or IGTs, which consist of interviews with different members of the same family/household.	Issues that were covered include changes over generations and continuities in relation to livelihoods, gender norms and family dynamics. Respondents were also asked about the main changes that they observed related to Youth Forward participants in relation to access to economic resources, social networks, health and other domains of interest from our conceptual framework.	IGTs were carried out with two generations of the same household (young woman and mother/father, or young woman and grandmother/grandfather). Respondents were interviewed individually. In the case of FCS, these were carried out with two different members of the same household (young woman and brother/mother, or young man and cousin/mother).

Instrument	Purpose/rationale	Areas of enquiry	Participant(s)
Key Informant interviews (KIIs)	KIIs are beneficial as part of assessments of organisations, programmes or community issues, allowing for a broad, informative overview of the issues (Lavrakas, 2008). KIIs are rarely used as the sole method of data collection for a study or particular issue, as there is little generalisability that can come from them. However, they have a useful role, when triangulated with other qualitative tools and secondary data, as in this study.	Respondents provided a broad overview in terms of: existing national and local-level policies and programmes around rural livelihoods from a youth and gender lens; enablers and constrainers that youths face in agriculture and agribusinesses; particular district- and community-level perceptions around youths' economic opportunities and change over time; the kinds of services available to youths that can support their livelihoods, infrastructural and human resource capacity, coordination among stakeholders, the effects/ impacts of programmes, and remaining needs and challenges at various levels, and their perceptions of Youth Forward and the effects of YETA and DYNAMIC on the lives of youths.	KIIs were conducted with a range of stakeholders, including: representatives from different line departments linking or working with youths, rural development, and gender, among others. These included representatives of District Community Development Offices, District Agriculture Offices or District Commercial Offices. Youth Forward staff (peer educators and parent mentors) were also interviewed.

The methodology for this research aimed to include a variety of cases in order to explore the realities of life for Youth Forward participants and to identify the divergence as well as the convergence of their stories. As such, *this study is not a quantitative impact evaluation and is not statistically representative of the Youth Forward population*. Unlike quantitative research, the purpose of this study is not to generalise the results of Youth Forward participants, but to explore other dimensions that are not easily identified in quantitative data, such as beliefs, attitudes, motivations, household and group dynamics, and social conventions or interactions, among others (Gobo, 2004). Additionally, qualitative data collection was employed because qualitative approaches are often more appropriate when dealing with sensitive issues (e.g. gender

norms, ability to exercise voice and agency, unequal access to resources), which were at the heart of this research. This approach allows us to identify consistent themes and patterns across young women and men and assess if there were themes exclusive to one group. Using other methods that are not essentially quantitative, as in this study, can reveal other significant features and provide a better understanding of other dimensions, like violence, insecurity, discrimination, gender or powerlessness (Chambers, 2007).

IDI respondents belonged to cohort 1 (for YETA those enrolled between 2016 and 2017, and for DYNAMIC those enrolled in 2017), although the years of enrolment reported by participants may not correspond to their actual enrolment, as youths may not recall the precise year in which

they began to participate in the programmes. Programme participants needed to have been aged between 15 and 24 during their enrolment, and not currently in school (having either dropped out or not been to school). Participants indicated they received information about YETA and DYNAMIC through consortia representatives or staff, local village authorities, family members who heard about the programmes, friends/peers, or from community members.

Most of our IDI respondents were female (23 females and 15 males); most young women were married (15, although we did not ask whether their husbands had a co-wife, though this did emerge in some interviews) and eight were single, while almost the same number of men were married (7) as single (8); participants were aged 28 (1), 26 (1), 25 (1), 24 (7), 23 (6), 22 (5), 21 (1), 20 (1), and 18 (2), and one participant did not know his age. Of the participants, 12 had no children, six had one child, seven had two children, and 10 had more than three children, while this was unknown for three. Not all participants with children continued to live with their partners and so reported their relationship status as single. Most participants (18) had completed some primary education or some secondary/senior education (15), while one male had completed a diploma and another was studying at university.

In terms of main livelihood activity, while the programme focused on improving opportunities for young people to build sustainable livelihoods and commercial enterprises in the agricultural sector, youth diversified into other businesses. Most female and male respondents were farmers (33), followed by those who reported being shopkeepers (5), local brewers/vendors (5), construction workers (3), tailors (2) and bakers (2). There was one student, one driver, one barkeeper, one labourer, one administrator and

one cleaner/cook in a health clinic. Most of the time, agriculture-related activities were combined with these other kinds of activities. Agricultural activities varied between young women and men, and farming produce was made available to the household for consumption, while surplus was sold. Most participants reported working in agriculture all year round, although they struggled to get enough food during the dry season, and depended on what they cropped during the rainy season. Most participants lived in large households with several family members. Although there were a few cases of female-headed households, most participants lived in male-headed households.

Descriptive quantitative data from YETA and DYNAMIC is incorporated in section 3.3 (socioeconomic characteristics of Youth Forward youths) and throughout the report, when postline data is available. This data was collected while YETA and DYNAMIC were still being implemented. For YETA, data includes baseline and postline (collected one year after participants graduated/two years after baseline). We mainly focus on data from cohort 1, as all our participants belonged to that cohort. For DYNAMIC, data includes baseline data only, as postline was not conducted. Descriptive quantitative data by UBOS is used in the report, especially results from the 2016 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), the 2018 Annual Agriculture Survey and the National Household Survey 2016/2017.

The limitations of this study are as follows. First, while some interesting findings did emerge and are presented here, the relatively small number of interviews (40) with young women and men in the four field sites compared to the number of Youth Forward participants allows for only cautious inferences to be drawn from these findings. However, findings are situated within the wider literature from Uganda and, given that this is

a qualitative study, the main aim is to capture the realities of a particular group of people in specific locations rather than to generalise. As such, our qualitative data can serve to interpret the quantitative findings of the sources that we use, and we feel able to make recommendations based on wider findings from the study.

Second, the YETA and DYNAMIC quantitative data presented in the report uses descriptive statistics to highlight trends and correlations, but does not aim to prove any causal effects. Hypotheses are often formulated throughout the report and are sometimes supported by the literature or the qualitative evidence. To understand causal mechanisms behind these observations, more research would be needed. In particular, to calculate the net effect of YETA and DYNAMIC programmes, we would have to use the follow-up data and compare it with non-participants with similar characteristics.

Third, it is important to note that, as recruitment of respondents took place once YETA and DYNAMIC had ended, some respondents had an expectation that the programmes were going to continue or that they would benefit somehow in the future. This resulted in the positive aspects of the programmes being overstated, without reflection on the potential challenges that they may have faced (social desirability bias). However, the research team triangulated the data (particularly through FCS/IGTs and KIIs) to also obtain wider perceptions. On other occasions, participants did not necessarily remember the different components of YETA and DYNAMIC or whether they participated or not in certain activities. When participants did not remember or misunderstood benefits from other programmes implemented in their regions, researchers probed and helped participants to recall.

A final limitation was Covid-19. Originally the ODI team would have joined the in-country DRT team for data collection, but this was not possible. However, the ODI team monitored daily collection remotely, and both teams conducted daily debriefings during the piloting and data collection phases, and maintained constant communication through digital technologies. Similarly, the research team aimed to conduct focus group discussions as part of the data collection, but these were not a safe option at the time data was collected. Instead, the team only conducted IDIs, FCS/IGTs and KIIs, taking into account Ministry of Health guidelines to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and Standard Operating Procedures, such as maintaining social distance regulations in addition to providing masks to research participants.

3.2 Socioeconomic characteristics of Youth Forward youths

Key socioeconomic characteristics of Youth Forward youths, based on descriptive quantitative data, are shown in Table 2. Data for YETA shows the socioeconomic characteristics of programme participants from cohort 1, given that participants of this study belonged to that cohort (see 3.3 below). This is survey baseline collected from 6,244 youth in Dokolo, Kole, Kiryandongo and Masindi districts. For DYNAMIC, descriptive data includes baseline collected in 2017 from 12,285 youths enrolled between 2016 and 2017 in nine districts in Northern Uganda. DYNAMIC data has a few limitations. There was no information on the type of businesses run by participants, the job sector for those employed, the amounts received from selling agricultural produce and other variables that YETA did collect. Similarly, DYNAMIC data has limited information on income levels.

Table 2 Key socioeconomic characteristics of Youth Forward youths

YETA (cohort 1 – 2016 baseline data)	DYNAMIC (2017 baseline data)
Participants by age and gender	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrolment of 6,244 youths in 2015 and 2016: 57% male and 43% female. ● Average age of the cohort was slightly above 20 for both male and female participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrolment of 12,285 youths in 2016 and 2017: 54% male and 46% female. ● Average age of the cohort was slightly above 20 for both male and female participants.
Employment, agriculture and entrepreneurship	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 74% of participants had at least one income-generating activity. ● More than 62% of participants undertook an agriculture-related activity (either employed on somebody else's farm or cultivating on their own), of these 80% were female and 72% male. ● Nearly all young farmers cultivated mainly for subsistence rather than profit (86% of women compared to 82% of men). ● Young women were more likely to open a non-agricultural business (60% of young women had a business related to trade compared to 49% of young men). ● 37% of participants were engaged in more than one income-generating activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 95% of participants had at least one income-generating activity. ● The agricultural sector employed the most youths: 87% of respondents declared farming as a source of income, 8% had an off-farm business, 1% were employed by someone else, and 11% were engaged in paid household work. ● 12% of participants were engaged in more than one income-generating activity.
Poverty and income variation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 85%–90% of youths may be living below the \$2 per day poverty line. ● Among 4,349 economically active participants, the average yearly income, which excludes own consumption, is UGX 275,000 or approximately \$250 purchasing power parity (PPP). ● Female participants earned 35% less than their male counterparts. ● Participants who completed primary school earned on average 40% more than participants with no education (females by 39% and males by 25%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 55% to 93% of youths may be living below the \$2 per day poverty line. ● For most youths (87%) crop farming constituted their primary source of income. Livestock was another important source for 41%. Off-farm business was the main source of income for only 3% of participants, and employment and hired labour for only 5%. ● Young women earned less than their male counterparts as they were over-represented in the lower income bracket (less than UGX 100,000 in the last six months) (60% and 54% respectively).
Marital and parental status	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nearly half the participants (44%) were parents of at least one child and slightly over a quarter (27%) were married. ● Women were nearly twice as likely to have children (60%) as men (32%). ● Average age at first birth was 18 for females and 20 for males. ● At age 17, 20% of female participants were already parents, against 1.3% for males. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Women were nearly twice as likely to have children compared to men (43% and 28% respectively) and more likely to be married (43% and 33% respectively). ● At age 18, 21% of female participants were already parents, against 13% of males.

YETA (cohort 1 – 2016 baseline data)	DYNAMIC (2017 baseline data)
Educational levels	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Only 47% of participants completed primary school. ● At age 20, 50% of female participants completed primary school, against 54% of their male counterparts. ● Women who do not have children at the age of 20 have a significantly higher chance of being literate (89%) and of having completed primary education (67%) than women and men who do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Only 33% of participants completed primary school. ● 61% of participants dropped out of school during primary school (or never attended primary school). ● Female respondents attended and started primary school in a larger proportion than males (65% against 56%) but fewer females actually completed primary school (27% of young women against 39% of young men).
Access to land	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 82% of youths farm or cultivate land. ● 52% report owning or renting the piece of land they cultivate. ● 92% of youths who own land acquired or inherited it from their parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 94% of respondents said that they had access to land to farm if they wished to farm. ● The main source of land was family (78%). ● Very few were able to rent land (3%), buy it (0.45%) or had access to community land (2%).
Access to financial services: savings and loans	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 61% of youths declared they saved or had set aside money in the past 12 months. ● The most commonly used institution to save was community-based VSLAs (59% of participants compared to 7% who used formal institutions). ● Female participants who reported any savings had UGX 65,953 (\$59 PPP) saved, which is nearly half the average amount saved by men (UGX 123,662, \$112 PPP). ● Only 8% of youths had applied for a loan in the preceding 12 months. ● Most loan applications were made through VSLAs (83%). Among the participants who had used this system to apply for a loan, 56% were female. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 56% had access to money to invest in a business if they wished to. ● Among these, 32% would use their own savings, 30% were able to borrow informally (family or friends) and 34% would borrow from the VSLA. ● There were no significant differences between male and female participants.

Sources: Bridonneau and Marć (2016; 2017).

3.3 Study site characteristics

Data collection took place in Masindi and Dokolo districts (YETA) as well as Gulu and Kaabong districts (DYNAMIC). These districts belong to the regions of Bunyoro (Masindi), Lango (Dokolo), Acholi (Gulu) and Karamoja (Kaabong). The 2016 DHS (UBOS, 2018b) disaggregates socioeconomic indicators of the study sites (see Table 3). However, data is not disaggregated by district (only regional level) or by age at regional level.

It is important to mention that the communities of the Karamoja sub-region are historically and economically distinct from those in other parts of Northern Uganda, as the Karamojong have traditionally relied heavily on pastoralism for their livelihoods (Löwe and Phiona, 2017). Another important feature of our study sites is the *different clan structures and ethnic groups* shaping the character of the northern region of Uganda (see Box 1).

Table 3 Study site key indicators at regional level of men and women aged 15–49 (unless specified)

Indicator	YETA		DYNAMIC	
	Bunyoro (Masindi district)	Lango (Dokolo district)	Acholi (Gulu district)	Karamoja (Kaabong district)
Poverty and education				
Population in the lowest wealth quintiles ⁶ (%)	21.9	43.3	61.2	82.9
Gini coefficient ⁷	0.32	0.25	0.38	0.33
Educational attainment of women (median years completed)	4.8	4.8	4.7	0.0
Educational attainment of men (median years completed)	5.5	6.0	6.7	2.8
Female population with no education (%)	21.0	21.3	20.2	70.6
Male population with no education (%)	14.4	12.6	9.0	53.7
Employment⁸				
Employed women (%)	58.8	80.8	76.2	70.5
Employed men (%)	83.5	92.5	90.2	79.3
Women employed in skilled agriculture/forestry/fishery (%)	51.7	61.9	69.4	25.2
Men employed in skilled agriculture/forestry/fishery (%)	65.1	78.7	63.5	64.8
Marriage, polygamy and sexual and reproductive health				
Median age at first sexual intercourse among women (age 20–49)	15.9	16.6	17	18.6
Median age at first sexual intercourse among men (age 25–54)	18.5	18.4	17.9	21.5
Median age at first marriage among women (age 20–49)	18.8	17.6	18.1	19.7
Median age at first marriage among men (age 25–54)	23.2	22	23.7	22.6
Married women whose husbands have one or more co-wives (%)	19.6	22.6	33.6	58.3
Women age 15–19 who have begun childbearing (%)	29	27.9	23.8	23.6
Total demand for family planning (%)	60	70.5	70.2	27

Source: UBOS (2016; 2018b).

- 6 Households are given scores based on the number and kinds of consumer goods they own, ranging from a television to a bicycle or car, and housing characteristics such as source of drinking water, toilet facilities and flooring materials. These scores are derived using principal component analysis. National wealth quintiles are compiled by assigning the household score to each usual (de jure) household member, ranking each person in the household population by her or his score, and then dividing the distribution into five equal categories, each comprising 20% of the population (UBOS, 2018b: 14).
- 7 The Gini coefficient ranges from 0–1, with 0 implying an equal distribution of wealth and 1 implying a totally unequal distribution (UBOS, 2018b).
- 8 Respondents are considered to be employed if they have done any work other than housework in the 12 months before the survey.

Box 1 Ethnic groups in Northern Uganda and the clan structure

Uganda is made up of a number of ethnic groups today, with the six largest being the Baganda, Banyonakole, Basoga, Bakiga, Iteso and Langi (Lowe et al., 2016). The north is home to Nilotic and Central Sudanic-speaking groups, encompassing the Acholi, Lango, Madi, Alur, Iteso and Karamojong peoples (Laruni, 2015). Ethnic groups are traditionally composed of clans. A clan is defined as ‘a group of family units who trace their ancestry to the same individual. Clans are a larger social grouping than households but smaller than tribes. When a clan becomes too large for its area or its ancestry too remote to trace, it may divide into two or more clans’ (Shero, 2014: 7). Although the clan has been superseded in everyday social organisation by territorially defined neighbourhoods, it is still the sole repository of tradition (Tosh, 1973). Clan leaders are the main figure of authority. They play a key role in influencing community perspectives, attitudes and responses to change, upholding and promoting norms, promoting conflict resolution and arbitrating over land disputes, as well as initiatives implemented in their territory (The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda, 2012).

Clan leaders are usually male and elders. As Shero (2014) describes, leadership in Africa remains dominated by men due to patriarchal gender norms. Although some groups are becoming more inclusive of women (such as the Gisu in Eastern Uganda, where Shero conducted his study, and whose constitution called for 12 women representatives), clan leaders were usually men above 50, who had retired from full-time work but remained active in public life. They are traditionally respected as clan leaders and have the final word on clan matters. Female elders were described also as leaders, but on affairs to do with morality; as described by one male elder included in Shero’s study ‘they have to reflect the morals of femininity and looking after the children, keeping the clan clean, feeding them, and involving them in useful social activities, economic activities, including cultivation’ (ibid.: 103). Thus, understandings of morals and norms stress a separation of gender roles, with women having duties as carers and being responsible for the well-being of the household, while men are seen as providers (ibid.).

Regarding *gender norms*, the Social Institutions and Gender Index⁹ (SIGI) in Uganda (Uganda-SIGI) (see Figure 2) classifies the Mid-Western region (including Masindi district) under ‘high’ levels

of discrimination. The Mid-Northern sub-region (including Gulu and Dokolo districts) is classified under ‘very high’ levels of discrimination. Karamoja (including Kaabong district) is classified under

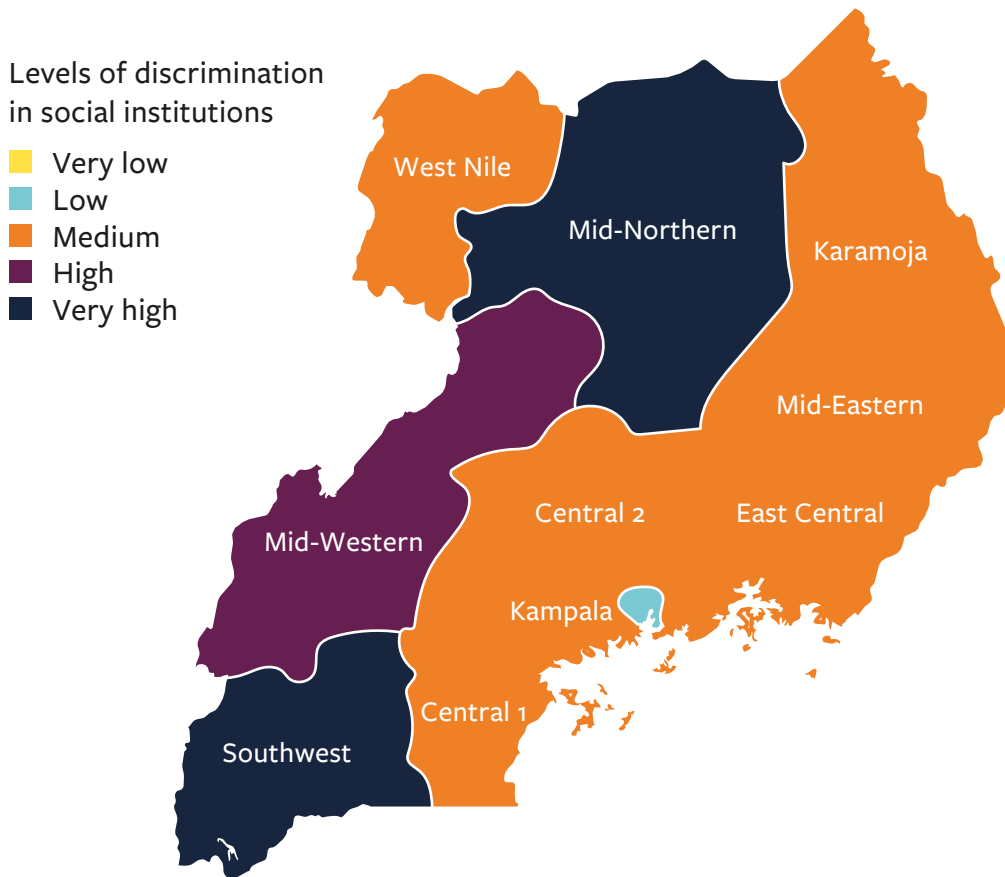
9 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) separates manifestations of discriminatory social norms and practices into five levels in social institutions: (1) very low; (2) low; (3) medium; (4) high; and (5) very high. Uganda-SIGI is a composite indicator measuring discriminatory social institutions using 64 variables. These 64 single variables are grouped into 20 indicators aggregated to construct the five sub-indices that capture specific manifestations of such discriminatory norms and practices. The five sub-indices are: (1) discriminatory family code; (2) restricted physical integrity; (3) son preference; (4) restricted resources and assets; and (5) restricted civil liberties. The variables, sub-indices and composite indicators are scaled between 0 and 1 for easy interpretation. The best possible performance, i.e. lowest level of inequality, is assigned the value 0, and the worst possible performance, i.e. highest level of inequality, the value 1. Hence, a value of zero can be considered the goal, and the distance from zero indicates the extent of gender discrimination.

‘medium’. The Northern sub-region in general performs poorly due to discriminatory opinions and practices within the family leading to unequal decision-making power and status in the private sphere, along with persistent harmful practices that threaten women’s physical integrity. However, in Karamoja, access to assets and resources is more equal and there are lower levels of discrimination against women’s civil liberties (OECD, 2015).

It is unclear why this is the case, but the study by Hopwood et al. (2018) in Karamoja with the Jie and the Matheniko offers some insights. The study notes that the end of the conflict and the 2006 disarmament campaign by the Ugandan government, which left the Karamojong unarmed when confronting cattle raiders from Kenya

or South Sudan, altered Karamoja society. Few families were able to pay any substantial bride price (usually involving cattle to the girl’s family so she becomes the property of her husband), which led to ‘greater freedom’ for women as they were no longer ‘owned’ by their husbands. Karamojong women in the study by Hopwood et al. (2017) were less ‘subservient’ in their attitudes and behaviours towards men; some spoke at public meetings and indicated that men’s attitudes towards shared property had improved, this was also due to sensitisation campaigns implemented by the government and NGOs. These changes led to some women exercising more economic power (owning and controlling their own income or assets), although not in all cases, as other women continued to suffer intimate partner violence (ibid.).

Figure 2 Uganda-SIGI score in Uganda sub-regions



Source: OECD (2015).

Land ownership is related to gender norms. The 1998 Land Act was supposed to address historical gender imbalances in land ownership (see also section 4.1 on main government policies on agriculture). However, it does not provide for spousal co-ownership of land (FAO, 2018b). Indeed, various studies have noted the strength of customary laws over national laws, with the former usually precluding inheritance rights to women as a result of *patrilineal practices* (Cooper, 2011; OECD, 2015; FAO, 2018b). Conflict can arise when women claim the land of a deceased husband due to their marital rights; however, local mediators such as clan leaders or local councils usually favour male relatives or receive bribes from them to rule in their favour, as observed by Cooper (2010). When women inherit land, this is usually not on an individual basis nor with full control. Instead, women in Uganda typically access land by proxy: through their husbands, fathers and sons (Bomuhangi et al., 2011 in Rietveld et al., 2020). Despite the mostly patriarchal structure of Uganda, several ethnic groups practice **matrilineal land inheritance**. These include the Acholi, Kigezi, Lango and Alur.

Women in Buganda have also enjoyed more land rights than women in other parts of the country. Under the mailo scheme,¹⁰ women began to inherit more land, and some even bought land (Hatcher et al., 2005). Tumushabe and Tatwangire (2017) also observed that the increased demand for land in Uganda has stimulated the supply side of land sale and the rental market, increasing the number of land sale/purchase transactions in all land tenure regimes. Indeed, the authors note that the improvement in market-based land transactions can also be attributed to the increased commercialisation of agriculture, rural economic

development, improved living standards, and the weaker role of families and clans in regulating land rights transfers in the face of increasing economic pressure to make money. The revival of the land market can be detrimental to youths who are unable to buy land at high prices (ibid.), but it could also benefit young couples, particularly young women, who would not otherwise have access to land through inheritance, as this study will show.

Marriage is also related to gender norms. Four different kinds of marriage are practiced in Ugandan societies: (1) customary, involving contract between the prospective groom and the bride's father (or equivalent). The actual marriage consists of the celebration of this contract, the father handing over his daughter and the groom providing certain customary payments of bride-wealth; (2) Christian or Islamic, where a religious ceremony is performed; or (3) civil, where a registrar performs a ceremony. There is an additional category (4) informal marriage, which involves people who are co-habiting without having performed a ceremony' (Seeley, 2011). Some couples may start to live together, and their marriage is formalised by the giving of a bride price or a religious ceremony some years later, when the husband has accumulated enough wealth to afford the expense (ibid.). Within our study regions, Table 3 shows the persistence of **polygamy**, especially in the Karamoja region. Under Ugandan law, legal polygamy can only exist if a man marries under customary or Islamic law. However, men in legally monogamous unions may marry additional wives informally (ibid.). Conflict between co-wives can arise over competition for a husband's affection and resources, while for men polygamy can have advantages, such as providing a large network of descendants and portraying them as successful in life (ibid.).

¹⁰ Mailo registered land is owned in perpetuity by a native landowner, often with tenants living on the land who are obliged to pay an annual rent to the landowner (GIZ, 2019).

Results from Uganda-SIGI showed that women living in the Northern region face strong discriminatory attitudes and practices related to social norms around marriage. Most women (57%) were married before the legal age of 18, and 28% before the age of 15. Uganda-SIGI observed that, despite the law setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 for both boys and girls, favourable opinions towards early marriage continue to justify the practice: one-third of the population believed that girls should be married before the age of 18. In contrast, social norms do not entail expecting boys to marry early, highlighting that such discrimination is biased against adolescent girls (OECD, 2015). In addition, other

discriminatory practices are prevalent in the Northern region, such as bride price and levirate marriage, which are more widespread than in other regions of Uganda (*ibid.*), echoing the findings of other studies in the region (Bantebya et al., 2013; Ssewanyana et al., 2018).

All these discriminatory gender norms have negative consequences for young women in different spheres in their lives, including their income-generating activities and their ability to save or to own land, as we will show in section 6.2 on the role of gender norms in the context of the Youth Forward Initiative.

4 Policy, programmes and external factors influencing rural livelihoods: macro-level effects on Youth Forward

At the macro level we aim to examine the national policies and programmes on rural livelihoods and agriculture from a youth and gender perspective. We also examine external contextual factors that affect the livelihoods of rural youth, and in this case the effects of Covid-19 are prominent. This chapter describes the broader context, before examining the situation of young women compared to that of young men at the meso (community) and micro (individual and household) levels.

Before exploring the range of government interventions, it is important to note that programmes targeting youth, including young women, are delivered through a multi-sectoral/multi-stakeholder approach involving different state and non-state actors, including ministries, departments and agencies – particularly the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), district local governments, civil society and PSAs. Many rural livelihood programmes are decentralised and implemented directly through the district local government and sub-counties in partnership with civil society and the private sector.

The bulk of the literature on agricultural interventions in Uganda argues that, for agriculture to contribute to development and poverty reduction, value-chain interventions must work for young women through effective gender mainstreaming in budgets and interventions across value chains (Forum for Women and Democracy (FOWODE), 2012). Quisumbing and Pandolfelli (2010) argue for rigorous and holistic evaluations of interventions, as well as meeting women's diverse needs by being sensitive to the trade-offs 'entailed in challenging or respecting local gender norms', and by taking into account women's heterogeneity.

Below we describe the policies and programmes mentioned by key informants and interviewees as running in their locations that in their view complemented the work of the Youth Forward Initiative, as well as the impact of Covid-19 on their livelihoods (see Box 2 for a summary of findings at the macro level). The interviewees' perceptions in this section are complemented with the available literature on current policies and programmes implemented in the Northern region.

Box 2 Summary of findings at the macro level: government policies and programmes on agriculture and rural livelihoods and the role of Covid-19 from a youth and gender perspective

- Although the agricultural budget has increased as a share of the national budget from 3.2% in 2018/19 to 3.8% in 2020/21, this is less than the 10% commitment of the Maputo Declaration.
- Gender mainstreaming by policies and programmes to improve rural livelihoods and agriculture is required by the Ugandan Constitution and is recognised in the policies and programmes under review.
- Nevertheless, government agricultural sector policies and programmes are often generic and do not provide clear strategies to achieve gender outcomes.
- Policies and programmes usually refer to the needs of ‘youths’ or ‘women’ in general; however, there are no clear strategies that address the vulnerabilities and promote the livelihoods of young women as a group.
- Programmes usually focus on meeting gender targets, but they generally fail to conduct a gender analysis that ensures young women will benefit in the same way as young men and sustain their achievements over the longer term.
- Obstacles faced by young women in accessing markets, extension services or agricultural inputs offered by programmes are not addressed by such programmes.
- Some policies and programmes acknowledge the negative role of harmful gender norms (often described as negative cultural attitudes, gender discrimination, gender stereotypes). However, these seem not to be contemplated in the implementation of programme activities.
- Programmes that directly address harmful gender norms and raise awareness among the population on how they affect young women and men were not identified.
- Youths reported they usually lacked awareness of existing government policies and programmes on rural livelihoods and agriculture that specifically target youths, but had some knowledge on programmes implemented by NGOs.
- Covid-19 was an important factor affecting the livelihood of youths due to its negative effects on the economy, as reported by key informants and youths.
- The Youth Forward Initiative had important effects at the macro level. Through the IYET, government ministries and district local government created an enabling environment for young people to participate in agriculture collectively by simplifying the registration process for youth associations and cooperatives.

4.1 Main government policies on rural livelihoods and agriculture with a youth and gender perspective

The Government of Uganda acknowledges that the agricultural sector plays a critical role in the economy, particularly in the creation of jobs for youths (Republic of Uganda and World Bank, 2019). As such, for the 2020/21 period, the budget allocation for the sector is UGX 45.4 trillion, equivalent to 3.8% of the total budget (Republic of Uganda, 2019). This is less than the 10% commitment of the Maputo Declaration and the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agriculture Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods (Ssanyu, 2020).

A number of policies are designed to assist agricultural development, most importantly the Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) 2016–2020, which sets out the strategic direction of the sector around four objectives: (1) increasing agricultural production and productivity; (2) increasing access to critical farm inputs; (3) improving agricultural markets and value addition; and (4) improving service delivery through strengthening the institutional capacity of the MAAIF and its agencies (MAAIF, 2016a). Furthermore, it identified several cross-cutting issues that need to be addressed and key categories of the population whose participation needs to be boosted in order to meet sector goals. These include gender and youth with the aim of supporting their employment in the various aspects of the agriculture value chain (ibid.). Similarly, Uganda Vision 2040 and National Development Plans (NDPs) I and II prioritise agriculture (Government of Uganda, 2015). Building on NDP I and II, NDP III focuses on increasing the commercialisation and

competitiveness of agricultural production and agro-processing, which will be achieved through pursuing interventions along the agricultural value chain in the seven major export- and income-generating commodities (coffee, poultry, fisheries, tea, pig-farming, dairy cattle, and beef and goat production) as well as four food security commodities (cassava, maize, banana, horticulture) (Republic of Uganda, 2020). Under its first objective (increasing production and productivity) priority interventions targeting youth are set out as: developing and equipping youth with knowledge, skills and facilities to access and use modern extension services; incorporating business, technical, vocational education and training institutions into the agricultural extension system to ensure that what is taught in these institutions is adopted and used by farmers; and empowering youth to form cooperatives (ibid.).

District Development Plans also consider gender and youth in their priorities. For example, the Masindi Development Plan (2015–2020) acknowledges women's low participation in agricultural production programmes and their unfairly low share of benefits from production, while also mentioning some strategies to overcome such challenges, such as community sensitisation about the right of women to own land and the benefits from sharing family profits between husbands and wives (Masindi District Local Government, 2015). Similarly, the Karamoja Integrated Development Plan 2 (2015–2020) stresses the need to diversify livelihoods, especially for youth, and calls for gender mainstreaming during the implementation of the Development Plan to minimise and manage gender-related shocks and stresses to communities and households (Ministry of Karamoja Affairs, 2015).

The 1995 Ugandan Constitution requires national agencies to promote gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups. The Gender Equality Policy of Uganda (2007) states that ministries and stakeholders should mainstream gender in their policies, programmes and projects, with each ministry expected to have its own gender strategy (FAO and UNDP, 2017). However, a review by the Ugandan government's

Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit (BMAU) found that most agricultural sector policies, while they were gender sensitive, had generic strategies and provided little guidance on how gender concerns would be addressed (BMAU, 2016). Table 4 outlines the Government of Uganda's main livelihood and agricultural policies, including their youth and gender equality considerations.

Table 4 Relevant agricultural policies including youth and gender equality considerations

Policy	Key content
National Agricultural Policy 2013	The National Agricultural Policy's overriding objective is to 'achieve food and nutrition security and improve household incomes through coordinated interventions that focus on enhancing sustainable agricultural productivity and value addition; providing employment opportunities, and promoting domestic and international trade' (MAAIF, 2013: 14). One of its guiding principles is for agricultural development services to be provided to all farmer categories as individuals or in groups, ensuring gender equity. There is recognition of the need to target vulnerable groups, such as households headed by women and children, in order to achieve its objectives, with vulnerable households identified as less productive and more likely to suffer from food insecurity (ibid.).
National Agricultural Extension Policy (NAEP)	The NAEP aims to increase productivity and the capacity of the government and civil society organisations to effectively deliver agricultural extension services (Mpiima et al., 2019). In objective four of the NAEP there is a commitment to empowering farmers and other value-chain actors, specifically youth, women and other vulnerable groups, to effectively participate in agricultural extension processes and build their capacity to demand services. In its principles, there is a stated commitment to gender equity and equality in the targeting of beneficiaries of extension services, as well as to the principle of gender responsiveness in which gender-based needs, constraints and opportunities are identified (ibid.).
National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture	Focuses on removing obstacles and the binding constraints which limit youth participation in agriculture (inclusive of those aged between 14 and 17). To address these constraints, the strategy proposes five main intervention areas: (1) strengthening the enabling environment for youth (setting up a facility for youth to obtain finance, access to public and private land); (2) supporting youth-oriented agricultural extension; (3) improving youth education and learning (with emphasis on other aspects of the value chain like post-harvest handling and agribusiness); (4) supporting youth entrepreneurship; and (5) adaptation and mitigation of agribusiness risks (Ssanyu, 2020).

Policy	Key content
National Agricultural Extension Strategy (NAES) 2016/17–2020/21	The NAES operationalises the NAEP and provides more detail on the inclusion of gender in agricultural extension services (Mpiima et al., 2019). One of NAES's explicit objectives was to 'empower farmers and other value-chain actors (youth, women and other vulnerable groups) to effectively participate and benefit equitably from agricultural extension processes and demand for services' (MAAIF, 2016b: 8). To achieve this, it aimed, among other objectives, to develop operational guidelines and procedures which are gender sensitive and to disseminate these, to prioritise gender-responsiveness capacity among staff at national and local government levels, to carry out affirmative action work to target the aforementioned vulnerable groups and to promote youth involvement through capacity building (e.g. establishing interest groups) and linking them to service providers (MAAIF, 2016b). Similar in its guiding principles to the NAEP, there is a commitment to mainstreaming of gender and youth issues into its policy framework and integrating gender and youth concerns into implementation plans (ibid.).
National Employment Policy 2011	The National Employment Policy acknowledges the capacity of agriculture to absorb labour and create employment, especially the labour of Uganda's very young population. It seeks to encourage rural employment creation through investment in agricultural enterprises, promoting agro-processing, providing the most dynamic smallholders with yield-increasing technologies and stimulating the expansion of rural financial service providers (Löwe and Phiona, 2017). The policy also calls for the promotion of equality (and equality of opportunity) in employment and working conditions for women and men and stresses the implementation of gender-responsive career guidance and counselling at all levels of education and training (MGLSD, 2011).
National Youth Policy 2001	The National Youth Policy focuses on ensuring young people are integrated into the national development processes that are the focus of other policies, to enable them to make the most of the opportunities available to them. The intention is to achieve this through support to vocational training centres, so that young people acquire practical skills that are relevant to the job market, as well as through improvements in literacy levels. Microcredit, market information and extension services are an integral part of the strategy to develop youth enterprise in the agricultural sector and other sectors; as is supporting the implementation of the 1998 Land Act, which was designed to increase access to land, and the rights of all landowners, but especially young people, both male and female (Löwe and Phiona, 2017). It acknowledges that negative cultural attitudes, such as gender discrimination, affect poverty, unemployment and underemployment. As such, it seeks to promote gender equality, including elimination of gender discrimination and violence (MGLSD, 2001).
Land Act 1998	The Land Act recognises four forms of land tenure systems: customary, freehold, leasehold and mailo. An individual can therefore acquire land by inheritance, purchase, donation or rent (FAO, 2018b). The Land Act also tries to preserve the rights of women and other marginalised groups to a certain extent by prohibiting spouses from dealing in land without the consent of the other spouse and offspring, when the family derives sustenance from the land; and by offering protection from evictions or denial of use of land (ibid.).

4.2 Main agricultural programmes with a youth and gender perspective

A number of programmes have been designed to support young people directly or indirectly

in the Northern region of Uganda. Table 5 below summarises key programmes identified by the available literature and local government key informants in our study sites.

Table 5 Relevant agricultural programmes including youth and gender equality considerations

Programme	Key content and general observations
Restocking programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides heifers to households using community-based targeting. These households then need to pass the first calf on to another household in the community (Löwe and Phiona, 2017). • The programme does not directly target youths, but targets households in most need; however, vulnerable youths belonging to such households may benefit to varying degrees (ibid.).
Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A government initiative providing male and female youths from vulnerable backgrounds with livelihoods skills, productive assets for viable income-generating enterprises, and loans with youth-friendly terms (MGLSD, 2019a). • Evidence from Hoima district suggests that male youths dominated bricklaying and hairdressing, while females received training in tailoring, weaving and embroidery. However, the skills of females were threatened by the importation of second-hand clothes (Mwesigwa and Mubangizi, 2019). • Löwe and Phiona (2017) indicated that implementation issues have been identified in Gulu, including low repayment rates, urban young people benefiting more than rural, and the perception that distribution of programme benefits was politically skewed (ibid.). Key informants in the same study also noted the programme was ambiguous in its aims and lacked training elements, seen as necessary for youth to be able to run their intended businesses.
Youth Venture Capital Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates cheap credit to individuals and small groups of youth in business who meet particular criteria. It targets youth aged 18–30 who already have an established business (Ssanyu, 2020). • It requires two personal guarantors that are Centenary Bank clients with good credit history. While the intention is good, the facility is more likely to benefit the upper cohort of youth (26–30) who are mostly urban and setting up in services and trade rather than agriculture (ibid.).
Olweny Irrigation Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented in Dokolo, the scheme aims to increase farmers' agricultural productivity (particularly targeting women and youth) through access to agricultural equipment such as tractors, bulldozers, graders, combine harvesters, forklifts, agro-processing machinery, farm tools, straw choppers and excavators, among others. However, the equipment is not free but subsidised – farmers are required to pay 40% of the total cost to access the equipment (Daily Monitor, 2020).
Agriculture Cluster Development Project (ACDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A partnership project of the MAAIF and the World Bank, financed by the International Development Association of the World Bank, and initiated in 2017. • It aims to raise on-farm productivity, production and marketable volumes of selected agricultural commodities (maize, beans, rice, cassava and coffee). • It targets youth to engage in agriculture and other value-addition activities (MAAIF, 2021).

Programme	Key content and general observations
Third Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF 3) (2015–2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project aims to provide income support to and build the resilience of poor and vulnerable households in Uganda’s Northern region. It offers labour-intensive public works and household income support (World Bank, 2021).
Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary target beneficiaries of the programme are women aged between 18 and 65. • It aims to improve women’s access to financial services, and equip them with the skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services. • Women are provided with interest-free revolving credit to initiate or strengthen their enterprises (MGLSD, 2019b).
Operation Wealth Creation (OWC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides strategic commodities and inputs to increase food security and household incomes. • Löwe and Phiona (2017) described how extension services in Northern Uganda have become less accessible to young people since the creation of OWC. Access to the services and inputs provided by these service delivery agencies had been politicised, with those with close ties to the National Resistance Movement given preferential access. Very few young people (particularly women) have the political skills or experience needed to benefit from such services and networks (ibid.). • BMAU (2019) noted that the lower access to inputs on the part of women and young people in this programme was attributed to lack of transport means to distant sub-counties to collect inputs, a lack of information about input delivery dates, inadequate supplies of commodities demanded by vulnerable groups and poor mobilisation of vulnerable groups. • The programme has strict eligibility requirements (such as land), that do not favour women and young people, who are less likely to own land or make decisions related to land use (Republic of Uganda and World Bank, 2019).
Sasakawa Global 2000 Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented by the Sasakawa Africa Association and the MAAIF. • It aims to provide improved agricultural technologies to enhance the food security and household incomes of smallholder farmers (Sasakawa Africa Association, n.d.). The programme provided machinery such as cassava graters, maize hullers and rice hullers to be used by group associations of youths; however, maintenance of the machines, and even the need for electricity to run them, meant the initiative was unsuccessful, as reported by key informants.

Generally, gender and youth are cross-cutting themes that programmes are expected to take into account during planning. However, there seems to be a *gap in terms of programmes or interventions in the region directly aiming to address gender norms*. Some key informants noted that existing programmes were tackling gender norms only because they included women or because women were aware that they should also benefit from them. Indeed, some livelihood

programmes were designed around existing gender norms related to the different kinds of work expected to be done by men and women, since key informants mentioned that young women, as part of programmes such as the UWEP and YLP, received short courses on baking, sewing or garment cutting. However, there was no indication that such programmes were addressing gender norms directly with young women and men as part of their activities.

Indeed, one key informant highlighted that government programmes usually benefit young men for various reasons, including their greater ability to take advantage of them and due to gender norms that favour men over women when it comes to selling products:

When you look at the government programmes at the district like the Agricultural Cluster Development, NUSAF, YLP you will find that most of the beneficiaries are men. Even the OWC, when you go to the villages, the biggest beneficiaries are men. The men get the things from these programmes but when they are taken home it becomes the responsibility of the woman to take care of them but later on, the person who sells the products is the man (Key informant, local government, Masindi)

4.3 Awareness of rural policies and programmes by Youth Forward Initiative participants

Awareness on the part of youths of rural policies and programmes that support their livelihoods is crucial for them to overcome the challenges that they face when it comes to increasing their capabilities, providing them with new opportunities or pathways that they were probably not contemplating and ensuring that they access timely and effective support when needed (Phillipps and Pereznieta, 2019). In terms of awareness of government initiatives or policies that were presented in the section above, there was limited knowledge about details and names of policies and/or programmes specifically for youths in agriculture among young women and men. Some Youth Forward Initiative programme participants explained that there were policies which were positive, but could not give further details. Similarly, relatives of these participants

indicated they were not aware of, or merely gave vague details about, specific government initiatives that supported young people into agriculture. Although youths and their relatives were unaware of government initiatives, they reported that youths are told by district local government and lower local government officials to 'be in groups' in order to access funds. The support was more available to youths who worked collectively rather than individually. Only two young women reported being aware of and benefiting from NUSAF 3 and YLP government programmes. Another young woman mentioned she once received cassava, bean and maize seeds, although she did not recall the programme.

By contrast, youths showed *more awareness of programmes implemented by NGOs*, including faith-based organisations. In Kaabong, a few young women mentioned receiving support from the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, the global humanitarian organisation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It provided inputs (seeds, goats) to youths working in groups who then sold the subsequent produce and divided the profits among members. Other young women in Kaabong mentioned receiving training from Mercy Corps and TechnoServe, which provide support to farmers to improve their agricultural practices. The young woman who participated in TechnoServe had a negative experience, since group leaders from the programme profited from the horticultural yields grown by programme participants. In the case of young men, very few reported having obtained training or benefits outside DYNAMIC or YETA programmes. Of those that did, one was motivated to obtain additional skills in agriculture and received training from Gulu University. Another young man from Gulu received agricultural training from World Vision, while another young man in Dokolo mentioned that he and his group received seeds on credit from Heifer International.

Finally, none of the study participants mentioned awareness of or having benefited from government or NGO *interventions directly aiming to address gender norms*. There is a lack of awareness of what gender norms are among participants or their implications for the well-being of women and their households. Young women considered that programmes were addressing gender norms when these delivered training in the production of goods and saleable products made by women, such as bags, liquid soaps, beads or pads made with local materials. The lack of awareness reflects that, although programmes such as YETA touch on issues regarding harmful gender norms, young women still lack awareness of what these entail, how they manifest themselves and how they may affect their lives.

4.4 Effects of Covid-19 on youth and their livelihoods

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an effect on the livelihoods of both young women and men. Measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 progressively impacted on the businesses of programme participants due to price fluctuations, lack of income and lack of cash flow, creating grave economic difficulties for participants and their communities more broadly.

Some youths indicated the negative impacts on *agricultural practices*. Participants who relied on their social networks as a source of labour for increased production indicated that, rather than farming in large groups, which was common practice, they were working in smaller groups to avoid infection. This arrangement reduced the size of land one could farm, which meant low farm yields, which in turn would generally be kept for home consumption. Participants who mainly

depended on subsistence agriculture but also sold different products at the market indicated that they were not able to sell their produce because markets were mostly closed during total lockdown. In addition to this, they were impacted by the restricted movement of potential customers from other locations, as they adhered to Covid-19 prevention measures by staying at home. In Kaabong, sitting together and sharing food in the fields was also feared, particularly among young women, who did not want to infect their families.

Other group activities that remained from the Youth Forward Initiative were also affected, such as the VSLAs. These were interrupted through restricted gatherings, and collapsed because members had used all their savings to meet household basic needs, as noted by male participants:

Other members are no longer saving. The group has collapsed totally because us and other members have been affected by this hunger, as a result to Corona (Male, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and baker, Kaabong)

The VSLA collapsed because when the hunger broke out, we used all the money for buying food and vegetables (Male, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Kaabong)

The *effects on small businesses* were also noted. Young women who owned small businesses (breweries, local shops) noted that their sales dropped due to people's fears of getting the disease and the restrictions on gatherings in adherence to the Ministry of Health guidelines and Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures:

COVID-19 has brought much impact, especially to the business like my small business here. You find that people don't longer come in large number like they used to do much as I've even provided those washing facilities at the door there but because people now hear that this disease is dangerous, it is killing people, especially when you are crowded, now this thing has ruined totally the business in that the few people come in a day (Female, 25, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and shop owner, Kaabong)

Covid-19 has also disrupted access to inputs needed for small businesses. One young woman mentioned that she can no longer access poultry due to movement restrictions:

I picked interest in keeping birds-chicken, I started even now raising the poultry house. I came to register but by then, he [the peer educator] told me the chickens were done ... corona has blocked everything (Female, 20, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and baker, Gulu)

Another young woman who sold 'mandazi' (fried dough) and 'chapati' (unleavened flat bread) to students during school breaks experienced income loss as she could no longer sell these items due to school closures.

Beyond economic activities, interviewees in Kaabong reported the revival of cultural practices such as cattle raiding which threatened peace and security. One male IGT participant mentioned concerns about Covid-19's potential to increase conflict between clans. He indicated that before Covid-19, community members from various clans would often hold 'meetings of peace' that prevented situations of conflict such as cattle raiding. Such meetings had been interrupted, posing a threat to stability in the community.

4.5 Impact of the Youth Forward Initiative at the macro level

The IYET in Uganda was launched in February 2017 to establish links between the Youth Forward Initiative, national policy, and influential youth stakeholders (Youth Forward Learning Partnership, 2019). By leveraging their own networks and expanding the set of people involved in the youth sector, IYET was envisioned as a national engagement group to help raise young people's concerns and the profile of these issues, in turn supporting Youth Forward to achieve its goals and enhance its sustainability (ibid.). As such, the main goal of IYET was to advocate for improved and diversified economic opportunities for young people involved in agriculture with government, donors and PSAs (ibid.).

IYET composition included representatives from key institutions: eight members from the public sector (National Youth Council; MAAIF; Ministry of Education and Sports; Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives; National Planning Authority; Office of the Prime Minister; Makerere University Department of Extension and Innovation Studies, Faculty of Agriculture; MGSLD), two from the private sector (Private Sector Foundation Uganda; Uganda Manufacturers' Association), the Feed the Future Youth Leadership in Agriculture programme, and two staff and two youth representatives from DYNAMIC and YETA (Youth Forward Learning Partnership, 2019). Aiming to be a voice of authority on youth issues, IYET provided an interactive platform for Youth Forward implementing partners and youth to interact with each other. Members advocated to promote youth issues within their own ministries and organisations, and with other networks and working groups in which they

were members. Similarly, the multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms brought together a wide range of actors to discuss and act on key issues facing young people (ibid.).

Since IYET was founded, six changes have been achieved, related both to processes (who is involved and the kinds of evidence that guides decision-making processes) and changes in institutional procedures and policy (Youth Forward Learning Partnership, 2019):

1. Fostered interactions among diverse stakeholders on issues affecting young people: IYET facilitated networking and engagement among actors who have been championing youth efforts individually to speak together as a group. Outward-looking activities, such as the multi-sector dialogues that groups hosted, led to knowledge exchange, community building, networking and convening among stakeholders (government ministries, private sector, academic sector, youths, Youth Forward and actors outside of the initiative). However, examples of joint collaboration in new projects among these groups of actors beyond IYET-initiated activities were not observed.
2. Linking young people with decision-makers: increased interactions with stakeholders also contributed to youths' improved awareness and ability to speak with different stakeholders about issues they faced, which in some cases led to extended direct support, requests for inputs into policy processes and contributions to changes in institutional procedures and policy. One example in Uganda includes the opportunity for youth to directly ask questions and voice their concerns with senior decision-makers at the Ministry of State for Youth and Children Affairs and the Commissioner for Youth and Children Affairs.
3. Increasing exposure and awareness of the Youth Forward Initiative: stakeholders at different levels have learnt about Youth Forward programmes and lessons from implementation, such as the importance of mentorship, soft skills and SRH services. Indeed, through field visits to Youth Forward programme sites, IYET members have an increased understanding of youth needs and experiences.
4. Extending direct support to the Youth Forward Initiative: IYET meetings provided a space for youth members to speak and work directly with decision-makers from the public, private and academic sectors. Additionally, through IYET, students from Makerere University provided peer-to-peer agriculture extension services to YETA participants in Uganda.
5. Offering expertise and evidence to inform policy processes: IYET's research on financial inclusion was discussed among participants at the national dialogue workshop, contributing to a wider pool of evidence on the topic. The IYET chair was part of a national working group convened by the Minister of Microfinance that recommended lowering the minimum age for opening bank accounts from 18 to 15 as per the National Financial Inclusion Policy.
6. Contributing to changes in institutional procedures and policies: IYET also raised with local government officials across the YETA districts the issue of young people's concerns over the cost of registering youth associations. The registration process was simplified with through the efforts of other stakeholders, including the Ministry of Trade Industry and Cooperatives. The MAAIF also implements the cost-sharing programme approach as adopted for its Agriculture Cluster Development Project (ACDP) programme, emulating the DYNAMIC programme. The ACDP is being implemented in 57 districts – working with extension workers at

district local government level. The programme provides grants to groups that must comprise 20% youth. The groups receive subsidies towards agriculture inputs for value addition, the project pays 67% and the groups pay 33% of the cost of machinery (IYET, 2020).

Regarding sustainability, national engagement groups aimed to be more focused on leveraging the existing networks to which members belonged, such as the Youth Entrepreneurship

and Employment Network, and the Finance Sector working group, as well as building partnerships with other groups, such as the Agribusiness Finance Platform. Sustainability goals also considered active engagement of members as well as finances for secretarial support and activities like multi-sector dialogues and field trips to visit youth programmes. IYET received commitment from other organisations for additional funding towards their multi-sector dialogue (Youth Forward Learning Partnership, 2018).

5 Access to economic resources and building social connections to improve rural livelihoods: meso-level effects of the Youth Forward Initiative

In line with our conceptual framework, meso-level factors include relationships and interactions with others (such as group members, other individuals in the community or at institutional levels, including Youth Forward Initiative partners) that led to economic improvements for individuals. Here we are interested in unpacking the ability of young women and men to build new relationships, and how these allowed them to access the resources that they needed to strengthen their livelihoods and become active

participants in their societies. We examine the effects of the Youth Forward Initiative on participants' access to economic resources (including access to inputs and technology, to new knowledge and skills, and to financial services) and their ability to benefit from close relationships/social connections through group membership and their YETA mentors or DYNAMIC peer educators. The summary of findings, including effects highlighted by participants and challenges associated with each component, is shown in Box 3.

Box 3 Summary of findings at the meso level: effects on access to economic resources and close relationships/building social connections

Access to economic resources

Access to inputs and technology

- Quantitative data from YETA indicates increases in livestock ownership from 36% (baseline) to 60% (postline). This change is more important among young women, with an increase from 32% to 61% compared to young men, who showed an increase from 39% to 53%.
- Increased access to livestock and inputs through group enterprises (YETA) and connections to input and output companies (DYNAMIC) improved young women's and men's economic empowerment.
- Challenges: inability to afford inputs from private companies (in the case of DYNAMIC); receiving unproductive seeds; livestock illness or death; continuous need for inputs; and lack of connections with input/output companies once programmes ended.

Access to education and learning

- Increased knowledge of agricultural and entrepreneurial skills among young women and men.
- Participants continue applying this knowledge and skills in their businesses, showing some sustainability of YETA/DYNAMIC.

- Knowledge and skills are shared with other members of the household and the community.
- Challenges: inadequate training facilities for young women with children; transport costs to attend trainings when these were delivered in venues away from where they lived; ongoing training needs once programmes come to an end; and the need to refresh learnt skills, indicating some challenges to sustaining knowledge.

Access to financial services

- The Youth Forward Initiative made access to financial services for participants possible, although in the case of DYNAMIC this depended on whether youths decided to set up their VSLAs after receiving training within the programme. For example, quantitative data from YETA shows that the proportion of individuals saving increased from 61% to 78%. Indeed, the proportion of young women saving was slightly greater than for young men (79% and 77% respectively).
- YETA and DYNAMIC gave participants the opportunity to save, access credit and borrow money when needed.
- Savings are usually invested in ongoing needs of their businesses, future needs of the family (in the case of young women) and plans for the future, such as building homes.
- Challenges: inability of young women to make initial or weekly contributions; young women also spoke of competing priorities over whether to allocate earnings to the groups or the needs of their businesses.

Building social connections and close relationships

Belonging to a group or network

- Gave young women the opportunity to challenge some gender norms (e.g. norms about women's financial autonomy or norms around decorum and mobility).
- Contributed to peer learning, including soft skills (e.g. conflict resolution and collaboration among members) (YETA).
- Encouraged participation in social and leisure activities for young women (DYNAMIC).
- Transmission of knowledge and skills to other community members.
- Challenges: emergence of conflict leading at times to group disintegration; in case of group disintegration, young women continued evolving with the skills they learnt; and, for young women, challenges in juggling YETA/DYNAMIC activities with their paid work and UCDW.

The contribution of mentors and peer educators

- YETA mentors play a key role in the transmission of new knowledge and skills, the shaping of new aspirations, and youths' ability to overcome challenges to their businesses.
- DYNAMIC peer educators served and became extension agents for many of the PSAs in support of agricultural enterprises for young people. Young women perceived them as role models, although they were mainly men.
- Challenges: infrequent appearance from peer educators; lack of monitoring of mentors and peer educators.

5.1 Access to economic resources

The increased access to different kinds of livelihoods and economic resources among participants is shown in baseline and postline data from YETA (cohort 1) participants. Postline YETA data indicates that the proportion of youths involved in an income-generating activity increased from 74% to 94%, mainly driven by an increase in the proportion of youths engaged in farming activities. Furthermore, there was an increase in the proportion of individuals who had multiple livelihoods (see Table 6).

Participants in this study, both young women and young men, indicated a direct positive outcome of the Youth Forward Initiative in their access to economic resources due to their increased ability to earn, save, invest or diversify into a new business.

Young women in both programmes perceived substantial improvements in their earnings and income-earning opportunities through agriculture and agribusinesses from livestock to crops. This is mirrored by quantitative data from YETA, which shows that subsistence agricultural production for young women fell sharply between

Table 6 Economic activity baseline and postline YETA (cohort 1) participants

Variable of interest	Gender	Baseline	Follow-up	% change
Any activity in the last 12 months	All	74%	94%	27%
	Male	79%	95%	21%
	Female	67%	92%	38%
Farming	All	55%	90%	63%
	Male	60%	91%	52%
	Female	49%	89%	81%
Employed by someone else (in the last 12 months)	All	25%	30%	17%
	Male	29%	34%	18%
	Female	20%	24%	17%
Entrepreneur¹¹	All	18%	33%	78%
	Male	18%	33%	87%
	Female	20%	33%	67%
Multiple livelihoods	All	37%	51%	39%
	Male	38%	54%	42%
	Female	35%	48%	38%

Source: Bridonneau and Pasanen (2018).

¹¹ In the case of household enterprises jointly run by both spouses, it is sometimes assumed that the business is owned by the husband. As such there might be some bias when estimating the proportion of women who run their own business.

baseline and postline (from 86% to 31%), suggesting a shift from subsistence farming to farming as a source of income (Bridonneau and Pasanen, 2018). Furthermore, the same data (see Table 6) indicates an increase in the proportion of entrepreneurs (non-farming business) for both males (from 18% to 33%) and females (from 20% to 33%) between baseline and postline. This is consistent with our qualitative data, which shows that young women in both programmes engaged in non-agricultural activities (e.g. selling food items, opening small retail shops, selling local brew and tailoring) for the first time or applied their new business knowledge in the small businesses that they set up before the Youth Forward Initiative. Some of these women made a clear reference to

their respective programmes and highlighted the positive effects they noticed in terms of their income and the changes they perceived:

Previously before I got knowledge of horticulture through DYNAMIC programme I was growing other crops, I used to earn like UGX 200,000 in a season only. But when we decided to invest in horticulture after getting advice from our trainer through DYNAMIC programme, nowadays in around three months, I can make between UGX 600,000 to UGX 900,000 depending on how the season has been. I go nearby the swamp here and grow [vegetables] and the demand is always high (Female, 20, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)



Local women sell fresh vegetables on the road to Murchison Falls near Masindi, Uganda. Selling farm products is their only source of income. Photo Credit: Anjo Kan / Shutterstock.com

The things that I have now are cows, and some of them I have calved them ... I have also bought a plot in the centre [of the town]. I have also started constructing, I have poured all the building materials. Other changes also include the knowledge that I got through YETA, all this brings an improvement in my life (Female, 24, YETA participant, farmer and local brew seller, Dokolo)

This is supported by YETA quantitative data, which shows that, in the baseline, the average yearly income among young women was UGX 321,999 and increased during follow-up to UGX 649,167, which is a 102% increase (compared to a 60% among young men), although for both men and women, the increase in income was mainly driven by an increase in income from crops.¹² Indeed, crop farming became the main source of income for female respondents as its contribution increased from 22% to 34% (compared to an increase of 19% to 30% among male respondents) (Bridonneau and Pasanen, 2018).

Young women from our study made reference to their spending patterns. Most mentioned allocating their money to their households, especially towards their children's welfare (food, school fees, medication), the support of their relatives, such as younger siblings (both those who lived with their parents and those who were already married), and further investments for their respective agricultural activities (feed for livestock, seeds) and businesses derived from

their savings (see also section 5.1.3 on access to financial services). As noted by the quote above, a few young women indicated that they had bought plots of land or begun the construction of their houses.

In the case of young men, they indicated improvements in their yields, livestock numbers and agricultural businesses due to the training and skills learnt from participating in YETA or DYNAMIC, which in turn increased their incomes and savings. Compared to young women, young men had more diversified involvement in non-agricultural pursuits. Some mentioned selling second-hand clothes, mending shoes, baking mandazi, driving, opening a bar, and selling water and firewood. Other young women and men indicated they acquired short-term jobs as community facilitators for NGOs or at Area Cooperative Enterprises (ACEs).¹³

Most of the activities started in 2018 or 2019, soon after participating in YETA or DYNAMIC. As with young women, men put their money towards household contributions, including food, transportation, medicine, school expenses of younger siblings and other expenses; re-invested in their agricultural business (such as purchasing feed and expanding the farm); and saved towards buying land or building a home.

In the following sub-sections, we examine the impacts of YETA and DYNAMIC in areas where young women and men indicated changes

12 This income was calculated by adding income from crops, livestock, employment and entrepreneurship. Income from crops included both the money received from selling the crop on the market and the monetary value of the portion of the crop consumed by the participant's household (subsistence production).

13 ACEs were formed in Uganda as a tool to empower farmers in agricultural production, value addition and marketing. Each ACE has primary societies, commonly known as Rural Producer Organisations (RPOs), which are usually engaged in group enterprises or activities. ACEs market the whole range of crops produced by their members, and collect and disseminate market information, and add value to members' produce through processing, or simply by sorting and grading. They also link producers and input dealers, and support agricultural extension services, among other functions (Thangata, 2016).

related to their access to economic resources and their well-being: access to livestock, inputs and technology; access to education and learning; and access to financial services. These economic outcomes are driven by their increased interactions with others in the community (including YETA and DYNAMIC staff, peer educators and mentors, and established structures such as VSLAs) as well as existing institutions (the private sector).

5.1.1 Access to inputs and technology

The use of agricultural inputs to increase and achieve higher-quality yields is standard practice in modern agriculture. However, the evidence on patterns of input use by gender is mixed (FAO, 2018; UBOS, 2010). According to the Ugandan Census of Agriculture (UCA) 2008/09, 33% of males and 24% of females were using improved seeds/varieties (UBOS, 2010), whereas in the FAO (2018b) study only slightly more males (47%) used improved seed varieties compared to their female counterparts (45%). Youths are not usually considered as heads of their own households, and they are frequently overlooked by the providers of extension services, particularly where this involves the distribution of inputs (Löwe and Phiona, 2017).

As mentioned in section 1.1 (YETA and DYNAMIC), in YETA, youths organised themselves in group enterprises and received some crops (sunflower, soybeans, maize and horticulture) or livestock (pigs, poultry, goats and animals for traction), contributing to their income. Data from YETA indicates increases in livestock ownership from 36% (baseline) to 60% (postline). This change is more important among young women, with an increase from 32% to 61%, compared to young men, with an increase from 39% to 53% (Bridonneau and Pasanen, 2018).

In DYNAMIC, youths were connected to input and output companies and some mentioned having received small livestock such as chickens and pigs. There is some indication as to the sustainability of businesses for those who received small livestock, as one young woman shared:

So many people buy pigs from us, when they go to their respective homes, their colleagues will see the breeds which they have, would start asking them ‘Where did you get these good breeds from?’ Then people call us. As I’m talking now, people are calling me from Lango sub-region, people are calling me from Lapoda in Pader district, people are calling me from Onyama in Gulu City demanding or asking about these breeds (Female, 26, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

Other DYNAMIC respondents mentioned that, as part of their agricultural training, they were provided with some inputs and shared their cost (mainly seeds, cassava stems, sunflower, soybeans, and maize) to set up their businesses. As such, YETA and DYNAMIC contributed to reducing the barriers that youths, especially young women, usually face when it comes to accessing productive resources.

5.1.2 Access to education and learning

The 2016 DHS indicates that 19% of girls and women and 13% of boys and men (aged six and above) have never had any formal education (UBOS, 2018b). Educational levels influence entrepreneurship among youths, especially for young women. For example, baseline data from YETA shows that completing primary school was associated with a 70% increase in the probability of owning a business for men, and only 22% for women (Bridonneau and Marć, 2016).



Young people drawing the timeline of their childhood and youth, Gulu District, Uganda.
Photo Credit: Alexandra Löwe, 19 May 2016

Among our study participants, financial reasons were the most common cause of school dropout for both young women and men, specifically because respondents and their parents were no longer able to pay school fees. Sometimes this coincided with other factors, such as the death of a family member who supported the respondent in paying school fees, or in other cases respondents felt they were not intelligent enough to continue learning. In the case of young women, two respondents dropped out after becoming pregnant and other young women dropped out to get married as an escape from their financial situation. In the case of youths, early exit from school is correlated with early

entry into the labour market, meaning that more youths (including young women) enter the agricultural labour market with limited skills (Ahaibwe et al., 2013; 2018). This was confirmed by our key informants in/from local government in our four study sites, who observed that, prior to the Youth Forward Initiative, both young men and women had limited skills and knowledge (numeracy, literacy) including lacking skills related to agriculture (such as how to weed, harvest, post-harvest and how to manage different kinds of crops). Lack of other skills such as business skills, marketing and savings were particularly affecting young women, mirroring the findings of other studies in Uganda (FAO, 2018b).

In the absence of sufficient formal education, extension services have an important role to play in developing young people's agricultural skills. However, the study by Löwe and Phiona (2017) observed that youths had minimal contact with extension service agents until they reached their 20s or 30s (a gap addressed by YETA and DYNAMIC through the role of mentors and peer educators; see also section 5.2.2 on learning from role models). The authors attribute this neglect to generally inadequate extension agent to farmer ratios as well as 'self-exclusion', as young people cannot afford to purchase the fuel that farmers normally supply to extension agents if they want them to visit their farms. In addition, the authors observed how extension services are only relevant to those farmers who can also afford to implement the farming techniques in question (ibid.). The literature also suggests that men tend to dominate extension services when these are offered (Alinyo and Leahy, 2012; Löwe and Phiona, 2017; FAO, 2018b). This was confirmed by one key informant in Masindi, who noted that young women face barriers to accessing agricultural extension services, mainly because men may impede it, including husbands who restrict their wives' movements and participation in community-based initiatives:

You may find some women that are not allowed by their men to participate [in extension services]. When you go to a group and you have some information to pass on, you find very few young women. You will find only young men and some few old women, very few. I think it's the men taking over everything. They may even refuse the young women to go and participate (Key Informant, Local Government, Masindi)

The Youth Forward Initiative filled this gap for both young women and men. Improved access

to economic resources and increased incomes was only possible through youths' increased knowledge of agricultural and entrepreneurial skills through YETA and DYNAMIC training (facilitated by peers), which often involved seeking consent from husbands and parents. This knowledge was highly valued by young women and men, since most dropped out of school at an early age. Young women indicated they had gained new agricultural skills such as keeping animals, planting different crops (beans, cowpeas, horticulture) and employing modern methods of post-harvest handling. Entrepreneurial skills were also valued, as they contributed to women setting up their own businesses:

Before I joined YETA, life was difficult because I did not have knowledge on how to start any small income-generating activity like the ones I am doing now like selling alcohol, bread or charcoal (Female, 24, YETA participant, farmer and seller of local brew, Gulu)

When I joined DYNAMIC, I got skills from the peer educator regarding business, saving in VSLA groups. Then, when I found that there was no start-up capital, which has been even brought up by the people of DYNAMIC, I thought let me start by my own. I started my own business [local brew], then I started saving money and then I came up with my small shop selling small things such as beer, salt, cooking oil, soap (Female, 24, DYNAMIC participant, local brew seller and shopkeeper, Kaabong)

Young men made particular reference to their acquired agricultural skills, including production (use of adequate farming techniques or pest management), post-harvest handling, selling and reinvesting profits. A few young men from

DYNAMIC also mentioned they were hired by farmer or ACEs and learnt to operate machines (tractors, maize threshing machines). Male participants considered they had an advantage over their male peers who did not participate in YETA or DYNAMIC because they had acquired knowledge of modern farming methods. New learning on making agricultural inputs (such as feed for animals or organic fertilisers) and techniques to preserve and multiply livestock were highly appreciated:

They would tell us if you buy one chicken or a cow, you will look after it and then it will multiply, you can then sell them and make a profit. Also, the way we do our agriculture is different as a result of the improved farming technologies that they gave us. So, I get a lot of harvest, hence reducing my level of poverty (Male, 28, YETA participant, farmer and bricklayer, Dokolo)

The new skills are helping me ... I do grow my own maize, then I use other locally available ingredients I talked about to formulate my feeds for my pigs. As you are aware, the price of animal feeds has gone up. So, I am saving as I produce my feeds myself and these savings help me to do other things (Male, 23, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

As such, young women and men have been able to continue using the skills they acquired during their participation in YETA or DYNAMIC to sustain their business growth, which helps them to take advantage of social or economic opportunities. For example, one young woman in Kaabong indicated that she shifted to selling local brew rather than growing white sorghum, as she was advised by her peer educator that

local brew could be sold all year round, providing a continuous income source. She also indicated that she continued applying the skills (particularly numeracy and business development) that she was taught by her peer educator:

Another thing that I've continued to do is brewing and what I do with my business is to make sure that my customers come. I make sure the place is not dirty, I sweep it, I wash the jugs and cups or the things that I'm using for giving these brews to my customers (Female, 24, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and local brew seller, Kaabong)

Knowledge- and skill-sharing between YETA and DYNAMIC participants and other members of their household (parents, husbands) and community members also emerged repeatedly as an important indirect effect of the Youth Forward Initiative.

Key informants mentioned that, although youths are the direct beneficiaries, they are told to share their knowledge with others. A few married young women discussed teaching their husbands on the skills learnt from YETA/DYNAMIC. Siblings also indicated they benefited from being taught by young women and men of both programmes and got involved in similar businesses or supported those of young women and men, feeling motivated to learn and increase their income.

5.1.3 Access to financial services

Evidence from the Economic Policy Research Centre (2020) shows that rural residents in Uganda usually borrow from informal sources, with males having slightly better access to loans than females (49% and 43% respectively). The same source indicates that 63% of males

(5.4 million) and 54% of females (5.4 million) are formally served by financial services.¹⁴ Factors that affect financial inclusion include: gender, access to mobile phones (and mobile money), as well as access to the internet (ibid.).

The Youth Forward Initiative made access to financial services for participants possible. This is supported by data from YETA, which shows that the proportion of individuals saving increased from 61% to 78%. Indeed, the proportion of young women saving was slightly greater than for young men (79% and 77% respectively). When looking at deposit frequencies, the data shows that the proportion of youth who made a weekly deposit increased from 71% to 93%. Again, this change is slightly greater among young women (up from 77% to 96%) than among young men (66% to 90%). Loan take-up also increased between baseline and follow-up, from 8% to 19%. Again, this proportion is slightly higher among young women (19%), compared to young men (18%). The use of mobile money also increased among women (from 41% to 54%) and particularly among young men (57% to 73%) (Bridonneau and Pasanen, 2018). In the case of DYNAMIC, the programme trained peer groups to establish VSLAs, and it was the groups' decision to take the initiative further.

The qualitative data shows that, although not all respondents confirmed their ongoing participation in saving groups once projects came to an end, also due to Covid-19, many indicated that YETA and DYNAMIC (and the financial and literacy skills they learnt) offered them the possibility to save, access credit and borrow money when needed (and when these groups were set up by youths in the case of DYNAMIC). This was still the case for youths

belonging to VSLAs that were set up at different times during programme implementation and continued to operate. Overall, experiences were positive. For young women, participating in VSLAs offered them a platform to save money and access loans for business growth and investment that they may not otherwise have had:

They [DYNAMIC partners] came and trained us on savings, so that made us stronger and they were hoping to even link our VSLA to open an account in the bank (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

I can still access [credit] ... when I am short of money, our group is still saving, so I go to our group and borrow some money (Female, 28, YETA participant, farmer, Masindi)

Young women observed that their new financial literacy/saving skills and knowledge allowed them to *allocate their savings* for a variety of purposes, including diversification and investment in multiple businesses. Other young women opened their own small retail shops. Others continued reinvesting in their businesses through allocating part of their savings, for example to re-investments in agricultural inputs (seeds), livestock, contributions to the payments of day labourers, or non-agricultural businesses. They also saved money towards future family needs and welfare (food, school fees), plans for the future (building a new home) and in case of emergencies (hospital expenses). A couple of women in Gulu observed that they lent money to close friends who then paid them back with some interest.

14 Formal financial access was mainly driven by use of mobile money and, to a lesser extent, increased outreach by financial institutions through agents located in rural areas. Commercial banks were found to account for only 11%, and together with savings and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs) and MFIs, 18% of financial inclusion (Economic Policy Research Centre, 2020).

Young men mentioned using their savings to buy vegetables during the rainy season to then store and sell during the dry season (particularly participants from Gulu), to purchase transportation goods (motorcycles), or to reinvest in their businesses or support those of their family. They also saved money towards future plans such as buying a plot of land or building a new home.

Other household members also benefited from the VSLAs formed through YETA/DYNAMIC. For example, one YETA male participant from Masindi indicated that his mother switched from her VSLA to YETA's after noticing the increased savings that the son was making. Other family members indicated that the savings of their children (both male and female) allowed the family to make larger investments, such as buying land or constructing new houses. However, in other cases wealth effects for the household take longer to materialise. Some relatives of participants indicated that benefits in agriculture were hard to see because they did not have access to land. In other cases, the group enterprises failed, and participants had not had a chance to share any economic benefits with their households.

5.1.4 Challenges to access to economic resources

Although young women and men indicated having positive experiences from YETA and DYNAMIC that supported their access to economic resources, challenges were also noted.

Some youths mentioned they had *problems in accessing livestock and agro-inputs while in their programmes*. Inability to pay for inputs from private companies was a problem for youths in DYNAMIC who had to borrow money from their parents to buy inputs through the discounted seed voucher arrangement. Some youths received

inputs (such as sunflower seeds, and cassava stems) but were not given the necessary training to grow them; on other occasions these did not produce good yields.

In YETA sites, youths also voiced challenges. Livestock illness or death was mentioned without these animals being necessarily replaced by the programme. This limitation was addressed by YETA for later cohorts through providing training to youths to become veterinary service providers. Unintended conflict at the community level (such as livestock damaging neighbours' crops) was mentioned on a few occasions. Seeds not producing good yields was also problematic for some participants:

When I joined YETA, we were given an incubation business of onion production. When we were given those onions, I thought my life would change after planting and harvesting and replanting again, but the onions didn't do well. So, life never changed as I expected (Male, 23, YETA participant, farmer, Dokolo)

Most youths did not have linkages with inputs/ outputs companies or stakeholders that could point them in the right direction once programmes ended. There was a continued need for inputs and technology, such as spray tabs for crops and other pesticides, fertilisers, seeds or products from agro-input dealers. Lack of pesticides and veterinary drugs for livestock was also seen as a continuous problem, especially by youths from YETA. According to key informants, along with youth participants and their relatives, the main challenge faced by youths in terms of accessing agricultural inputs (seeds, pesticides) and technologies or machinery to process products (such as maize, and coffee) was lack of capital:

[Name of participant] does not have the ability to access inputs because as a child, he has limited capital, he has not yet expanded his network, like the water pump he uses, he got it from a friend, a colleague of his who is also a vegetable horticultural farmer like him (IGT, father of a young male participant of DYNAMIC, 35, farmer, Gulu)

He cannot access fertilisers as his earnings are very low, he cannot access seedlings from the agro-input dealers. He cannot access land. He cannot access fertilisers (IGT, father-in-law of a young woman participant of YETA, 37, farmer, Masindi)

However, some young men (three) noted that they could access agricultural inputs through private input dealers in their town centre or marketplace, or had connections (relatives) who worked ‘in the business’ and who could provide them with the inputs needed. Others indicated that they obtained inputs and technology from their parents, echoing the findings of Löwe and Phiona (2017). In the case of young women, none of them mentioned having access to personal connections or going to marketplaces to buy inputs or technologies, although one female mentioned having a grinding machine and a few mentioned receiving support from their parents if required. This reflects the challenges that youths continue to face once programmes come to an end.

Furthermore, *factors beyond the control of YETA and DYNAMIC challenged youths’ ability to sell their products*. As Löwe and Phiona (2017) observed, links to value chains and national markets are tenuous in Northern Uganda; owing to poor infrastructure, prices tend to be more volatile and profit margins for both food and cash crops are unpredictable, something

that was confirmed by our key informants. Key informants also noted that youths in general struggle to sell larger quantities of a product because they may need to sell it outside their villages, and some, particularly women, cannot commute longer distances due to lack of transport. Youths mentioned they still had to deal with local intermediaries (‘obagos’) who would take a commission and would not pay fair prices for better-quality products. Most respondents also highlighted the negative impacts of climate change. Short-term crops as a result of rain not being reliable (or non-existent for several months) or floods, were constantly mentioned, as well as increased pests and diseases affecting crops.

Regarding access to education and learning, *participants indicated challenges related to their learning process and the sustainability of knowledge*. Mention was made of inadequate training facilities that did not attend to the needs of young women, particularly those with children. For instance, in DYNAMIC sites, one young woman from Gulu noted that her training took place in a youth centre that she described as crowded, unhygienic and inadequate for babies, as she had to bring her new-born with her. In YETA sites, although YETA aimed to accommodate women with children during trainings, these efforts did not become fully operational until cohorts 2, 3 and 4.

Lack of transport due to the high cost of attending trainings (when these were organised in venues away from where they lived) and lack of food during trainings were other challenges communicated by some participants. Inadequate training was also raised by some participants, who mentioned not having received skills to face potential issues that were faced during farming. This is an indication that challenges in farming are manifold and short-term skills training may

not be sufficient for participants to obtain positive outcomes from farming or agribusiness. Furthermore, there was a need for training in new topics, as well as refreshers for previously learnt skills once programmes came to an end. This highlights the importance of programmes' actions to sustain knowledge transfer. Accessing continuous knowledge and skills once YETA and DYNAMIC came to an end depended on the relationship established with mentors and peer educators. For example, one peer educator mentioned that he told youth members, even once DYNAMIC had ended, to continue approaching him should they need him. However this was the exception rather than the rule among participants.

Challenges regarding VLSAs were also identified by participants. Problems faced by young women included the inability to make the initial or weekly contributions to the savings group. For some, there were competing priorities over whether to allocate earnings to the group or to the needs of their businesses:

Our group started at the time when we were digging, and money was needed to open land and to buy seeds. So, we had no savings and the rule was that every week you had to save. So, we struggled and that was a very big challenge to choose between saving and buying seeds to plant for the next harvest season (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and university student, Gulu)

5.2 Building social connections and close relationships for sustainable rural livelihoods

Community-based organisations, such as farmers' groups, cooperatives and savings associations, can be an effective way of improving access to

markets, access to information about production techniques and as a way to pool risk. Collaboration between individual farmers can help to overcome constraints in accessing resources and to achieve economies of scale (FAO, 2011). Indeed, membership of a farmers' group is an important prerequisite for accessing certain programmes and services (Ahaibwe et al., 2013). However, Ahaibwe et al. (2013) also note that farmer group membership is lower among youths (aged 18 to 30) than adults (aged 31 to 64) at only 10.1% compared to 14.1%, though youth in the Northern region are more likely to be members of farmers' groups than those in the other regions, with membership at 10% compared to a mere 2.6% for the Central region. This is partly attributable to the presence of NUSAF, which places emphasis on farmer group formation in its operations (ibid.).

Key informants noted that local government initiatives (such as the YLP) have encouraged young women and men to participate in the formation of such groups so they can benefit from government and NGO initiatives that support youths in agriculture. Participation of young women in groups with economic benefits for participants may have the potential to challenge harmful gender norms in the region, as key informants noted:

Our young girls have not benefited a lot due to a number of things that need to be worked out such as gender perspectives, changing the mindset of communities; but with the arrival of these NGOs, slowly, they are trying to change. The girls in some communities are now being seen as equal partners in development (Key informant, Local Government, Masindi)

One essential change voiced by young women and young men was in the domain of sustaining and building social connections and relationships

with peers who also participated in Youth Forward Initiative activities, as well as with other important stakeholders, such as the peer educators in the case of DYNAMIC and mentors in the case of YETA. This sub-section discusses the effects of building close relationships through both belonging to a group or network and learning from role models, particularly peer educators and to a lesser extent mentors.

5.2.1 Belonging to a group/network

Belonging to a group/network was of great importance to YETA and DYNAMIC participants. For young women in both programmes, participation in groups was an opportunity to challenge barriers driven by gender norms (see section 6.2). For example, participating in a group gave young women the opportunity to challenge barriers related to norms around decorum and mobility. Young women indicated that they now worked in agricultural businesses outside of their homes, they could voice their opinions during VSLA meetings, or engage with other women in sports activities. Furthermore, belonging to a group also allowed young women to challenge barriers related to norms about women's financial autonomy. While some young women would initially be supported by their relatives with start-up capital for investment in their businesses, others who lacked such support accessed loans and credit from their VSLAs to buy or hire land, buy seeds and/or hire labour to start an agricultural business which yielded profits (see section 5.1.3 on access to financial services). Young women in YETA could negotiate and discuss household finances with their husbands, especially when couples joined the VSLA together. Young women also noted that before YETA/DYNAMIC they did not engage in group activities that brought income-generating opportunities or improved their mental health and well-being.

In the case of YETA, participants indicated they were encouraged to work in groups because, if one member had a problem, others could provide support. As noted by Löwe et al. (2019), this kind of collaboration allowed youths in YETA to overcome psychological, physical and economic barriers to improved livelihoods. The increased access to economic resources (particularly access to resources such as livestock, inputs and technology and to financial services through VSLAs) would not have been possible without youth groups. Echoing Löwe et al. (2019) in their study on the role of youth associations and cooperatives in getting young people into work, YETA participants benefited from the formation of bonding capital, defined by Putnam (1995) as the forming of relationships with peers, family and friends to allow a group access to resources that would otherwise have been beyond their reach. This is of particular importance to participants in this study, who faced an array of barriers to their livelihoods as individuals (e.g. lack of land, access to extension services, lack of knowledge on agriculture and entrepreneurial activities).

As youth under YETA belonged to organised groups, they could be easily linked to government programmes to access crops and livestock, mainly the YLP. YETA group enterprises were important, but the skills gained through the group were also used by participants to start their individual businesses. Young women in YETA also noted they learnt skills (such as looking after animals, saving and entrepreneurial skills) from friends, including friends from other locations (Lira) who they met through the programme. In the case of young men enrolled in YETA, they also mentioned benefiting from peer learning, something also noted by their relatives during IGTs. Learning about conflict resolution among members (both female and male) of YETA group enterprises was another highly valued skill:

When we joined, we were taken through how you can solve differences. If you have annoyed someone, we were told how we can talk, so that we solve issues amicably (Male, 25, YETA participant, farmer and construction worker, Dokolo)

In the case of DYNAMIC participants, benefits from bonding social capital were also observed (see Box 4).

Box 4 Benefiting from group membership: ‘I no longer have problems that press me so much like those days’

Masiko is 20 years old and she is a former DYNAMIC participant in Gulu district. She completed senior 1 and abandoned her studies when her parents informed her that they could not continue paying her school fees. She then decided to get married and forget about spending more time on her economic activities and now has two children. Masiko and her husband were farmers, but when she joined DYNAMIC she began to practice horticulture (growing tomatoes, onions, soybeans). In addition to these activities she recently ventured into rice. Compared to her life before DYNAMIC, when she begged occasionally, she feels secure in her life because she has money on a regular basis: ‘I no longer have problems that press me so much like those days. My children can take sugar, I can buy milk, I can meet some basic needs. I’m very happy.’ Having access to regular earnings has also reduced the economic pressure on her husband: ‘my husband when he comes and finds I’ve solved certain issues, which was not like before, he also feels happy and appreciates it.’

Her increased income has also reduced criticisms from family members about suitable work for women, normally considered work that is done in the household, and she feels encouraged and supported:

My husband and his family members cannot stop me from being involved in farming or agribusiness because they are seeing the value we are getting from it and everybody appreciates and they keep encouraging us.

Masiko considers she would have not achieved those changes in her life without the skills and knowledge she received from DYNAMIC:

Using the knowledge that I got from the DYNAMIC programme is helping me, it’s supporting my family. Even if you didn’t give me money, the knowledge you gave me is worth money.

Masiko observed that, with DYNAMIC, she has grown in confidence in other areas of her life. She is secretary of her VSLA and notes that she ‘enforces discipline for people who come late’. Her family has noticed that she has made new friends since participating in DYNAMIC and that she has become more social, as her father noted:

She was not an outgoing person. She used to stay at home, she used not to go out and meet with friends. But nowadays I see her going to saving groups, coming back feeling happy. I see her friends coming here, she's always with her fellow ladies-girls. They keep discussing productive things in most cases and when her friends come, I normally see them coming to her garden to support her and she also goes and supports them.

Masiko has also observed continuous benefits from being part of a group under DYNAMIC: 'since DYNAMIC organised us into groups, World Vision came with inputs and gave them to some group members. They also come and train us, they give us some skills.' Similarly, she and other group members have continued organising themselves to access formal financial services:

Centenary Bank came here last week and talked to us because we want to apply for a loan to fence off part of the stream to grow horticulture during the dry season when cows normally disturb us there. They promised to come back next week.

However, she still faces challenges in her economic activities. Masiko lacks the pesticides to prevent diseases and pests that at times ruin her crops. Although she gives advice and has some control over decisions that concern her children, the main decision-maker is still her husband: 'it's my husband who always takes decision on matters concerning income, education and livelihood of our family.' Also, it is unclear if the loan that she is planning to apply for with her group will be granted, and the process is still unclear to them. Although she was not told when DYNAMIC was coming to an end, Masiko has noticed that DYNAMIC staff are not around any more, and she shared her hopes of seeing them back so she can continue getting further skills and support.

Young women and men who participated in DYNAMIC indicated that participation in VSLAs helped them to learn how to work well with other youth members and to collaborate. A few respondents also reported that being able to save allowed them to support and to motivate each other:

I know that from these [VSLA] savings, I will later on get the money. If I'm not quite there, then I go to my friends and I ask them for some money; if they need savings, they also come to me when they do not have. So, it is all about sharing (Male, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Kaabong)

Those of us who are enterprising, we keep encouraging ourselves to save more money, to invest more money, so that we can also be better. Since we have little responsibility at this age, we assume that by the time we get responsibility, we shall have accumulated some money that can help us do some business to earn a living (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and university student, Gulu)

Some young women in DYNAMIC indicated that the programme encouraged them to participate in social and leisure activities (e.g. sports activities, dancing groups), where they met other women. Those with time to participate in such activities were

usually single. Involvement in these groups improved their physical and mental well-being and on occasion gave them an opportunity to increase their income:

There are activities that we do, which other women who are not in the programme don't do, for example we have our traditional dancing group and netball team. So, most times when we save, we normally also play after the savings' meeting. Also, sometimes we also practice the traditional dance and if some people are around within the community who are having their parties, they invite us and pay us some little money (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and university student, Gulu)

The benefits of knowledge and skills learnt through group activities were transmitted from YETA and DYNAMIC participants to other members of the community. For example, one female YETA participant shared her experience in advising her neighbour on starting and running a small business, although she did not specify the kind of business. Likewise, key informants observed that other members of the community have improved their farming techniques (soil preparation, weeding, sowing) after observing YETA and DYNAMIC participants or being taught how to by them.



A young woman and youth at a VSLA. Photo Credit: Bosco Otulo / YETA

5.2.2 Learning from role models: the contribution of mentors and peer educators

Social capital theory maintains that, once members have formed groups and are accessing the benefits of collective action, the second type of social capital (bridging capital) becomes more important (Majee and Hoyt, 2011). This is capital that allows groups to form networks with other groups, with the aim of obtaining ever-greater human, social and financial capital. Members benefiting from any form of bonding social capital will not be successful until they forge ties with others in the wider society (Putnam, 1995). The evidence suggests that young women (and to a lesser extent young men) benefited not only from the formation of bonding social capital, but also from bridging social capital, particularly through their new relationships with mentors (YETA) and peer educators (DYNAMIC). The skills and knowledge of agriculture and business obtained through mentors and peer educators allowed youths to overcome existing barriers and so acquire new knowledge on agriculture and businesses through government extension services.

YETA youths mentioned that they learnt their knowledge on agriculture and agribusinesses through their mentors, some of whom were their peers. Youths valued the fact that mentors had experience in growing cash crops that provided them with higher returns compared to the crops they grew before YETA. Young women and men indicated that their relationship with mentors also helped them to shape new aspirations, such as the possibility of continuing to grow their businesses and to attain their life goals through higher incomes. Mentors also helped young women and men to overcome challenges faced in their businesses and to answer their doubts. Youths

reported that mentors motivated them to become more entrepreneurial and gave them with confidence to venture into new activities. Furthermore, although participants did not mention the role of their mentors explicitly, mentors may have played a strong role in improving youths' confidence, self-esteem, leadership skills and psychosocial well-being, since YETA trainings integrated considerations of young people's psychosocial well-being and confidence as part of their content.

For DYNAMIC youths, the relationship with peer educators was also key in learning new skills. Peer educators had an opportunity to serve and become extension agents for some of the PSAs in support of agricultural enterprises for young people. Most young women shared positive views of their peer educators and their increased learning in agricultural skills, keeping livestock, disease and pest control, and business skills. Peer educators were perceived by young women as role models or inspirations for mastering agribusinesses:

I got encouragement from [name of peer educator] because he's the one who was the first youth to start keeping birds around. I saw his life was changing, so I also started admiring him and I was feeling that it is easy, it is doable and that's why I chose to also start the birds business ... initially we used to throw away feed but nowadays even the feed leftovers are not wasted. I just make sure that when we finish eating, I put it there and give it to the birds with the hope that at the end of the day I will be able to get some money from it. All this I learnt from [name of peer educator] (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and university student, Gulu)

Peer educators also facilitated access to inputs and livestock for youths. For example, goats, cows, chicken or pigs were received through peer educators' established networks with private sector companies that dealt in those specific inputs. Peer educators were seen as individuals who have greater knowledge of agriculture or business skills and are capable of giving valuable advice to young women. However, peer educators were mainly men (see section 1.1.), and young women did not benefit from a female role model who resembled them from a gender perspective. Young men in DYNAMIC sites did not share details of their peer educator experience. Only the mother of a male participant from Gulu indicated that the peer educator was the only channel for her son to continue obtaining agricultural training during Covid-19. Similarly, another young man indicated that, through his peer educator, he had more access to machinery due to his increased connections to other farmers:

After I was taught farming, some days I followed these people who drive tractors and I went with them for digging. So, I could follow them, sit on the tractor, saw what they were doing, and at the end of the day, they made me know how to use it for ploughing and I am now using the tractor (Male, 24, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Kaabong)

Peer educators expressed a preference for working with young women rather than young men. For example, a peer educator from Gulu indicated that working and sharing knowledge with young women was easier than with young men because women were genuinely interested in learning, listened more carefully and attended more regularly. In contrast, men were more interested in being paid after

each training and their attendance at meetings and trainings was irregular.

5.2.3 Challenges faced while belonging to a group/network and the (non-existent) relationship with mentors and peer educators

Despite the positive impacts of belonging to a group/network and the relationship with mentors and peer educators, YETA and DYNAMIC participants identified some challenges.

Some participants touched on the disadvantages of group membership. As also observed by Löwe et al. (2019), conflict emerged on some occasions in YETA sites around issues of free-riding, theft of group resources or the success of the group enterprise. YETA and DYNAMIC participants from this study indicated that conflict emerged around issues of disrespect among members (being ignored or having their views suppressed), inability to pay loans on time, theft of group savings, hoarding inputs received by the programmes (seeds, bicycles) and time constraints on participation in community works (road construction). This shows that, even within groups that display strong characteristics of bonding social capital, processes of inclusion and exclusion are clearly evident (Leonard, 2004). The extent to which the group was affected by these issues was largely determined by how engaged and skilled their mentor or peer educator was. Conflict with other group members led to group disintegration in some instances. When this happened, young women noted that they tried to make the most of the skills they had learnt (see Box 5). Conflict also arose with other community members who, according to young women and men, were jealous of not being part of the programmes, and resented participants.

Box 5 Group conflict and strategies of young women to overcome challenges

Afiya, 22 years old, was a YETA participant in Dokolo district. She studied until Primary Seven and abandoned her studies when she became pregnant. She did not get married and lives with her parents and her three-year-old daughter. When Afiya joined YETA she learnt different skills that she considers important in livelihood terms, such as new agricultural techniques or keeping livestock and birds. She also valued the financial skills she received, which helped her to start saving for the first time in her life: 'Before joining YETA, there was no way I would get money, but when I joined, I started to save and when I was given back the savings I used them to buy my things.' Afiya also made new girlfriends from her savings group. Together they discussed what they were doing with their savings and motivated each other. They also played volleyball occasionally after meetings. YETA also taught her group about conflict resolution:

During those trainings under YETA, they taught us that if you want to talk to someone about solving an issue, for that person to pick very well what you are telling him, you are supposed to sit down with the person, in privacy and with respect.

However, conflict arose in her group and the skills learnt relating to conflict resolution were not enough to avoid its collapse:

The reason why this group of ours somehow disintegrated is because of our group leaders, nothing else. When the group was formed, YETA gave us three bicycles and they told us that, if there was any member of the group who wants to use the bicycle, maybe [this person] has a problem like wanting to go to the hospital, that person is supposed to come and be given the bicycle to meet his problem. But these group leaders would refuse giving the other members the bicycles. That is why other members decided to withdraw, and the group collapsed.

When her group disintegrated, members decided to divide the money among themselves to avoid further conflict; after that they did not meet again. Afiya received a good amount of money (around UGX 150,000) but was unsure what to do with it. While in YETA, she learnt about the importance of investments and, after consulting with her parents, she decided to buy piglets and goats. While in YETA she also learnt livestock skills, so she was confident she could make the most of her investment. Once she began to sell the piglets and see the return on her investment, she decided to join a different VSLA group, where she is currently saving.

Today, Afiya sells piglets after they have grown and keeps goats in case of an emergency. YETA also made her think about her future. Afiya wants to buy larger animals such as cows, so she can increase her income. She also wants to contribute to a better future for her parents: 'I want to work hard and do something for my parents, finish and cement their house, so that when I am leaving, as in getting married, I know I have left something for them.' So, even though her group collapsed, Afiya could take the right decisions and apply what she learnt as a member of YETA.

Another important challenge for young women was *juggling YETA/DYNAMIC group activities (due to their length or frequency) with their paid and UCDW responsibilities*. Time constraints around attending trainings and other kinds of group meetings were mentioned by both young women and key informants:

I still strongly believe that the biggest beneficiaries of these programmes are the boys, why: they have the time to attend the meetings compared to the young girls who have to take care of their families; these boys end up putting the assistance to poor use (Key informant, local government, Masindi)

Participation in DYNAMIC affected my participation in the other [paid] activities because there may be an activity in the community which coincides with for example savings [group meeting] and I cannot participate in other programmes because when you fail to go for the savings [group], you always pay a fine (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and university student, Gulu)

I was interrupted by YETA group activities, because of that sometimes I did not attend to my farm. So, I was interrupted (Female, 23, YETA participant, farmer, Masindi)

This finding is similar to those found in the literature, which shows that Ugandan women struggle to juggle their paid and non-paid activities in addition to time spent in development initiatives or farmers' groups (Bantebya et al., 2013; FAO, 2011; 2018).

Other participants mentioned *challenges when working with their YETA mentors and DYNAMIC peer educators*, although more experiences were shared regarding peer educators. Some young women indicated negative experiences due to peer educators' infrequent appearance to provide training and/or mentorship. As a result, these participants described the absence of any meaningful relationship with their peer educators and had consequently lost motivation to continue with their agricultural activities. Lack of monitoring of mentors and peer educators was also noted:

We got challenges most especially from the peer educator because all the time he could not give us or provide us with enough skills, he only appeared once every three weeks, he trains us, yet we needed more skills from him. Also, people from DYNAMIC did not take seriously monitoring over the peer educator (Female, 24, farmer and retail shop operator, DYNAMIC participant, Kaabong)

One male peer educator indicated that other peer educators were not doing their jobs and that there was a lack of serious supervision mechanisms. A female peer educator also reported problems with mobilising youth for training, noting that youths hardly wanted to share the training costs, which discouraged some youths from participating in trainings. Peer educators also said that youth would want to be remunerated after the trainings, while young women were easier to mobilise compared to young men. This indicates the great influence that role models such as mentors and peer educators can have in the overall goals of the programme and the experiences of young women and men.

6 The experiences of young women and men in the agricultural sector: micro-level effects of the Youth Forward Initiative

This section explores the effects of the Youth Forward Initiative at the micro level. For the purpose of the analysis of our data, micro-level factors include the individual and their relationship to others in the household. This section begins by briefly introducing the roles of young women and men in agriculture, along with existing gender challenges.

We then examine the remaining four areas from our conceptual framework: (1) the role of gender norms (in the context of the Youth Forward Initiative); (2) exercising voice and individual agency; (3) exercising competence and self-worth; and (4) physical and mental health and well-being. The summary of findings at the micro level is shown in Box 6.

Box 6 Summary of findings: the experiences of youths in the agricultural sector, the role of gender norms and the effects of the Youth Forward Initiative at the micro level

The agricultural sector as experienced by youths and existing gender challenges

- Youths face important challenges in agriculture, such as limited ability to accumulate assets and resources, responsibilities to contribute to household needs, or limited ownership and control of land.
- Young women face additional challenges due to their gender, including having less access to extension services (attributed to transport costs, information on available extension services, and it being a male-dominated sector in which visits to male farmers who can cover the costs of a visit are preferred) and to land than men, as well as often cultivating less profitable crops, among other factors.

The role of gender norms in the context of the Youth Forward Initiative

Findings indicate that gender norms play a role in driving women's engagement in the agricultural sector, mediating the outcomes of the Youth Forward Initiative. These include:

- Norms on expected kinds of work for men and women in agriculture and the household, which originate from beliefs around women's inability to undertake 'hard labour', leading young women to work in less productive activities or those that can be combined with their household chores.
- Norms on ownership of land tend to favour young men whose access increases with age.
- Norms on ownership of non-land assets limit young women's access to cattle, capital and inputs.
- Men are the ultimate decision-makers, including decisions on farming proceeds, affecting young women's ability to invest in profitable crops and in small businesses.
- Norms on women's financial autonomy limit their access to formal financial services.

- Norms on decorum and mobility lead young women to undertake paid activities that can be run within or close to their homes compared to men who spend more time in the public sphere.
- Gender norms contribute to young women's marriage and childbearing from an early age, affecting their time and capacity to engage in commercial farming.

Youth Forward Initiative's role in exercising voice and individual agency

- YETA/DYNAMIC led to single young women deciding to delay marriage and romantic relationships.
- Young women increased their confidence as regards making decisions on personal matters and voicing their concerns. Young men also voiced changes in confidence and in sharing thoughts during family/community meetings and in the presence of elders.
- Young women improved their decision-making power on allocation of earnings and control of resources due to their increased awareness of their own economic contribution to the household.
- Once youths (mainly young women) overcame family opposition to joining the Youth Forward Initiative, YETA/DYNAMIC led to an improvement in their roles within their households and how they were viewed by relatives, mainly due to their increased financial support and independence.
- YETA/DYNAMIC also brought prestige and pride to the family as youths improved their economic situation.

Youth Forward Initiative's role in exercising competence and self-worth

- YETA/DYNAMIC increased participants' competence and self-worth, as shown by participants' changes regarding: improved confidence; exercising of leadership (with some barriers still faced by young women); increased feelings of pride due to perceived improvements in skills and positive behaviours; and enhanced aspirations for the future.

Youth Forward Initiative's role in physical and mental health and well-being

- In YETA sites, young women identified improvements in knowledge on SRH and family planning.
- Young women and men voiced positive changes in their nutrition and that of their children.
- Changes in personal hygiene and cleanliness were perceived by young women and men in DYNAMIC, which were also transmitted to children.
- Positive changes around mental health and psychosocial well-being were identified in both programmes.

6.1 The agricultural sector as experienced by youths

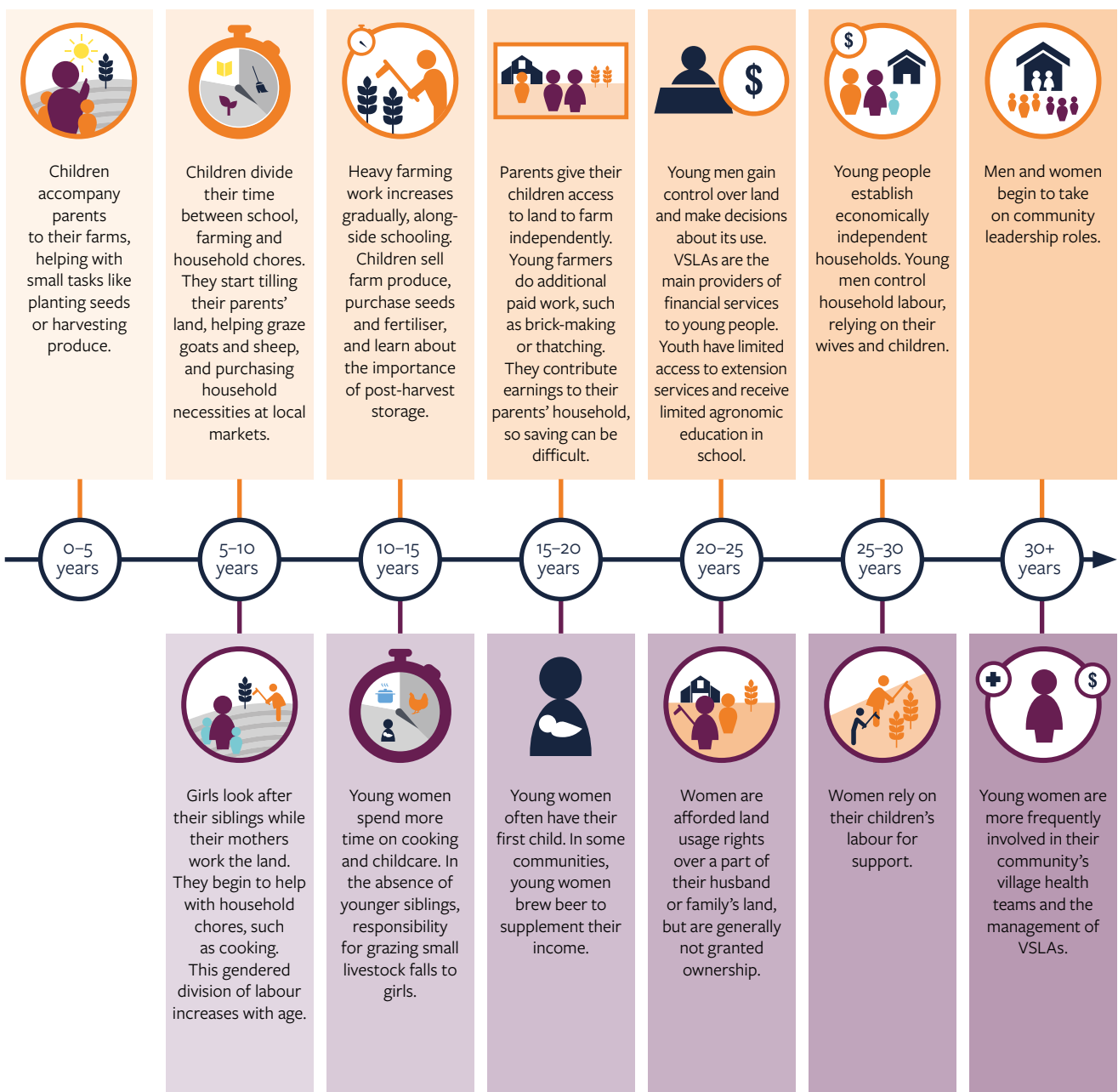
The agricultural sector is of particular importance to young Ugandans since more than three-quarters of youths aged 15–24 engage in agriculture as their main job, mainly in primary production (Republic of Uganda and World Bank, 2019). Löwe and Phiona

(2017) describe the role of young women and men in agriculture in Northern Uganda from childhood to young adulthood (see Figure 3). They note that, from birth to the age of five, young children of both genders accompany their parents to the farm and assist with basic ad hoc activities, such as planting seeds or harvesting produce. Between the ages of five and 15, children will start school and divide

their time between school, household chores and farming. As they mature and become physically stronger, responsibilities include taking livestock out to graze, tilling the land and, in the later ages, purchasing household and agricultural goods. It is during this age bracket that the gendered division of labour begins, and it increases with age: girls will look after their siblings and, compared to boys,

spend much more time cooking. In the absence of any younger siblings, girls will be responsible for grazing small livestock. It is important to note that, while ideally school begins at the age of five, schooling may be delayed due to conflict or insecurity. Between ages 15–20, parents will give their children access to farmland independently and they may do additional work, such as thatching.

Figure 3 Growing up on a farm in Northern Uganda



Source: Löwe and Phiona (2017). Note: VSLA, Village Loans and Savings Association.

Although rural youths are engaged in the sector from a very young age and their responsibilities increase with age, they face important challenges. It is not until the age of 18 or over that young men gain control over their land and make decisions about its use (Löwe and Phiona, 2017). However, in the Northern region specifically, average land ownership is 1.3 hectares for youth-headed households, compared to 1.5 and 1.8 hectares respectively for households headed by a 'prime age' adult (aged 31–64) or elderly person (aged 65+) (Ahaibwe et al., 2013). Indeed, the process of establishing a household separate from that of their parents is a gradual transition, as our study also found. Young couples remained tied into the man's parents' household finances (they eat with their parents, live in a separate space within the same compound, work the land of their parents, etc.) and are not independent economic units per se (Löwe and Phiona, 2017). Young people contribute at least some, and usually a significant part, of their earnings to the extended family's needs, posing a challenge to their opportunity to save (ibid.), as we also showed in the previous section.

Key informants mentioned that the lack of formal employment and the low educational levels reached by some youths motivate them to work in agriculture. This reflects the findings of Löwe and Phiona (2017: 7), who suggest that 'agriculture' is portrayed as the option for those who cannot continue in school and those who do not have the capital to go into alternative self-employment. However, our young respondents voiced different reasons for being engaged in agriculture. Several young women and men suggested that aspirations for a better quality of life and their desire to improve their income motivated them to work in the sector. For young men, having a plot of land that was inherited or lent by their parents was another factor, suggesting intergenerational

transmission of agriculture as a profession. Thus, although rural youths receive the message (mainly at school) that agriculture is an occupation of 'last resort' (Löwe and Phiona, 2017; Tadele and Gella, 2012), contrary to some of these findings, our participants considered it a livelihood that offered them the opportunity to thrive and to achieve their life aspirations. This difference in our study may be due to the fact that participants learnt about different agricultural techniques and business skills through YETA and DYNAMIC, and were experiencing the economic benefits of these activities.

6.1.1 Gender challenges

Young women face additional challenges due to their gender. Very few studies have disaggregated their data or focused specifically on young rural women. One exception is Rietveld et al. (2020), who observed that young women (aged 18–30) in their study faced several challenges in agriculture: they were all single mothers who had moved back in with their parents after their marriage ended or following an unplanned, undesired pregnancy; they farmed for food on their parents' land or rented land to feed themselves and their children; small revenues obtained from crop sales were used for livelihood necessities rather than for (re-)investment in agriculture; and they struggled to combine their farming activities with their domestic chores. Löwe and Phiona (2017) in their study in Northern Uganda observed that young women were less likely to access extension services and reported a reluctance to make use of them, probably due to costs relating to the extension agent over their transport, information on available extension services, and it being a male-dominated sector that prefers to visit male farmers who can cover the costs of a visit (FAO, 2018b). Another barrier is access to land. While young women are afforded land usage rights over

some of their husband's or family's land, they are generally not granted ownership (Löwe and Phiona, 2017), nor are they included in decision-making over its use (Republic of Uganda and World Bank, 2019).

Previous evidence from Africa on women's role in agriculture in general helps to situate this study. Some studies have identified gender gaps in different key areas, such as asset ownership, education, access to credit and extension services, all of which cause female farmers to be less productive (Doss, 2001; Quisumbing et al., 2014). There is agreement in the literature that Ugandan women working in agriculture operate largely within the informal economy in terms of capital, production and marketing, irrespective of the area of production they work in (for

instance, 90% of coffee producers and 81% of food producers) (Kanyamurwa et al., 2013). In addition, the type of crops differs across gender. Ugandan women usually cultivate crops that are less profitable: cassava, beans, sweet potatoes and plantains, because they contribute to household food security. In contrast, men farm cash crops including coffee and vanilla grown at larger-scale farms (OECD, 2015).

In accordance with the existing literature, most respondents highlighted that there is a gendered difference in the *activities that young women do in agriculture/agriculture-related activities compared to young men*. For example, women indicated that they are restricted to growing cash crops that can be produced on smaller farms, such as maize, beans or sugar cane.



Farming fields in the Ruwenzori Mountains in western Uganda. Photo credit: JordiStock / Shutterstock.com

Women also sell different products from their harvests, which may also include some level of self-processing (charcoal, bread, alcohol, cooking oil, soybeans, cabbage, okra and other vegetables). Key informants highlighted that females (particularly single mothers) had no other option than to work in agriculture, compared to males who can engage in other livelihood opportunities (boda boda drivers,¹⁵ seasonal migration, day labourers). This is because, according to these KIIs, women have household chores and care responsibilities that could at best be complemented with agriculture. At the community level, when agricultural activities are undertaken by larger groups, young women provide support by cooking for men and preparing what will be needed for the day. Young men considered they did the ‘hard work’ in agriculture and indicated that they spent more energy and time on it than women.

We now explore the existing gender norms that shape young women’s engagement in agriculture and how these also mediate the outcomes of the Youth Forward Initiative.

6.2 The role of gender norms in shaping young women’s engagement with agriculture in the context of the Youth Forward Initiative

Harmful gender norms are widely identified as detrimental to women’s economic empowerment, affecting both their access to decent work and their experiences within workplaces (Marcus, 2018). As Marcus also stresses, gendered norms – along with stereotypes about the different capabilities of women and men – negatively affect

resources, opportunities to develop human capital, livelihood opportunities and time use. The outcomes of the Youth Forward Initiative are highly mediated by specific gender norms in our study sites.

According to Uganda-SIGI, attitudes and practices discriminate heavily against daughters in the Northern region, mainly driven by attitudes that justify a gendered distribution of housework between siblings, where girls are expected to contribute more to household chores. Gender norms also affect the allocation of resources that families decide to spend on their children’s education: 34% of women and men affirmed that higher education is more important for boys, and 12% of people think that households should spend more resources on boys’ education (OECD, 2015).

The literature, supported by the narratives of our respondents, reflects a variety of gender norms which play a role in driving women’s engagement in particular activities in the agricultural sector. These include: expectations around the kinds of work men and women perform in agriculture and the household; norms about ownership of land; norms about ownership of non-land assets; norms about decision-making power including farming proceeds and command of family labour; norms about women’s financial autonomy; norms about decorum and mobility; and norms about marriage and childbirth.

6.2.1 Norms about expected kinds of work for men and women in agriculture and the household

Quantitative data from the Youth Forward Initiative shows that youths undertake training or

¹⁵ Boda bodas are bicycles and motorcycle taxis commonly found in East Africa.

income-generating activities that are perceived as more suitable for their gender. For example, baseline data from YETA shows that, among the 196 young men from cohort 1 who had participated in vocational trainings, 60% chose building and construction or mechanical training courses. On the other hand, 73 out of 100 women who participated in trainings chose tailoring or hairdressing courses (Bridonneau and Marć, 2016).

Beliefs expressed by young men and even key informants around women being unable to undertake ‘hard labour’ or having ‘less energy’ shape women’s involvement as ‘helpers’ or working in ‘easier’ agricultural activities across all sites:

Men do the harder work and the women do the easier work, for example men can open land like cutting trees, cutting the bushes, slashing, first and second digging; then women can come and help with some agricultural activities like weeding or harvesting (Key informant, local government, Masindi)

For us men, we have to start from planning on how to get the inputs, how to open up the land and we have the strength to work in the garden; but with women, they just go and do light work like planting, weeding and then they go back home to cook food (Male, 18, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and bricklayer, Gulu)

Men are the ones who open the land. You can find that if they are farming in a virgin place, it is men who penetrate the land. Women cannot manage. Men are the ones who go and cut the trees from the bush, they are the ones who do

the land clearing, they are the ones who do real ploughing and ox-traction work (Key informant, local government, Kaabong)

Respondents indicated that these perceptions reinforce and lead to different roles for men and women in agriculture. Women’s roles in agriculture include soil preparation when carried out by hand, weeding, feeding and watering livestock, cleaning equipment or animal shelters. By contrast, men tend to be responsible for soil preparation when carried out using animals or machinery, fertiliser application, constructing livestock shelters and vaccination, echoing the findings of FAO (2018c) on the unequal roles of women and men in agriculture. That is, men’s roles in agriculture are associated with tasks that are considered to be ‘masculine’ and/or those requiring access to assets and inputs, which women often lack. As these agricultural activities are considered ‘heavier’ and ‘more demanding’, male respondents usually deemed their experience as harder than that of women. Young men further highlighted the importance of feeling economically successful and able to provide for their wives.

However, other young men considered that women had a harder time in agriculture because they must combine it with their UCDW. These respondents felt strongly that women must participate in agricultural activities as well as UCDW and acknowledged that women experienced greater challenges than men due to juggling both sets of activities:

The reason why I find farming somehow simpler for men compared to women is that for us men, we have time to do other things to earn money, but for women, it is very difficult for them to do income-generating activities because after the

garden she has to cook for the kids, she has to look for firewood, she has to take care of the children and you find that she has no time to involve herself in income-generating activities, thus making it simpler for men who have time to get money and plough it in farming (Male, 28, YETA participant, farmer and bricklayer, Dokolo)

Indeed, some of these young men noted that they had an easier time in agriculture because they left most of the agricultural work to their wives and only intervened in key tasks such as supporting harvesting or selling of products. As a result of UCDW and farm/agriculture-related work, women face a double burden, while men are able to spend time on farming/agriculture-related activities, but also leisure activities, echoing findings of other studies in Uganda (Alinyo and Leahy, 2012; FOWODE, 2012). Unequal gendered divisions of labour within the household burdens young women even more as they often end up doing most of the UCDW, thus limiting even further their capacity to engage in and benefit from other activities, including education, training, leisure and productive labour (Bantebya et al., 2013; Löwe and Phiona, 2017).

6.2.2 Norms about ownership of land

Lack of land ownership has significant implications for women's livelihoods, including lack of security of ownership of the agricultural enterprise on the land they work and the use of land as collateral to access finance (Bantebya et al., 2013; FAO, 2018).

YETA quantitative data indicates that land ownership increased significantly between baseline (36%) and postline (46%). However, postline data shows that young men were more likely to own land than young women (49% and 42% respectively) (Bridonneau and Pasanen, 2018). This is mirrored in our qualitative findings,

as most youths across the four sites reported male ownership of land. Some young men indicated they inherited or were working on land that was given by their parents. This was confirmed by key informants in all sites who indicated that women hardly have control over land (unless they buy it) and they usually do not inherit it from their parents or husbands:

Our women do not own land. We have this negative tendency of not giving what is due to girls in our rural communities and you find a boy has been given a plot of land and a woman has not been given land from her father's side and even when a girl gets married, she is not given any land, so, where does this girl belong? You find out that she belongs nowhere (Key informant, local government, Masindi)

Land ownership increases with age, particularly for men. For example, the DHS (2016) showed that most young women and men aged 15–19 do not own land (92% and 91% respectively), but young men begin to increase their ownership in their 20s (66%) compared to young women (75%) (UBOS, 2018b). Overall, our data mirrors findings from other studies that identify how harmful gender norms constrain women's access to land (OECD, 2015; Rietveld et al., 2020). Some fathers noted that it was not their responsibility to give land to their daughters, as this was their daughter's own responsibility or that of the government, reflecting customary patrilineal practices of inheritance (Cooper, 2011). However, we also encountered a few fathers (those who were more educated and whose daughters still lived in their household) who were eager to support their daughters and shared with them some land, as they wanted their daughters to thrive and noted the potential economic benefit for the entire household. We also found young women (especially unmarried

single women) who expected to take advantage of the land market and aspired to use their savings to rent or buy land, as shown in section 5.2.1 (belonging to a group/network): ‘I expect to buy land or construct a house using my own money’ (Female, 23, YETA participant, shopkeeper, Masindi).

These young women usually lived in a supportive family environment (living with both parents) and had achieved slightly higher levels of education.

6.2.3 Norms about ownership of non-land assets

Control of physical assets is particularly important for self-employment, especially with regard to women’s entrepreneurship and their potential to engage in productive livelihoods (Marcus, 2018). However, this can also be affected by gender norms.

In Uganda, Ahaibwe et al. (2018) observed that men maintained that women were not allowed to control assets and that if women made money they could become ‘uncontrollable and disobedient’. In the study by Löwe and Phiona (2017) in the Northern region, young women aged 15–20 perceived themselves to be less likely than young men to own cattle, even once they were older, but hoped this might be something their husbands would either bring into the marriage or they would acquire later in life. Young women from both programmes in our study expected to accumulate the resources necessary to keep small ruminants or poultry, but generally not cattle:

When you look on the side of owning animals, it is men who own these oxen and then they can use them for cultivating and they make the decisions over them (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and shop owner, Kaabong)

Even when young women were married and co-benefited from the ownership of livestock and cattle through their husbands, some women in Kaabong said they had to share them with other co-wives:

For me, I have my co-wife and it means my husband is the one who has the oxen and he makes decisions over it: if the oxen goes to my co-wife’s garden or if it comes to my garden ... The man is always in-between as then he goes to the garden [of the co-wife] to cultivate for the other one and then comes to mine. That is what makes it difficult for me, that I do not own my own oxen (Female, 25, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and shop owner, Kaabong)

Access to assets usually favoured young men in our study. Parents (fathers and mothers) usually voiced their support in providing capital or inputs to their sons, as a way to ensure their sons’ livelihoods:

As parents, we feel like we need to stand with [name of young man] to ensure that some of his productive activities move on well. For instance, like his plans to start the piggery project. As it stands now, he is not in any way capable of raising capital but as parents, we need to stand with him, we advise him (IGT, mother of young man participant of DYNAMIC, age unknown, farmer, Gulu)

As mentioned in section 5.1.1 (access to inputs and technology), the Youth Forward Initiative improved young women’s access to non-land assets, particularly livestock and inputs. However, gender norms still prevented them from taking full ownership of their productive resources and making decisions about what they do with their incomes, as we show below.

6.2.4 Norms about decision-making power, including control of farming proceeds and the ability to command family labour

According to the 2016 DHS (UBOS, 2018b), married women (aged 15–49) are more likely to participate in decisions about their own health care (74%) than in decisions about making major household purchases (64%). In contrast, married men (aged 15–49) are more likely to participate in decisions about their own health care (87%) as well as in decisions about major household purchases (89%). Regarding control over earnings, the 2016 DHS found that, among rural married women, 10% do not participate in decisions about the use of their own cash earnings compared with 5% of urban married women (ibid.).

Our findings provide strong evidence that men (husbands and fathers) were the ultimate decision-makers within the household, echoing the findings of other studies in Uganda (Alinyo and Leahy, 2012; FOWODE, 2012; Hill and Vigneri, 2009; Njuki et al., 2011). This was due both to detrimental gender norms and also to the fact that men control important productive resources, particularly land:

The land is mine because my father gave it to me and since now I have a wife, it is me who makes decisions over this land whether we sell it or we use it for continuous growing of crops (Male, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Kaabong)

Me and my wife, the two of us we take decisions, but me as a husband I always bring the final decision (Male, 28, YETA participant, farmer and bricklayer, Dokolo)

As a result, some young women mentioned not having control over decisions regarding farming proceeds (e.g. where to invest, how much money to save) that could affect their ability to generate higher income levels for themselves, even when the division of labour was perceived as equal:

Young Woman: When we sell the produce, the division is not equal. My husband always takes the biggest share.

Interviewer: But do you use the same labour to contribute to the produce that you grow in that rented land?

YW: Yes, we always use the same labour. If we are digging both of us, we dig at the same time for the same number of hours.

I: So, why don't you then share the produce equally when you've used the same amount of time in the garden?

YW: He will say he wants to buy a cow and for me, I always use it to buy these small things [vegetables] that I always sell (Female, 24, YETA participant, farmer and seller of local brew, Dokolo).

Other young women indicated that when their husbands controlled most of their profits, they were only given small amounts that they used for household needs. Lower earnings were a barrier for young women to invest in profitable crops or small businesses. These findings mirror those of other studies in Uganda which suggest that women cannot decide 'when and how much farm produce should be sold, let alone what the income should be used for' (Alinyo and Leahy, 2012: 340–341). FAO (2018b), for example, found

that 99% of men had ownership and control over the proceeds of their farms, compared to only 55% of women, which was attributed to more men owning land.

Several informants indicated that men tended to control products that were sold at higher prices and were the ones seen selling cattle on market days, whereas women generally sold smaller livestock such as chickens or low-profit crops such as sorghum. The implications of women's lack of control over income from farming as reported by participants in the study by FAO (2018b) in Uganda include: lack of decision-making power over land cultivation, reinvestment and choice of enterprises (52%); lack of financial independence (33%); loss of morale in agricultural activities (29%); domestic violence (29%); unmet needs and desires (15%); inability to negotiate prices and look for markets (5%); and limited earnings (5%).

Regarding the *ability to command family labour*, the evidence in Uganda indicates that female farmers are less likely than their male counterparts to hire labour. The study by Ali et al. (2015) observed that hired labour applied to 31% of male-managed plots versus 23% of female-managed plots. Similarly, Kabeer (2018) observed in her literature review that men in Uganda reported increased hiring of family members (most often children and siblings) whom they presumably did not have to pay or could pay less than the market rate. By contrast, women were unable to mobilise family labour in the same way that men did, and their capital stock and cash reserves appeared to be depleted by family demands.

6.2.5 Norms about women's financial autonomy

Access to credit and financial services is a challenge for most smallholder farmers in rural

Uganda, regardless of gender or age. Nevertheless, women find access to affordable credit especially difficult due to: lack of collateral; very limited access to relevant information; and, in particular, access to credit from the Bank of Uganda which de facto favours large-scale farmers, who are mostly male (FOWODE, 2012: 12).

Limited access to financial services appears to reflect harmful gender norms around women's financial autonomy and limited decision-making power. Uganda-SIGI found that one person in five agreed that women should not have the same rights to access credit as men, and one in every four people agreed that women should not have the same decision-making power when it came to financial services. In addition, formal financial institutions often require the husband's consent (such as a signature) to open a personal bank account, despite the fact that the law does not require this (OECD, 2015). As a result, women's access is usually restricted to informal saving mechanisms and microfinance. These forms of financing are characterised by high interest rates, and small loan sizes and are short-term. Therefore, women can become trapped in the informal sector and unable to expand their businesses (ibid.), as even the most established MFIs 'that have a focus on poor women and serve between 50-70% of the women have yet to reach sufficient scale to make a sizable impact on the rural market' (FAO, 2018).

Young women may face further disadvantage due to their youth. Formal providers are unable to cater to those under 18 without a guardian's permission. Furthermore, if young men feel uncomfortable about participating in VSLAs or accessing formal finance services due to lack of confidence (Löwe and Phiona, 2017), it is possible that young women also feel reluctant and share those same feelings. Most young women in our

sample, across all education levels, reported having access to financial services from VSLAs, which in part is a result of YETA/DYNAMIC. However, young women noted the small amounts given as loans through VSLAs at times, which limited the investments they could make in agriculture. If they wanted to access formal financial services, lack of land ownership was their main barrier, as they could not offer any collateral as required by formal institutions.

6.2.6 Norms about decorum and mobility

Norms about decorum influence whether women participate in work outside the home (Marcus, 2018). For example, the study by Buss et al. (2017) observed that female focus group participants in Uganda indicated that they did not engage in certain agricultural activities (digging) when they could see the upper body of a shirtless man who was not their husband. Similarly, concerns about women's safety emerged as a significant constraint for them to engage in different activities outside their households. Young women voiced safety concerns related mainly to gender-based violence when walking at night or far away from their fields. It was considered dangerous for women to farm in plots that were distant from their households as other men could abuse them. Other literature on Uganda has identified that some families consider bicycles a suitable form of transportation for boys but not for girls, as they do not afford enough protection from sexual harassment (Ahaibwe et al., 2018). Fear of gossip and damage of reputation can also limit women's mobility leading women to avoid employment outside the home (Marcus, 2018).

Young women in our study who decided to become self-employed undertook activities that could be run within or close to their homes

(e.g. food production in their own gardens, local brewing in their homes), activities not necessarily undertaken in the public sphere, and which allowed them to combine paid work and UCDW more easily. Furthermore, where women are able to engage in sales, this is most often limited to small quantities and selling in local markets, as women noted they did not own bikes, felt uncomfortable or had no time to travel long distances.

In contrast, men are more mobile, travel longer distances (by motorbike or bicycle) and usually spend their time in the market or in the community centres:

The ideal situation would be that they [men and women] are all equal and they do everything for the benefit of the home and for the benefit of promoting agriculture. But you find in a home that the young women are in the field planting, weeding, cooking and the men are at the trading centres. Some of them have young families ... women are busy in the fields digging and the boys who are energetic find themselves in the trading centres taking this local brew ... or playing Ludo or playing cards (Key informant, local government, Masindi)

Norms about decorum and mobility also play out in the activities that men undertake in agriculture. Participants indicated that men engage in negotiations with buyers (usually middlemen) and sellers at different trade levels along the supply chain because those activities are 'men's work', similar to the findings of FAO, WFP and IFAD (2019). Thus, norms related to compliance with social/moral rules in the public sphere exist and have an effect on the role of young women in agriculture and their potential to thrive in the sector.

6.2.7 Norms about marriage and childbirth

Globally, the total number of girls married in childhood is estimated at 12 million a year (UNICEF, 2017). In Uganda, results from Uganda-SIGI showed that women living in the Northern region face strong discriminatory attitudes and practices related to social norms around marriage. The majority of women (57%) were married before the legal age of 18, with 28% marrying before the age of 15. Uganda-SIGI observed that, despite the law setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 for both boys and girls, favourable opinions around early marriage continue to justify the practice: one-third of the population believed that girls should be married before the age of 18. In contrast, social norms do not expect boys to marry early, highlighting how adolescent girls are discriminated against (OECD, 2015). In addition, other discriminatory practices are prevalent in the Northern region, such as bride price and levirate marriage, which are more widespread than in other regions of Uganda (ibid.), echoing the findings of other studies in the region (Bantebya et al., 2013; Ssewanyana et al., 2018).

Social norms can be a cause of early marriage which also constrains girls and women from participating in certain forms of agriculture. The study by Ahaibwe et al. (2018) in Uganda shows that gender norms, both in wider society and among girls' peer groups, contribute to early marriage and childbearing, and thus limit educational achievement and women's future economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas. The same study found that women who married or gave birth before 20 years of age were less likely to be in professional/technical and managerial positions and were more likely to work in subsistence agriculture (55% as compared to 40% of women who married later).

The respondents noted that early marriage and/or childbirth contributed to young women not engaging in commercial farming, as one key informant indicated:

Women don't go for commercial farming just because the capacity is not there for them. Most of them are young mothers who marry a bit early and some of them after having more than one or two children, their family breaks. So, they go for these small farming to sustain them (Key informant, local government, Kaabong)

6.3 Exercising individual agency and participation

An improved ability to exercise agency and participation is reflected in YETA's and DYNAMIC's strong effect on single young women's thinking and *preference for delaying marriage and romantic relationships*. Rather than focusing on marriage and relationships, young single women shifted their attention to their business/agribusiness and their goal of increase their earnings:

Being in the programme has kept me safe and I don't think of getting married or falling into a relationship because I only want to focus on my business (Female, 21, YETA participant, farmer and tailor, Dokolo)

My engagement with DYNAMIC has not made me feel anything like getting married or engaging in a relationship because now my focus is my business so that I can multiply my money and be better like others. Though that feeling may come, I think it will be later not now (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and University student, Gulu)

Another young single woman in Gulu (DYNAMIC) indicated that having a stable income-generating activity and money will provide her with respect among other members in the community, particularly young men who may not overlook her in the future. However, one peer educator in Gulu mentioned that he observed a few young women abandoned the programme because they got married. Single young men did not discuss this topic explicitly, but a few of their mothers mentioned they were also delaying marriage and relationships, while other mothers indicated their sons were saving resources or dowry for marriage in the future. For young women who are married, there are indications that participating in YETA improved their marital relations through

an improved ability to manage interpersonal relationships, a better understanding of the risks of multiple partners and economic independence.

Young women also indicated they have *increased their confidence to make decisions regarding personal matters and to voice their views* (see Box 7). Young women also indicated that their involvement in savings groups has encouraged them to speak in public and to gain the confidence to voice their concerns. For young men, the improvement in confidence and communication with others was most keenly related by parents who observed young men sharing their thoughts more both in the family, as well as in community meetings and in the presence of elders.

Box 7 Increased confidence to exercise agency and voice own views

Mary is a 23-year-old young woman who lives in Kaabong district and joined DYNAMIC in 2015. Mary dropped out of school after completing primary education when her parents could not afford her school expenses. Instead, her parents arranged her marriage to an older man from her village. Mary had no option but to accept the offer since her family was poor and she had no means of going back to school. She has three children and now lives with her husband in her mother's house. For a livelihood, she became a farmer, and collects and sells firewood in the village. She began a brewery business which improved once she joined DYNAMIC. When she learnt about DYNAMIC she was eager to participate, however, she was discouraged by her relatives because they did not see the benefits of the programme and considered it better to focus on her agricultural activities and household chores. They did not stop her from joining but, once she joined, she faced criticism from her family and the community who considered she was engaged in activities not suitable for women:

There were some relatives who actually tried to stop me from my activities because I was coming from town and they thought 'this one is now in prostitution', and even when I began building my house there, some of them were telling me 'now you stop these things, why do you want to do this when you are a woman'. So, those people were there trying to discourage me.

Strong determination was required by Mary to overcome such active discouragement:

I had to close my ears, I felt like I was a deaf person. I just continued doing my own things but also I told them 'just watch what I'm doing and you're going to see the result'.

Mary is proud of herself following all her achievements as part of DYNAMIC. For the first time in her life she began to save. She learnt about hygiene and decided to invest in a latrine at her home. She learnt business and agricultural skills and considers she is more confident and able to speak in large groups. Mary's first cousin, Elvin, also thinks that she has become more confident. He sees that Mary teaches others in the family and the community about agricultural skills, financial skills and the advantages of improved hygiene. Despite her increased confidence, Mary still faces challenges to exercise her voice during community meetings because she is a woman:

There are challenges especially when I want to speak out to the community and there are men. What they tell you is 'women are not supposed to have something to say'. So, I don't always express my voice, but I tell my husband 'please mention this'.

Mary also met new people through DYNAMIC that she considers role models, although all of them are male: 'I have some role models who also work in agriculture and I feel like how I wish I could be like them.'

Since DYNAMIC ended, she has been able to sustain her business and agricultural activities. She is also grateful for the savings groups, which she has continued with other DYNAMIC participants. However, she thinks she would benefit from further and refresher sessions on financial literacy to continue making the most of her savings. Mary also expressed a wish to build stronger connections to other companies and organisations. She also would like to continue meeting her trainers with whom she has lost touch following the end of activities. For her future, Mary wants to finish building her house, and continue with her brewery business and hopes that all her children can go to school without any interruption to their studies.

Improvements in decision-making power for young women were at times reflected in their *contribution to decisions around allocation of earnings and control of resources*. In YETA, when couples joined the VSLA together, women were better able to negotiate household finances. Although men usually continued taking decisions regarding income and family proceeds, as shown in the previous section, some women indicated that, following their participation in YETA or DYNAMIC, they increased their awareness of their economic contribution to their households through the profits of their agricultural work, their small businesses and their savings. This awareness led them to contribute towards decisions about the allocation of household earnings, as indicated by married young women and their husbands:

I always ask my wife, I tell her 'we have sold our produce, the money is here, what can we use this money for?'. Then she tells me we can buy a goat or a cow or something. What she says is what we do (Male, 23, YETA participant, farmer, Dokolo)

It is me who makes mostly decisions on produce, especially when it reaches to this time of brewing because my husband cannot brew. So, it is me who makes that decision (Female, 28, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and shop owner, Kaabong)

When they [the savings group] share the money from the VSLA, I have to bring this money and we plan with my husband on how to use it (Female, 24, DYNAMIC participant, local brew seller, Kaabong)

Joint decision-making was more evident in cases where husbands and wives rented the land they farmed or in female-headed households between daughters and their mothers:

The land where we farm is someone's land that we always hire and the decision on the sales is made by me and my husband (Female, 24, YETA participant, farmer and seller of local brew, Dokolo)

Joint decision-making was probably more likely among couples who jointly rented land because young men did not own the land that was farmed by both and did not feel entitled to it compared to young men who inherited the land from their parents, as shown in section 6.2.4 (norms about decision-making). In the case of young women living in female-headed households, the relationships between mothers and daughters were strong and the absence of the husband made the mothers the main decision-makers, and they consulted their daughters on important decisions such as profit allocation.

6.3.1 Effects on family roles, views of relatives and increased participation in household affairs

As noted in Box 7 above, the Youth Forward Initiative female participants have not always had the approval of their households to participate in YETA/DYNAMIC and had to overcome critics and confront male family members (husbands and parents) in order to join:

It was my father. When I first talked about the DYNAMIC programme, particularly on raising chickens, he discouraged me by saying 'No, you just keep quiet. Do you know the challenges which can be brought by what you are trying to engage in? At first, you do not have the skills, you do not have the knowledge, you will not manage raising those birds. They are very expensive'. ... I waited for him a little to settle emotionally (Female, 20, DYNAMIC participant, baker, Gulu)

Young women were usually supported to participate in YETA and DYNAMIC only after their families saw the economic benefits that the programmes could bring. In contrast, young men were encouraged (or at least not discouraged) to participate in YETA and DYNAMIC. Parents perceived YETA and DYNAMIC as a positive opportunity for their sons to gain training and improve their life prospects. Another benefit that parents observed was gaining skills that could potentially make up for their sons dropping out of school.

Once participants received approval or were not discouraged from household heads from participating in YETA/DYNAMIC, both young women and men indicated *positive effects on their family roles and views of their relatives about them* as a result of their participation in the Youth Forward Initiative. Young men now have the capacity to support themselves or to be seen as providers for their families; their household members view positively the fact that young men have the financial capacity to buy items for themselves, to improve the household's diet, to offer support with expenses and to take informed decisions about how to spend their earnings:

[Name of young man] has now become independent, he knows how to work for his

money and when he earns, he knows how to spend his money. He doesn't spend it on other luxury things, he spends it wisely so that he may invest. He even asks himself 'when I spend this money how will my mother or parents or relatives see me' ... So, he knows how to plan for his money, he knows what he needs and he knows what he wants in the future (IGT, aunt of a young male participant of YETA, 40, farmer, Masindi)

YETA and DYNAMIC also, according to study respondents, increased the respect that older relatives have for young men through their increased financial independence and through the new knowledge that they gained, increasing their ability to participate in family decisions that were previously taken by fathers or older relatives. For those who are married, their increased capacity to provide improved their relationships with their wives, bringing more harmony to the household. However, in other cases this newfound financial independence may bring challenges in dynamics/relationships between young men (especially those who are unmarried) and their elders, such as parents. Youths may no longer look to their parents to make decisions for their lives, causing tension in family relations, as one key informant observed. In other cases, relatives noted that young single men still needed guidance on how to spend their earnings and savings.

For young single women, their parents also valued how their daughters increased their financial support to their households and saw this as a positive change that improved their relationship with their daughters. Parents also valued the new knowledge that young women obtained through YETA and DYNAMIC training, and that young women consulted them for their opinions. Young married women, as a result of their increased capacity to

generate their own income, can be a source of financial support for their husbands in times of need, which can also come from their access to credit/finance through participation in savings groups:

I participate in a VSLA group ... time came when my husband was stuck financially. He requested me to go and borrow money from the savings group to help in the construction of the water tank. So, I went and got that money and I gave it to him, we constructed our water tank (Female, 26, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

There also appears to be an element of *prestige and pride* for families in having a member who participated in YETA/DYNAMIC. Participants indicated that their neighbours asked about the programmes, wanting to participate. YETA and DYNAMIC participants are viewed as being economically empowered and responsible as they engaged in their own income-generating activities, contributing to a positive image of their households. Family members, especially mothers, mentioned that they worked to improve themselves in various aspects, aspiring to enhance their living standards, motivated by the changes they have seen in their daughters:

I really admire the way things are going in the life of my daughter and I've tried to copy these things, like the issue of hygiene. I also wake up in the morning I make sure I wash my face so that when I go to the people there, they can see me also as a person who has come from this family of [name of young woman], and then my clothes, I also make sure I wash to show some kind of hygiene like she does (IGT, mother to a young female participant of DYNAMIC, 50, brewer, Kaabong)

Thus, a greater sense of respect from community members was also significant for mothers of young women who consider it important to take pride and reflect the positive changes of their daughters on them.

6.4 Exercising competence and self-worth

According to study respondents in YETA and DYNAMIC sites, enablers and indicators of self-worth included: gaining confidence; exercising leadership; increased feelings of pride and independence; and having aspirations for the future.

Gaining confidence was a valued outcome of receiving training from YETA and DYNAMIC. Nearly all young women discussed using their new-found confidence in their businesses:

I can now speak very well, I can now speak without being afraid, I can now stand by myself when doing something that will help me. I can now, with the knowledge I've got, make feeds and, if the feeds finish from other farms, they can come and buy it from here (Female, 26, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

I used to fear starting a business or participating in a business. I was shy but when I joined YETA, I gained confidence and I just buy things and sell without fearing or even being shy (Female, 21, YETA participant, farmer and tailor, Dokolo)

Young men who participated in DYNAMIC also noted they can share their views with more confidence and can persuade others in their saving groups.

Exercising some type of leadership was observed in both programmes. For example, some young women in DYNAMIC noted that their new communication skills and increased confidence had allowed them to share their views, including in public events:

I was this type of person who could not closely speak to the public, I used to fear people but after joining DYNAMIC, we were given life skills where one of it was how to communicate, so, right now, I can communicate even to the large crowd of people without being shy (Female, 23, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and local brew seller, Kaabong)

Similarly, young women indicated they exercised some form of leadership when sharing their learnt skills and knowledge to other youths or members of the community, as well as having a more active role in community activities.

Another change in my life is the ability to train other people because I can now talk to youths who have interest in learning how to take care or raise pigs or to do a poultry project. I can now talk to them, I can now teach them because I have the knowledge and the skills (Female, 26, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and produce trader, Gulu)

I got basic skills in managing pigs because formerly we used to use natural foods whereby we would get this grass or weeds and we give our pigs but when we were trained, we were taught about how to mix feeds, how to make IMO [indigenous micro-organisms]. So, those skills are really very useful, I even train and advise other pig farmers around the village (Female, 26, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

However, key informants noted that they have not observed that young women hold leadership positions such as being chairpersons or being in charge of managing the savings of VSLAs. The same key informant indicated that, although women were better qualified and had better skills in managing finances, they tended not to participate in management positions in community groups. This was confirmed by a young woman who indicated she was the secretary of her VSLA, but she has not been given the opportunity to exercise a higher role. Thus, gendered norms may discourage young women from undertaking this kind of leadership positions, although they are not discouraged from participating as members of such groups. Despite this barrier, DYNAMIC and YETA have contributed to young women's confidence where they can speak out in such meetings and exercise some kind of leadership skills.

In the case of young men, some discussed improvements in their ability to talk to others and exercise leadership skills. One young man in YETA observed he exercised his leadership skills as chairperson of his savings group. Another young man in Dokolo attributes to the leadership skills gained from YETA his achievement in getting elected as coordinator of the Village Health Team for the whole parish.

Young women and men in both programmes also voiced *increased feelings of pride*, mainly through their increased skills, their ability to run their own businesses, to make their own money, and to avoid harmful behaviours (for young men) as indicated by participants:

I'm different from those who didn't participate in DYNAMIC because I can now make my own money. I see some of my colleagues they

wait for their husbands to give them money. Even if their child is sick, they get the money from their husbands and if the husband has not given the money, they cannot get it from anywhere else (Female, 26, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

YETA has changed my life, nowadays I even hold money. I don't labour from people's garden, I now practice digging, I keep animals, I don't even gamble now like those days. And also, I don't opt for stealing (Male, 20, YETA participant, farmer, Dokolo)

The other youths who didn't go through YETA, you will find them drinking or gambling and for me because of the trainings, I have changed. I'm doing my farming with improved techniques and I get surplus for selling, I gave up drinking alcohol and instead save that money. Also, there is no domestic violence in my house, I know how to stay at home peacefully with my people (Male, 28, YETA programme, farmer and bricklayer, Dokolo)

Establishing aspirations for the future was seen as important for young women and men who participated in YETA or DYNAMIC, particularly relayed by many young women in detail. They discussed envisioning, planning and working towards a future that they have not envisioned prior to participating in YETA/DYNAMIC. Rather than working for someone else, having their own business or income-generating activity was an important goal that several young women voiced. Young women also highlighted the fact that they now have aspirations such as buying land, building a house with iron sheets, making sure their children go to school, starting a new business and opening/owning a shop:

In five years to come, I see my future and my life building a house made of iron sheets for my family. I see myself taking my children to school and if I continue with the savings that I'm doing right now, I will even see that food is enough for my household ... I feel happy about my future ahead (Female, 24, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and local brew seller, Kaabong)

When I entered the group [YETA] my vision changed. Now I think about opening a shop which belongs to me, rather than working for someone else (Female, 23, YETA participant, shop keeper, Masindi)

Through their accounts, young women noted they felt empowered as agents to be able to shape their own and their family's future, through their income-generating capacity and ability to manage finances, particularly their savings which they see will continue increasing and will allow them to achieve their goals for the future. In the case of young men, they discussed learning to plan for the future and having increased aspirations for their livelihoods, such as thinking of their farm as a commercial business, rather than simply for subsistence. Especially, for young men who had to drop out of school at an early age, they felt that YETA and DYNAMIC gave them the skills and confidence to build a productive future. Parents discussed the improvement in their sons' ability to plan pragmatically and responsibly for the future.

6.5 Physical and mental health and well-being

Participants indicated positive effects of YETA and DYNAMIC on their physical and mental health as well as their well-being through their participation in programme activities (group activities, tailored sessions on topics such

as SRH, hygiene and nutrition) and positive changes in terms of perceptions of increased income-generating capacity.

Regarding *SRH*, some young women in YETA sites highlighted the knowledge that they acquired during their SRH sessions, including personal hygiene, the use of sanitary pads and ways to avoid sexually transmitted infections, although they did not elaborate on this. However, not all women remembered attending these sessions, while others did not recall what they learnt. In the case of men, they did not recall the benefits of such sessions, although this question was not put to all of them directly. However, YETA data (based on a survey conducted with multiple cohorts) shows that young women and men reported having attended SHR visits (95% and 87% respectively) and knew their HIV status (90% and 92% respectively) in 2019, compared to only 45% of youths who reported having received SRH counselling in 2016 (NCBA CLUSA, 2020).

YETA female participants also indicated they improved their knowledge and use of contraceptive or *family planning* methods, which they did not make use of before the programme. Other young women in YETA mentioned they have strengthened their relationships with their husbands, while young men had reduced the number of sexual partners. YETA (through peer leaders, of whom 44% were women) also provided a linkage to the local health centre through referrals, enabling participants to access SRH services for free (as is the case in all health facilities), which is seen as a benefit. These results are significant for gender equity at the household level and joint decisions over family size.

Both young women and men indicated health improvements in *nutrition*. This is particularly observed in the narratives of participants in the

YETA programme who indicated nutritional improvements for themselves and their households (including their children). This was attributed to crop and animal husbandry skills contributing to household food security. Thus, despite Covid-19 and accompanied income decrease as a result of government restrictions, participants reported improved food security, as reported by other farmers in rural areas compared to urban dwellers in Uganda, who depend to a great extent on market sources for food (Kansiime et al., 2021). Youth were growing vegetables and keeping poultry and livestock that contributed to household diet. In addition participants received new information on nutrition. For example, they spoke about the importance of having a diversified diet through increased consumption of pulses, vegetables and meat, whether grown or bought through new income sources:

My body and my life are OK because of my balanced diet due to the off-season farming. They [YETA staff] would also emphasise us especially on the green vegetables, so, I always have a balanced diet (Female, 24, YETA participant, farmer and brew seller, Dokolo)

Other benefits I've seen is being with food throughout the year. For example, I have planted my cassava, my maize, my beans. Due to those skills, I have different types of food throughout the year. And also, the health condition of the people at my home is fine because we have cows that give us milk, we have greens, we have chickens (Male, 25, YETA programme, farmer and construction worker, Dokolo)

Young women and men who participated in DYNAMIC indicated improvements in *personal hygiene and cleanliness*, contributing to their

overall well-being and self-esteem. For example, young women noted that they now have a washing routine, while young men indicated using part of their earnings to buy soap and following a washing routine after work:

When I get paid, one thing that I do is to buy soap because I was at work. After buying soap, I come home and make sure I clean myself, wash the clothes that I used when I was in the garden and I put on clean ones (Male, 24, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and day labourer, Kaabong)

These improvements are generally transmitted to children as young women indicated they bathe their children and care about their hygiene:

I have now known how to bathe my children, I can maintain hygiene than when I was alone and before the DYNAMIC programme I was also not a person who would mind about hygiene because I was not given lessons (Female, 24, DYNAMIC participant, farmer and brew seller, Kaabong)

Positive changes in mental health and psychosocial well-being are also observed by young women and men involved in both programmes. However, participants were not probed on the effects of Covid-19 on mental health, as the questions directly focused on Youth Forward's effects, and they did not mention negative effects of the pandemic in their accounts. Young women indicated feeling less stressed and more self-motivated. Their income-generating capacity gives them confidence in supporting themselves, their family and their ability to plan for their future, which improves their psychosocial well-being:

My mind has changed in a way that the stress has reduced because I used to think on how I could get money, but when I started my business I no longer stress myself thinking that and also I'm healthy because of being in the project (Female, 21, YETA participant, farmer and tailor, Dokolo)

My well-being has evolved for the time I've been in DYNAMIC programme because I am now self-motivated because of the money I get from the horticulture that I grow. So, I no longer have small problems that presses me so much like those days (Female, 20, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

Young women also noted that their mental health improved as a result of their motivation to join group activities, as encouraged by YETA and DYNAMIC:

I feel happy because it brings us together and we play together, laugh together and joke together.

Besides that, when we dance, we play volleyball and we sweat a bit, that is very healthy for us (Female, 22, DYNAMIC participant, farmer, Gulu)

Young men did not discuss increased participation in social and leisure activities, probably because they did not previously face gender norms that affected their participation in the public domain. That said, a few mothers had noted improvements in their sons, in terms of having new friends and participating in sports activities such as football. Young men indicated further mental health improvements through their increased engagement in income-generating activities. They said that YETA and DYNAMIC made them feel 'of value' compared to other youths who stayed idle. Parents of young men observed that their children are more interested and motivated to support the household's agricultural activities. Parents also noted that young men are more '**business oriented**' and feel proud of themselves because they earn their own income and support their own expenses.

7 Conclusions

Study findings have shown that rural youths face multiple challenges in agriculture due to structural challenges in the sector that are exacerbated by their youth. At the macro level (national policies, programmes and external factors), existing policies and programmes aim to support the livelihoods of youths, including those of young women; however, men take more advantage of them or are more able to access government and non-government support for various reasons, including young women's lack of time or ability to access markets. We found no evidence of national or district programmes or initiatives that discussed gender norms directly with young women and men as part of their activities. At the macro level, the study also found that measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 have progressively impacted on the businesses of programme participants due to price fluctuations, lack of income and lack of cash flow. The Youth Forward Initiative had an influence on the macro-level context. For example, through IYET, government ministries and district local government created an enabling environment for young people to participate in agriculture collectively by simplifying the registration process for youth associations and cooperatives.

At the meso (community) level, youths, and especially women, are also at a greater disadvantage because they do not meet formal requirements to access credit or financial services (e.g. a warranty of collateral; access to relevant information; a husband's consent to open a personal bank account) or face barriers to access extension services (inability to cover certain costs for the extension agent, information on available extensions, etc.). Young women are usually overlooked by extension services or they

struggle to be part of community-based initiatives that could offer potential economic returns because they do not have time or are excluded by men. Another key barrier is lack of capital, which also limits youths' access to agricultural inputs, technologies and machinery. Youths also lack means of transport, especially when having to move larger volumes of products, and are dependent on middlemen to sell their products. Within this context, YETA and DYNAMIC enabled the building of close relationships between participants and other group members or with the wider society. Youths increased their earnings through venturing into new agricultural activities and businesses, and also improved their savings through VSLAs that are youth friendly and tailored to their needs. The role of mentors and peer educators was crucial, as they became both knowledge transmitters and role models to young women. As we have shown in this report, the positive effects of YETA and DYNAMIC continue to be reflected in the lives of young women and men, mainly through the continued use of learnt skills and the sustainability of group membership helping them to continue their agribusinesses and VSLAs.

We have shown that, at the micro level (individual and household), youths participating in YETA and DYNAMIC were not forming economically independent units per se, and continue, to some extent, to be part of their parents' households. This could offer them opportunities (access to family land and inputs), but also challenges, as youths do not own land themselves and have to contribute to their households' expenses. Furthermore, our qualitative research findings highlight that young women face specific challenges due to their gender. Persistent

gendered norms lead to young women's more limited access to assets, resources, inputs and technologies. Gender norms restrict young women's participation in certain agricultural activities because they are considered 'weaker', they have less time due to their UCDW, or because they exclude themselves and limit their contribution to being 'helpers'. Young women usually work the land of their parents (when single) or their in-laws, which reduces their decision-making over the production process and proceeds, although belonging to a VSLA has allowed some to invest their savings into renting or buying land, mirroring quantitative postline data from YETA. Income that is co-opted by men further limits women's access to markets and control of finances, as confirmed by other studies in Uganda (Löwe and Phiona, 2017; FAO, 2018).

YETA and DYNAMIC contributed to some extent to the challenging of existing gender norms that young women face in their lives and their livelihoods. The programmes allowed them to own and manage their own business, take decisions about their own income, stand by themselves/be independent, raise their concerns, etc. Positive changes in exercising agency and self-worth were also observed in both young women and young men, as well as in their health, including SRH and mental and psychosocial well-being. The effects of the Youth Forward Initiative are also seen at the household levels as youths share their new skills and knowledge with others, contribute to the expenses of their households and have a greater say in household affairs. The Youth Forward Initiative also increased feelings of pride as youths became more financially independent.

However, challenges persist once the programmes came to an end. Accessing inputs (fertilisers, improved seeds) is challenging for youths in the absence of the Youth Forward Initiative. Very few

were able to sustain a relationship with YETA and DYNAMIC partners to access inputs or knowledge, nor have they continued to see their mentors or peer educators. Some groups have collapsed due to conflict or the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving youths without access to a support network to continue their businesses or their group savings. While some youths joined other existing savings groups in their locations, not all had the initiative, or these were not always available. Youths continue to have learning needs as their businesses evolve or need ongoing sessions to refresh previous knowledge or learn about agricultural innovations. Current trends render this ever-more urgent: our research shows that youths need additional support and guidance to overcome shocks relating to climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic, challenging the sustainability of the positive effects of the Youth Forward Initiative in their lives.

In the case of young women, gender norms still affect their lives and livelihoods: they continue to face barriers to accessing and exercising leadership positions, to making greater profits by selling beyond nearby markets or accessing inputs, or they have to juggle economic activities with their UCDW, among other issues. Indeed, it is critical that policy-makers and programme implementers recognise that it is not only about enrolling women in programmes and initiatives. Skills building and awareness raising about gender norms and implementing gender transformative approaches can enable young women to thrive in agriculture and other livelihood activities. We have highlighted broad areas for action that are cross-cutting yet can be adapted to programme and district realities, and for improving YETA/ DYNAMIC programming or similar interventions that have the potential to improve the skills of rural youths and support their livelihoods from a gender perspective.

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Appendix 1 List of sub-counties selected for each of the districts

Table A1 List of districts and sub-counties included in the sample

District	Sub-counties
YETA sites	
Masindi	Pakanyi sub-county Karujubu division Nyangayha division Bwijanga sub-county
Dokolo	Kwera sub-county Okwongodui sub-county Kangai sub-county
DYNAMIC sites	
Gulu	Bungatira sub-county Paicho sub-county
Kaabong	Kaabong town council Kakamar sub-county

Appendix 2 Interview type and number by location

Table A2 Interview type and number by location

Interview type	Number of interviews		
	YETA sites	DYNAMIC sites	Both programmes
In-depth interviews young women	12	12	24
In-depth interviews young men	8	8	16
Intergenerational trios/family case studies young women	12	9	21
Intergenerational trios/family case studies young men	7	7	14
Key informant interviews	6	4	10
Total	45	40	85

Appendix 3 Details of study participants

Table A3 Age, marital status, number of children, education level and occupation of study participants

	YETA				DYNAMIC				TOTAL	
	Masindi		Dokolo		Kaabong		Gulu		Young women	Young men
	Young women	Young men	Young women	Young men	Young women	Young men	Young women	Young men		
Age										
18	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	-	2	1
21	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
22	-	-	2	-	-	2	1	-	3	2
23	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	3	3
24	-	-	1	-	4	2	-	-	5	2
25	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	1
26	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	1
27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
28	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	1
29	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Marital status										
Single	3	2	2	1	-	3	3	2	8	8
Married	2	1	4	3	6	1	3	2	15	7
Number of children										
0	2	1	1	2	-	3	2	1	5	7
1	-	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	4	2
2	1	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	7	-
3	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	3	3
4	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-
5	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3
Education level										
Primary 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Primary 2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Primary 3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Primary 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Primary 5	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	2	2

	YETA				DYNAMIC				TOTAL	
	Masindi		Dokolo		Kaabong		Gulu		Young women	Young men
	Young women	Young men	Young women	Young men	Young women	Young men	Young women	Young men		
Primary 6	-	-	3	1	1	-	-	1	4	2
Primary 7	2	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	4	1
Primary level complete	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Secondary/senior 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Secondary/senior 2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Secondary/senior 3	-	-	2	1	-	-	1	-	3	1
Secondary/senior 4	-	-	-	-	3	1	1	-	4	1
Secondary/senior 5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Secondary level complete	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Diploma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
University	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Occupation										
Farmer	4	3	5	4	5	4	5	4	18	15
Shopkeeper	1	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	4	1
Student	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Tailor	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Local brew vendor	-	-	1	-	4	-	-	-	5	-
Baker	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	1
Driver	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Barkeeper	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Construction & bricklaying	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	3
Labourer	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Administrator	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Cleaner and cook at health clinic	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-

