Youth and Public Policy in Uganda

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Society for International Development Eastern Africa (SiD) received funding from the Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa to carry out a study which would help understand the status of youth in Uganda. The research reviewed existing policies and interrogated whether they were responsive to the current needs of youth in Uganda who form the largest percentage of the population. In April 2014 the Society for International Development held a consultative meeting in Kampala with sampled sections of Ugandan youth in order to get their thoughts on what thematic areas that touch on the youth they would like to see included in the research that was soon to be commissioned and fed into the final report. After the meeting, SID commissioned researchers who upon completion of their papers were asked to present their findings for review and validation.

Following the submission of research papers, SID planned and organized a peer review and validation meeting in Kampala. This review brought together all authors who presented their papers to SID and OSIEA representatives as well as a panel of academic reviewers who were at the time PHD students at Makerere university. The peer reviewers encouraged authors to include evidence for factual statements made in the papers in other words ensure proper referencing. Authors were also asked to elaborate their strong points clearly and unpack their ideas well in order to reach different readers with relevant messaging. Peer reviewers indicated areas in the text
that were superfluous and encouraged authors to use a variety of sources as opposed to monopolizing them. The authors went back and incorporated reviewers’ comments in their final work.

Due to the fact that this research was about young people SID decided to commission young Ugandan researchers. After the submission of papers SID planned and held a two day training workshop in Uganda on research skills.

Youth Characteristics in Uganda

In this introductory review, Christopher Okidi provides a qualitative and quantitative introduction to Uganda’s youth demographic and highlights the country’s status as the ‘youngest in the world’, with 78% of the population under the age of 40.

The study presents a number of different legal, political, social and cultural definitions of youth, and – with reference to the country’s different cultural and linguistic contexts – explores the etymology of the term youth. The definitions of youth employed by a selection of the country’s tribal groups, including the Acholi, Iteso, Karamajong, Baganda, Ankole, and Bagisu are analysed to demonstrate that youth is typically defined as a ‘transitional phase’ associated with behaviours and actions that signify ‘coming of age’. Through this exposition the authors question the frequently held assumption that African culture is ‘ultra-patriarchal’, citing examples of contemporary changes to the way young women in different regions are perceived.

However, in moving to examine the definition of youth from the perspective of young people themselves, the authors reveal a schism that aligns with a ‘youth-bulge theory of conflict’. It is revealed that young people are increasingly likely to define themselves according to a status of political and economic exclusion. This claim is supported with data and qualitative evidence that highlights that the country has the highest rate of youth unemployment in Africa, high levels of youth involvement in quasi-military organisations, low levels of youth participation in political processes, and high rates of youth gambling. The researchers articulate an urgent need to address youth marginalisation, in order to mitigate the risk of social unrest that this situation cultivates.
Youth Participation in Policy Processes

In her study on effective youth participation in policy processes, Helena Okiring seeks to take the debate on youth political participation beyond the quantitative. This is achieved through case study based evaluations of specific policy initiatives. Her research highlights the achievements and limitations of these efforts.

The study brings to light the significant role that youth have played in shaping Uganda’s social, political and economic policy landscape by outlining youth involvement in the struggle for the country’s independence. Okiring, however juxtaposes this contribution to national development with details of youth involvement in counter-insurgency efforts to suppress pro-independence movements.

The theme of youth and conflict at the centre of the countries political history is further illustrated during the post-independence period. The study highlights the way in which young people were both key proponents and opponents to Idi Amin’s military dictatorship. More contemporarily, the research examines the promises of Uganda’s longest serving president, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, to create structures and platforms for youth to engage in policy-making processes.

The author probes into Uganda’s legal framework, and opines that much of the legislature, such as the 1996 constitution, is progressive and inclusive, but emphasises the significant gaps that exist in implementation: Uganda’s National Youth Policy of 2001 has been passed but remains unimplemented. However, despite the comparatively progressive legislative environment, the review emphasises the way in which Uganda’s political environment curtails dissent, particularly that which emerges from civil society.

A historical summary of the development and decline of key institutions for youth – such as the Youth Affairs section in the Ministry of Culture and Community Development, established in the 1960s –, through to current institutions – such as the National Youth Council and the Representation of Young People in Parliament – is presented. These developments are positioned within an assessment of the country’s political environment, and it is argued that a lack of independence from the state has served to restrict the remit and influence of these institutions. Although a number of prom-
ising opportunities exist for youth participation in civil society, the author concludes that these are at risk of being overly dependent on donors and state recapture.

Through a series of case studies, policy makers’ efforts to include youth in policy development are illuminated. These illustrative examples expose a number of issues with the way in which youth participation in policy dialogue is structured. These limitations are asserted to impact on the effectiveness of efforts, and a series of internal (within the youth movement) and external challenges (outside of youth movement) are presented.

The study closes with a number of suggestions and recommendations to enable youth to play a more proactive and more significant role in influencing policy processes. It concludes that the inclusion of youth in political processes presents a significant, but not insurmountable challenge. But, reiterating a theme common to this collection of studies, warns of the critical and urgent importance of engaging youth who, after all, constitute the overwhelming majority of the country’s population.

Youth and Political Inclusion in Uganda

Simon Opoka outlines a series of key national and international policies and legal instruments that have been adopted by the government of Uganda, and brings to light the key articles and commitments that the Ugandan government has made to promote youth participation in political processes.

Simon takes specific sections of Uganda’s 1995 constitution, the National Youth Council Act, the National Youth Policy, African Youth Charter, African Charter on Human and People’s Rights, UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and uses the commitments they contain as a benchmark against which to assess the extent to which young people are able to access positions of power, authority and responsibility.

Simon invites a number of politically engaged youth to compare the aspirations of the policies and legislation with the realities they experience. These interviews and focus group discussions bring to light some individual successes that have seen young people breaking through to national
politics, but it is argued, that, given the country’s demographics, these successes are statistically isolated. Simon presents the wide-ranging concerns raised by the study participants, highlighting; contraventions of different charters; a lack of harmonisation between policies at local, national and international levels; exclusion of youth from decision-making boards; unrepresentative participation structures; a failure to allocate adequate resources to enable youth participation; and the systematic marginalisation of young people - especially young women and young people with disabilities. It is concluded that youth political participation in Uganda remains symbolic rather than authentic.

Youth Culture in Uganda

Patricia Achiro Olwoch’s case study on the influence of Hip Hop culture on Ugandan youth exposes what is often perceived as an international phenomenon to be firmly rooted in contemporary Ugandan youth culture.

Starting with a historical overview of Uganda’s cultural diversity, Olwoch demonstrates the importance of family, clan and traditional leaders amongst Uganda’s 65 indigenous cultures; stating that these were the primary arenas for social, political and economic organisation.

Olwoch explores the destructive influence of colonialism on Uganda’s traditional socio-political structures and indigenous knowledge, and highlights the way in which cultural oppression and domination undermined Uganda’s social fabric and promoted division between the country’s different peoples. Olwoch adds to this contextual illustration with reference to the impact that the expulsion of Ugandan Asians in 1972 had on the national culture.

Olwoch reveals that despite establishing the Ministry of Culture and Community Development upon independence, and the subsequent adoption of laws to strengthen culture, there was no specific national cultural policy until 2006.

In defining culture, Olwoch again emphasises the country’s diversity and draws the reader’s attention to Uganda’s historical musical and artistic traditions. This aspect of the country’s culture is located within contemporary Uganda with an exposition of youth involvement in the production of
independent music, film and theatre - particularly in the country’s capital, Kampala. Youth involvement in this growing cultural sector, is however, not without challenge, requiring young people to navigate the responsibility they have for carrying on the country’s culture and traditions in the face of modernity and Western influence.

Focussing specifically on Hip Hop culture, including music, dance, skateboarding, visual artists, graffiti, spoken word, and poetry, Olwoch highlights the way in which this form of cultural expression is often misconceived, and reveals the way in which young people are adapting and integrating this international phenomenon into the country’s culture.

Giving examples of how participation in this youth subculture has impacted on the lives of individual young people – young women included – Olwoch reveals Hip Hop to be embedded within the cultural scene of the country in both urban and rural settings. It is argued that through Hip Hop, youth in Uganda are on a quest to promote their native languages and embrace their cultures.

**Youth and Economic Inclusion in Uganda**

Following a doubling of the country’s population in last 20 years, Uganda’s youth cohort is currently the largest in the country’s history, yet 21% of the country’s population lives in abject poverty. It is against this demographic and economic backdrop that Irene Ikumu argues for the potential for youth to be pivotal in either bolstering, or undermining the country’s national economic development objectives.

Ikumu outlines the ambition of the Ugandan government to transform the country into a modern, prosperous and middle class nation, presented in the National Development Plan and Vision 2040, and highlights the significant successes Uganda has achieved in ensuring macro-economic stability and impressive rates of GDP growth. These celebrated successes are set against the economic challenges that resulted from Idi Amin’s rule and the country’s civil war in the 1980s.

However, through an analysis of youth inclusion in Uganda’s economy – covering the employment outlook, the situation in the formal and informal economy, Uganda’s agricultural sector and youth access to finance –,
Ikomu highlights the failure of Uganda’s economy to create a labour market capable of absorbing the country’s youth. Low levels of job creation and demographic pressures have conflated to result in Uganda having the highest rate of youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa.

Ikomu highlights a number of specific challenges facing the Uganda economy such as the mismatch between a largely rural-based workforce and largely urban-based employment opportunities; the high prevalence of casual labour; low levels of post secondary and tertiary education; a mismatch between education provision and the country’s labour market; low investment in the agricultural sector; a lack of access to finance; and the potential for labour-market exclusion to contribute to social unrest. It is argued that youth have failed to benefit from the country’s impressive economic growth.

Assessing the policy landscape, Ikomu is critical of the lack of up-to-date data that is available at a policy level, and questions how effective economic planning can be undertaken without it.

Specific policy interventions such as Venture Capital Funds and entrepreneurship training are evaluated, alongside government efforts to promote business skills and agricultural development. Ultimately these efforts are deemed insufficient to address the country’s youth unemployment crisis.

Contrary to the prescriptions espoused by proponents of privatisation and liberalisation, Ikomu calls on the government to more actively intervene in the supply side of the economy and to support job creation. The study closes with a series of recommendations, designed to influence Uganda’s policy environment and create the conditions to address the exclusion of youth from the country’s economic development.

**Education in Uganda**

**Amina Osman** explores the key historical and policy developments in Uganda’s Education system, taking the reader on a journey from Uganda’s a pre-colonial informal educational provision through to more recent government commitments to establish Universal Primary and Secondary Education, and develop Business, Technical and Vocational Training (BTVET).
From its origins, Amina Osman describes how Uganda’s system of informal education—focussed on life, work, relationships, history and culture—was delivered within the unit of the extended family. An introduction to the education provision during the early colonial period highlights the education provision of this time as being informally organised, missionary-led instruction, which had the primary purpose of teaching and promoting Christianity. During the 19th Century, Amina Osman highlights how education under the colonial system was primarily provided through formal schools, which, whilst maintaining the predominant focus on promoting Christianity, expanded their curricula to include instruction on English language, values and character building. Access to different educational institutions during this period is described as uneven and exclusive, with access restricted to those who supported the colonial system, and gender segregation at secondary level.

Amina Osman introduces the reader to Uganda’s first post-independence attempts to reform the country’s education system, which sought to produce ‘skilled Africans for the African economy’. These developments are highlighted as foundational, and are argued to have influenced education provision in the country up until the production of the Education Policy Review Commission Report (1989) and Uganda Government White Paper on Education (1992). These two government policies are reported to have influenced the country’s education system for over three decades. In turn, the principles of these policies remain visible in the country’s contemporary policy landscape including within Uganda Vision 2040, Uganda National Development Plan, Education Sector Strategic Plan and Educational Ministerial Policy Statement.

Turning to the structure of Uganda’s education system, Amina Osman outlines the different types of educational provision that currently exist, the different educational pathways that young people can follow, and the levels to which young people can study.

Amina Osman presents the success that Uganda has achieved in establishing Universal Primary Education—a key pledge of President Museveni’s key 1997 presidential campaign—, and notes that Uganda was the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to introduce free secondary education. However the reader’s attention is drawn to issues of quality, gender inequality, and
poor enrolment and retention rates at secondary level. Explanations, and policy opportunities to address this situation are discussed.

Youth and Crime in Uganda

Against Uganda’s demographic, social and economic challenges, Penninah Mbabazi Atuhaire argues that youth exclusion from socio-economic progress creates fertile conditions for youth in Uganda to become both victims and perpetrators of violence and crime.

Difficult situations such as poverty and single or no parenthood are argued to result in idleness, drug and alcohol abuse, and in more extreme cases, radicalisation.

The study analyses the present situation of the youth as ‘victims’ and/or ‘perpetrators’ of crime and violence. Details are provided about Uganda’s prison population, and gaps in official reporting of crime are highlighted.

Atuhaire explores a wide range of underlying social and economic risk factors that increase the likelihood of young people being involved in violent or criminal activity, and investigates how circumstances and systems affect their decision-making.

In a critique of Uganda’s youth policy landscape, Atuhaire emphasises the lack of cross agency coordination and the absence of an over-arching National Crime Prevention Strategy as key concerns.

The study concludes with recommendations that would allow Uganda to harness the energies of its youth, their creativity and their resourcefulness. It suggests putting in place policies and programmes for preventing youth crime, and strengthening public institutions whose work – both directly and indirectly – could reduce youth involvement in criminal activity. Having argued a causal link between socio-economic inclusion and crime, it also explores specific policy measures that would allow youth to become contributors to the country’s on-going social and economic development.
Youth and Health in Uganda

In her paper on youth and health in Uganda Christine Munduru discusses youth participation and involvement in health development in Uganda, and argues that youth have been looked upon as recipients of health services but not as active participants in the development of health policy.

Christine Munduru introduces the reader to Uganda's health policy context with an overview and analysis of the key national policy documents – including Vision 2040, the National Development Plan, National Youth Policy and Adolescent Health Policy –, that seek to improve health outcomes for young people.

With an exploration of the country's social, cultural and religious beliefs and practices, Christine Munduru depicts the way in which culture intertwines with behaviour to influences specific aspects of young people’s health. In so doing, the study investigates a number of specific health outcomes amongst youth, with reference to communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases and deaths from accident or injury.

Throughout the study a number of key policy issues emerge; including a propensity for policy and health service provision to lack a specific youth focus; the predominance of problem-focussed medical models of health; and a failure for policy makers to respond to the rapid social and economic changes taking place in Uganda.

The links between culture and health are argued to disadvantage young people in general, and young women in particular. The exclusion of youth from policy processes and development issues is argued, to result in a failure of services to respond to young people's health needs. The author closes with a series of recommendations and emphasises an urgent need to ensure that health policy, services and programmes respond to the needs of Uganda’s youth.
Youth and Public Policy in Uganda
Defining Youth Characteristics in Uganda

Christopher Okidi
1.0 Introduction

There is no one size fits all definition of who a youth is in Uganda. This is because of the multifarious of definitions of youth that exist within the Ugandan society. The National Youth Council Act that derives its authority from the Constitution of Uganda defines a youth as *any person between the age of 18 and 30 years*¹, however, other policy documents variously define youth. For example, The National Youth Policy- a government document- is one such. The policy defines youth as;

*All persons; female or males aged 12 to 30 years undergoing a period of great emotional, physical and psychological changes that require societal support for a safe passage from adolescent to full adulthood* (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2001)². These in-country definitions contained in legal-policy text are also at variance with the international definitions of youth, the UN defines a youth as anyone between the ages of 15-24 and 15-29 according to the Commonwealth. There is also a notable existence of internal contradictions or competing definitions of youth, that pits the government view contained in legal and policy texts against the socially constructed definition of youth: defined in terms of societal expectation and responsibilities from the various social groups in the country- revealing a clear semantic rift in the construction of youth.

This paper argues the need for a settlement of this semantic rift, so then can precision be afforded to the various statistics and the lexicons used to describe youth such as the “youth bulge”, “youth dividend’. This study also discovered that many youth and even policy implementers do not know the age boundary of youth – a direct consequence of the semantic rift. And even so it becomes difficult to implement a programme to a group not properly defined. But even if this solution is achieved, delineating the political economic and social characteristics of this cohort is fundamental to providing to them durable solution, let alone giving a broad range of categories that should be covered in the definition. This paper therefore looks

1. Section 1 (Interpretation section) of the National Youth Council Act Cap 319, Laws of Uganda.
at how the socio-political and economic landscape shapes youth characteristics and presents an empirical picture of youth demography in Uganda.

This paper employed the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data collection was primarily based on interviews and on secondary data which stemmed from mainly two sources. The first source was books, journals and other publications available on youth. The second was online materials. Major Websites; Government of Uganda, World Bank, USAID, United Nations; print and electronic media; Daily monitor, the New Vision, The Observer, The Independent, BBC, the Economist and the financial times were consulted on issues concerning youth. There was preference for current literature and those that are closest to the narratives of the youth who live the experience the study investigated. It is important for the reader to note that some links to statistical information to corroborate with the data and literature in the empirical analysis later required access to government archive, the next phase of the study will have to pay attention to.

1.1 Understanding Youth in the Legal — Policy Perspective in Uganda

The legal definition defines youth as any person between the age of eighteen and thirty years (Government of Uganda, 1993). This definition is contained in an Act of Parliament which derives its force from the constitution of Uganda. While this should be the supreme authority to define youth, there are other definitions which depart from this position of the law. One such departure is the National Youth Policy which defines

Youth as all persons; female or males aged 12 to 30 years undergoing a period of great emotional, physical and psychological changes that require societal support for a safe passage from adolescent to full adulthood (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2001).

The rationale for this definition is the imperative for establishing a mutual inclusivity between child and youth. But while a child is defined in sec-

4. Supra 2.
tion 2 of the Children Act cap 59 as “... a person below the age of 18 years (Government of Uganda, 1997)”. The youth policy is interested in a mutual inclusion of a child of 12 years of age. This is also the age of criminal liability among children. It is therefore in the interest of the National Youth Policy that youth be defined from the age of criminal responsibility other than only growth which has customarily been the benchmark of definition of youth as later seen in the cultural viewpoints discussed in this paper.

1.2 Youth in the International and Regional Perspective

A plethora of public international organizations affiliated to the UN operate in Uganda and a host of other international NGOs, to these organizations they define youth in their programmes according to the international perspective. The UN in 1995 defined the world youth population as the age cohort 15-24 \( \ldots \text{estimated to be 1.03 billion, or 18 per cent of the total world population} \) (United Nations, 1995). The Commonwealth defines youth as the age cohort of 15-29 and the African Youth Charter defines youth as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years (African Union, n.d.). These definitions are far from the local thinking of who a youth is that we elaborately discuss below;

1.3 Youth in the Social-Cultural context

Youth have also been defined in Uganda based on cultural context. The multi-cultural nature of Uganda with 56 indigenous ethnic groups (Government of Uganda, 1995) provides unique dimensions not necessarily within the ambit of the law and policy instead cultural values such as marriage and socio-cultural roles have been the basis for the construction of youth,

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the foregoing is a brief albeit comprehensive discussion of a sample of constructions across some cultures in Uganda.

The Acholi—a central Luo ethnic group in Northern Uganda refer to youth as *Bulu* meaning “any young energetic person who is not yet an adult” estimated to begin around the age of 13 associated to puberty growth. The etymology of the word *Bulu* comes from *bulu* which literally means roasting, meaning those who would roast meat for elders. The gender dimension is that the construction favoured masculinity and weak on the female gender since they had different cultural roles than hunting. This is explained by the fact that meat in Acholi is called *Ringo*, translated to mean running. The Acholi as hunters and gatherers used to hunt a lot of game meat and the people who would run after the game have to be young and energetic and the same young and energetic people would be tasked to roast the meat hence the name *Bulu*. However, the cultural construction of youth today in Acholi has the inclusion of the female gender into the name *Bulu* partly owing to the equality crusade. *Bulu* also means any person who is of marriage age but is not yet married, it didn’t matter the age, however old one is if he is not yet married he would be considered a youth and would eat among youth in community functions and gatherings.

The Iteso—from the far Eastern Uganda, refer to youth as *Atumunan* which means a youth, from the word *atumun* which means growth, when they are many youth they are collectively referred to as *Atumunak*. One becomes an *Atumunan* from the age of 13 when one begins experiencing growth at puberty. The growth however should be accompanied by enhanced mental development and capability to contribute ideas the community considers constructive.

According to the Karamajong in North-Eastern Uganda, youth originally are referred to as the *Karacuna*; the *Karacuna* included both male and female. The lower age started at 14 years when one is considered able to herd and defend the cattle in case of a raid and also ability to participate in a raid.

*There has been a host of conflict researchers that have been to Karamoja and have been wrongly using the Karacuna to refer to young warriors, although youth are the most active of warriors, to call young warriors Karacuna is giving a new meaning to the concept of Karacu-*
na other than the traditional one (Lochomin, 2014). It is important to notes that the Karamajong categorise the youth according to the age system, gender and roles (Pulkol, 2014).

To the Baganda in the central region of Uganda youth are referred as Bavubuka. This study could not establish the etymological foundation of the word. The Bavubuka are however categorized into two, the Bavubuka Bato those from the age of 12-20 and Bavubuka Ba Nene from 20+. To the Ganda culture age matters less on the upper side because exiting youth is dependent on marriage. It is explained best in a Ganda local proverb ‘akyezimbira teka ba kato’ literally meaning that “if a bird builds its own nest then it is not young”. Therefore unmarried men no matter the age are considered Bavubuka Ba Nene. This underscores the notion of transition as an important component in the Ganda conception of youth.

In the Ankole culture in Western Uganda youth referred to as Eminyeto usually starts at the 16 years up to 35 years. This is because at 16 years one is considered as old enough to be independent and can now engage in his own work. Unlike other cultures the issue of marriage as exit of youth is not pronounced here.

The general term for youth according the Bagisu around the Elgon Mountain in Eastern Uganda is Bavubukha. The female youth are referred to as Bakhana while the male youth are referred to as Bahindade. The age for youth is between 12-30 years. The age of 12 is usually associated to puberty growth. While male circumcision known as imbalu according to Gisu culture is an initiation to manhood. It is also a ritual that serves more of an inclusion purpose of the young in community development. One is allowed to attend meetings among men if he has been circumcised. One who is not circumcised is considered a child not a youth no matter if they have attained the requisite age.

1.4 How youth define themselves in Uganda

Tradition and policy makers and actors in the international and national realm posit different definitions on youth, the youth themselves have a myriad of constructions to describe them. They define themselves along age, and their location in the political, social and cultural spheres of life. The foregoing is a discussion on how youth in Uganda define themselves;

Box 1
Key findings from the Socio-cultural context

» The cultural perspectives underscore the importance of youth, their roles and provide for a framework for their participation for example “the ability to contribute constructive ideas is fundamental to graduate from a child to a youth besides growth” (Ebwaat, 2014). This shows that the fundamentals for youth inclusion and participation are clearly seen in tradition that policy implementers can take advantage of.

» There is recognition that youth is a transitional phase from the period of adolescents to adulthood or from dependence on one’s parents to independence, although this notion of independence varies, to some cultures it is complete with marriage.

» That some cultures were initially repugnant to gender concerns, but the dynamics have since changed partly due to the equality crusade in the last half of the 20th century that has seen the female gender inclusion in the traditional construction of youth.

» The dominant narrative of African culture being ultra-patriarchal is challenged here considering that some cultures were already gender-sensitive in their construction of youth – a debate outside the scope of this paper.

Source: Author’s

Youth in Uganda define themselves in terms of their political exclusion. They look at themselves as the politically excluded. To them “Youth is that lot in Uganda that is only remembered during election time by our leaders”\textsuperscript{11} and yet “Youth are the victims of any conflict and those that suffer for the mistake made by adults”\textsuperscript{12}. They think that “Ugandan youth are the totally ignored and forgotten group in Uganda”\textsuperscript{13} They also think that youth are partly to blame for their predicament because youth choices that tend to favour the pop culture aides the manipulation of this cohort and swayed away from a strong bargain about their issues

“Youth are that generation of “bling bling” and swag in Uganda, that is why during elections the president raps for us, instead of address key political concerns to us, remember ‘U want Another Rap, Yes Sevo.’”\textsuperscript{14}

This is in reference to the 2011 Elections where the incumbent president sang Hip Hop Music to a crowd of youth in a concert instead of rolling out a practicable and coherent programme for youth.

Youth also define themselves those on the Margins of Uganda’s Economic ladder. They say they are the poorest group “We are the poorest category in Uganda”. They are considered a burden considering their dependence on the working population “We are considered a burden to Uganda”. This is because a few earn income as we shall later elaborately discuss on how poverty has shaped youth characteristics later in this paper.

When asked to describe themselves by the first words that come to their mind the following responses were given by the youth;

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|}
\hline
Box 2\tabularnewline
Showing How Youth Define Themselves\tabularnewline
\hline
» “Uganda youth are the totally ignored and forgotten group in Uganda”\tabularnewline
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{11} KII Interview with a youth leader from Mukono, May 7th , 2014.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{13} KII Interview with Youth Activist, May 8th , 2014.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
“Where do policy implementers go wrong?”

Policy implementers have been victims of the narrative that tradition is a barrier to youth inclusion and participation. This narrative has no factual basis; in fact it is borne out of the unfiltered consumption on the part of policy implementers of the many post-modern concepts and the “barbaric” label that has been afforded on the various African cultural practices. This has made them disregard even the positive elements of tradition in their implementation and design of policy and programmes that target youth.

“The attitude of the policy implementers, is that whenever there is a new positive thinking externally generated, and money given for it, it is implemented with disregard of the existing positive body of knowledge and social realities embedded in culture, the programme then fails because the people do not understand it and view it as promoting another culture on them” (Activist, 2014).

15. Interview with a youth activist in Youth CSO.
Furthermore there has been no attempt to define youth, policy implementers have operated in an environment where the definition is fluid and have continued approving programmes targeting a fluid target group. This has led to people in some areas being excluded from programmes meant to benefit them. A case in point is the Youth Fund and the Livelihood Programme that was rolled out in the 2012/2013 Budget. The fundamental question was who benefits? Is it 12-30 years as per policy or 18-30 years as by law. Both definitions are contained in government documents National Youth policy and National Youth Council Act respectively.

1.6 Youth Characteristics in Uganda

There are many socio-political and economic characteristics obtaining from the various definitions and perceptions on youth in Uganda. A key defining feature of youth that has been generously attended to is the issue of transition to adulthood and independence. On the economic realm this inadvertently requires attention to the poverty levels among youth, the labour market characteristics of youth, migration and financial inclusion as factors that sustain this whole independence notion. Politically the extent of youth inclusion and participation in governance is a key feature that will be analysed too because attaining youth is a benchmark for participation in the community as posited by both tradition and law. While other factors like health, education and crime and conflict will be given attention to considering that they are interlinked and have shaped the youth at risk characteristics today.

1.6.1 Uganda’s Youth Population Profile and the Resulting Characteristics

Uganda has the youngest population world over with over 78% of its population below the age of 30. By age 8 million youth are aged 15-30 (AAU, DRT, UNNGOF, 2012) and 52% below 15 years, and the age group 18-30 years, constituting 21.3% of the population. The annual population increase rate 3.2%. This makes the age group 18-30 to be projected to grow to 7.7 million young people in 2015 (Daily Monitor, Feb 26, 2013). This portends significant...
challenges to a country already grappling with the highest youth unemployment rate in the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa.

This youth bulge\textsuperscript{17} provides interesting dynamics and characteristics as well that while economic opportunities for the youth continue to shrink the youth have taken into gambling to make ends meet and as a result there has been a flourishing gambling sector that government boasts of as a lucrative tax base, which is reflective of government’s inadequacy in addressing the youth socio-economic concerns. Gambling is thus a key characteristic of youth in Uganda, the robustness of gambling is nascent though but the youth have fully embraced it especially sports betting as a source of income.

\textit{“In fact I read somewhere that there are many betting companies in Uganda than all other African countries combined so we have a generation reduced to gambling”} (Owachgiu, 2014).

Another dynamic and characteristic of this youth bulge is the growth of youth militancy in Uganda in two fold. The first is the militancy/vibrancy generated out of the perceived government apathy on youth concerns like the politically mobilized Blue and Red Brigades during the 2011 General Elections and those that operate on a quasi military organization or militia like the \textit{Kiboko Squad} which is believed to be hired by government to quell lawful demonstrations in the city.

Although we may lack the exact figures of youth in these quasi military outfits, there is clear evidence that youth in Uganda have become more militant adding to the fragility of the state. This argument is buttressed in what is now called the youth bulge theory of conflict. Political scientists argue that developing countries undergoing demographic transition are vulnerable to civil conflicts because a large proportion of young adults and a rapid rate of growth in the working age population tend to exacerbate unemployment, prolong dependency on parents, and diminish self esteem and fuel frustration (Cincotta, 2007), besides the utility of extra legal means for unemployed youth to seek economic and social advancement is well documented.

\textsuperscript{17} Youth bulge is a social science label of the demographic profile with a burgeoning youth population like the case of Uganda.
Box 3
For Uganda's population, it's more youth, more problems

According to the findings, Uganda has the world's youngest population, with over 78% below 30 years. Such a revelation also comes with concerns, writes Taddeo Bwambale. A walk through bustling downtown Kampala tells the allure of a flourishing business in the city. It is barely 8:15am, but a large room on the second floor of Mukwano Arcade, near the Old Taxi Park, is packed to capacity. The people are placing their bets on various sports games, among them football and virtual racing.

Giant TV screens relaying matches, blaring music, a fast food joint in the corner and computers spread across the room give a sense of comfort to clients, many of them young men. At the counter, 19-year-old Brian Guma, an S.6 vacist, places his bet on three matches, with sh5,000. If luck smiles on him, he will earn sh470,000 by close of day. Should any of his selected teams lose, he will walk to Kalerwe.

Then, there is George William Bakka, a 21-year-old proprietor of Angels Finance Cooperation, a firm in the city. Having leaped over humble beginnings, Bakka is now a budding young entrepreneur.

The stories of Guma and Bakka present the mixed fortunes that present with an increasingly younger population age group struggling to survive in the city.

According to the latest State of Uganda Population Report 2012 released in December, Uganda has the youngest population in the world, with over 78% below the age of 30 years. Experts warn that such a big young population will exert more pressure on the economy, unless it is transformed into a productive work force.

According to the report, 78% of Ugandans are below the age of 30 years and 52% below 15 years, making Uganda the youngest nation in the world. It further shows that there are 6.5million Ugandans in the age group 18-30 years, constituting 21.3% of the population. This age group is projected to grow to 7.7million young people in 2015.

Source: Daily Monitor Newspaper Feb 26, 2013
The population profile reveals yet another characteristic in the orphan youth. This study found out that 7.5% of Uganda’s youth populations are orphans. 5% of who lost both parents before the age of 15. Most of the orphans have ever lived under foster care at least up to 45% of orphaned youth, as opposed to 21% of all youth (Nicola, 2012).

There are also youth in Uganda who live under foster care. This is important to look at considering that it provides an empirical insight of the dependence burden on the older cohort of Ugandans. Available information suggests that orphanhood is not the primary driver of foster care though, because only 8% of youth who have ever lived in foster care lost both parents before turning 15 (Nicola, 2012). This is perhaps explained by the nature of the African families which are extended. The phenomenon of foster care has a notable regional variation to it. 9% of youth in Kampala lived under foster care compared to 51% in northern Uganda. It should be recalled that Northern Uganda went through turbulent episode of war with many fatalities, that caused more orphan hood problem but the foster care is entrenched in most cultures across the north like to the Acholi culture.

“A homestead is closed with the odwong wood when all relatives and clan members have died otherwise children belong to the clan” (Okello, 2014)

In terms of gender, the fact is that youth are characterized according to female and male as the various socio-cultures posited. The pyramid of Uganda’s population shows that the ratio of female youth to male is nearly 1:1 meaning the population is the same although female youth might be slightly more.

In terms of rural-urban characteristics of youth, numerical information disaggregating youth according to rural –urban and peri-urban was difficult to get, because numerical studies on youth have not paid keen attention to disaggregating them this way at least in Ugandan context The fact is that youth can be characterized according to those living in rural areas, urban and peri-urban.

18. Youth Watch.
19. Okello, P.
1.6.2 Poverty and Youth Characteristics

In Uganda 12% of youth are chronically poor. The youth age group of 12-17 years is the most affected than their 18-30 age group counterparts (AAU, DRT, UNNGOF, 2012). This trend is not surprising considering the legal and institutional framework available to protect the latter from exploitation. In any case the country’s majority age stands at 18 where one can enter a contract recognized by law and at 16 years sometimes depending on special circumstances (Government of Uganda, 2010). Other explanations in perception exist for example the belief that “the potential to engage in gainful activities is higher among the latter (18-30) than in the former age group (12-17). It is also believed that livelihood of the latter category is dependent and dictated by their parents or guardians (AAU, DRT, UNNGOF, 2012). Thus 18-30 age group is left constituting the bulk of those searching for employment opportunities in the job market. Employment is elaborately discussed later in this paper.

It is important to note that while poverty hits the youth hard, there are youth transitioning out of poverty and those transitioning into poverty as the table below portrays.

Table 1
Poverty Transitions of the Youth by Age Groups in Uganda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Moved into Poverty</th>
<th>Moved out of Poverty</th>
<th>Never poor</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population by Age Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-30</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UBOS: Uganda National Panel Survey 2009/10

1.6.3 Youth and the Labour Market in Uganda

In terms of the Labour market characteristics of youth, Uganda has the highest youth unemployment rate in Sub-Saharan Africa. The unemployment situation is projected to even worsen if the youth bulge fully develops and no deliberate efforts are made to address the unemployment trends. The overall unemployment rate in Uganda stands at 80 %. Government of Uganda too admits that half of the youth population in Uganda are not engaging in any income generating activities be it self employed or employed. By age group, available statistics put unemployment among the age group 15-24 at 18 % and their 18-30 counterparts at 16 %. In terms of rural-urban distribution, youth unemployment rates, this study found out that youth unemployment is higher among rural youth at 83 % compared to 72 % among urban youth. In Kampala- the capital city youth unemployment is estimated at 32.2 %. Studies that have paid attention to gender trends revealed that among the age group of 18-24 female unemployment stands at 27 % compared to 9 % among their male counterparts of the same age group (Nicola, 2012).
These labour market characteristics have a regional dimension to it in terms of labour market outcomes. Although participation is generally limited, Youth in Central and Western Uganda display the highest levels of labour force participation, particularly in Western Uganda, where only 11% of youth are not engaged in the labour market. Youth in Central Uganda experience the best economic opportunities: only 16% of youth there report
an inability to find sufficient work than their Eastern and Northern regions counterparts.

**Figure 2**
The Primary Income Activity for Youth in Uganda

Source: Youth Watch Survey 2011

The figure above presents the youth characteristics as shaped by the labour market. We see the youth employed on salary, wage earners, subsistence farmers, commercial farmers among others.

This is corroborated by Youth Map a project supported by USAID that conducts a detailed study on youth in the region- Uganda inclusive who posits that many youth end up in the informal economy owing to unemployment. They estimate that the informal sector in Uganda accounts for up
to 67% of employment outside agriculture. The same report provides that in Northern Uganda the main economic activities that youth engage in, in the informal sector is *leje leje* (casual labour) while female youth brew local alcohol as the main economic activity. Locally brewed alcohol constitutes 80% of the alcohol consumed. It is also estimated that 70% of youth aged 14-30 engage in unpaid family work. Boda Boda [motorcycle] riding is the most cited youth occupation dominated by males. (YouthMap, 2011)

**Gaps in the Policy Environment relating to the Informal sector**

Uganda ranks low in doing business. It actually ranks 122 out of 183 according to *Doing Business in the East African Community* report for the year 2011.²² The high cost of entry into business is among the reasons cited for this trend, besides corruption and high taxes. Small and Medium Enterprises which are considered engines of growth and employment have high mortality rates owing to those facts. Foreign investors have been prioritized and other regime cronies like Basajabala have been given tax incentives. This is indicative of a long standing neglect to provide tax incentive for young people who start investments in the category of Small and Medium Enterprises. Many young people spend up to 16-18% of their profits in taxes without incentives. Studies showed that many investors given incentives were willing to continue investing in Uganda even if they were not given taxes incen-

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**Box 4**

How effective is the tax incentives regime in Uganda?

Over 92% of investors in Uganda currently enjoying tax incentives would have invested their capital even without these incentives.

This is one of the key findings of a recently concluded Investor Motivation Survey conducted by the Investment Climate department of the World Bank group, covering a representative sample of companies

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already doing business in Uganda. The companies in the sample range from small (investment under $50,000) to large (investment over $50 million), and are from the entire spectrum of businesses – services, retail, manufacturing, construction, IT, agriculture, and tourism.

The surveyed companies include solely domestic capital companies, mixed capital, and wholly foreign owned companies. An investor motivation survey is a useful diagnostic tool as it helps to measure the effectiveness of tax incentives and how they impact investment decisions. It helps understand and identify marginal investors (those who would not have invested without tax incentives), and it provides key practical information for governments to develop an accurate understanding of investment behaviour and, hence, build an appropriate tax incentives policy. One of the questions from the survey was: are the revenues being lost through the innumerable tax incentives actually worth it?

And the loss of revenues is significant. An estimate of the African Development bank puts the revenue loss from tax incentives and exemptions at “at least” two per cent of GDP, in 2009-10. That means almost Shs 690bn or $272 million in 2009-10, about twice Uganda’s total budget on health. We do need to care.

Our research shows that the effectiveness of fiscal incentives is mixed, at best, in terms of effectiveness in attracting investments, and, thereby, creating jobs. Research has also shown that the introduction of tax incentives in a poor investment climate – poor infrastructure, high labour costs, low levels of technical skills, etc. – is totally ineffective to attract investment, and their effectiveness of attracting FDI in better investment climates is eight times that in worse ones.

The implication to governments is that efforts should be focused on improving investment climate when it is below par, as a necessary, though not sufficient, condition to attract and retain investment. In a context where the majority of investments would have taken place without tax incentives, like the survey shows, to the cost of substantial loss of revenues to the state, serious reconsideration of the tax incentives regime is needed.

Source: The Observer Newspaper, Tuesday, 3 July 2012.
tives. This shows that government has the capacity to give as many small businesses tax incentives to enable them to incubate and take off.

1.6.4 Education and skills Characteristics of Ugandan Youth

The National Development Plan (2010/11 –2014/15) envisages to transform the Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years; reaching middle-income status by the year 2017. Skills development is highly regarded as a means to raise productivity and incomes and enhance competitiveness of the economy especially for the youth. But the country still has early school dropout rates which in terms of gender put young women dropping out more than young men. And on average, 0.7 years less education in both rural and urban areas. The vulnerabilities facing youth also differ across rural and urban areas. Rural youth receive less education than their urban counterparts and are more likely to work and study simultaneously. They are, however, more likely to receive vocational training, as well as more likely to use those skills, primarily because agricultural training has the highest utilization rates among vocational training courses (Nicola, 2012).

1.6.5 Youth and Politics in Uganda

The political characteristic of youth was identified at three levels. The first level looked at the overall participation of youth in mainstream political governance of the country. This which analysed the participation of youth in the government arms of cabinet and the legislature excluding the judiciary. The judiciary was excluded because unlike the two arms of government entry is not by election and limited to a particular qualification and skills. Of particular interest also was youth participation in the mainstream level of political parties with representation in parliament. The second analyses youth voting characteristics. The third level then analyses the available platforms for youth participation and their effect in achieving youth participation.

Politically there are youth who have found their way in the mainstream structure of governance in Uganda although they are very few. At ministe-
rial level there are two deputy ministers of youth age-Ronald Kibule and Nekesa Barbra Oundo (Bigombe, 2014).²³

Politically still in the National Parliament other than the five slot for youth, there are youth who have got to parliament as directly elected. The total number of youth in the national parliament is estimated not to exceed 15 MPs.

At the Political Party level, they play a very active role but as young wingers. Within the mainstream political party structure a few have made it to the top executive position across the political parties.

In terms of youth voting characteristics, in 2011 national elections in Uganda three-quarters of Ugandan youth voted. Voter apathy among youth is highest in capital city -Kampala. Studies reviewed also show that young

²³ Bigombe, B. Personal Interview.
women are less likely to participate in political activities than young men: of eligible voters, 78 and 72 % of young men and women voted in the 2011 national election, respectively (Nicola, 2012). Two main characteristics appear that while youth participate in voting, there are also those apathetic to voting.

In youth council elections the below table shows that just over half of youth voted in the last youth council elections, distributed as 25 % in Northern Uganda to 67 % in Eastern Uganda (Nicola, 2012). Young women are 13 % points less likely to have heard of the youth council. Poorer youth too are between four and five percent less likely to have heard of the National Youth Council than youth from the wealthiest backgrounds. Youth are disappointed by the political systems and structures that represent them.

Table 2
Youth Voting Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Voted in National Election 2011</th>
<th>Discuss politics with friends always or often</th>
<th>Corruption is very common</th>
<th>Knows about youth council</th>
<th>Voted in 2011 Youth Elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kampala</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table includes 18+ years old youth
Source: Uganda Youth Watch Survey-2011
Youth at risk

Another distinct youth characteristic is the cluster normally referred to as youth at risk. In Uganda the National Youth Policy identifies 22 priority areas that target youth with special attention or particularly vulnerable to specific risks (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2001). The at risk category include:

» Youth in conflict, this category includes a host other characteristics such as ex-combatants
» Child mothers who were formerly abducted
» Formerly abducted youth
» Internally displaced persons (IDP’s) and those in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.
» Youth with disabilities
» Youth in the informal sector
» Orphans
» Rural youth
» Female youth

Box 5
Indicators of the Magnitude of Uganda’s Youth-At Risk Population

» 1.7 Million People in Uganda are orphans and vulnerable children.
» Approximately 75 % of the nations’ Persons with disabilities are youth
» 73 % of Uganda’s prison population is between the ages of 18-30 and due to overcrowding youth are imprisoned with adults.
» Uganda has the highest alcohol abuse rate in the world and alcohol is cited as the cause for low-productivity and vulnerability to crime and violence
» 57 % of youth age 14-35 are involved in drug abuse

Source: Youth Map
» Unemployed youth
» youth addicted to alcohol and drugs
» Youth suffering from HIV.

1.7 Conclusion

This study was able to delve into the various definitions of youth from the legal-political view to the socio-cultural construction. It revealed interesting perspectives that if positive cultural values are integrated, it can help a great deal in ameliorating the youth policy and programmatic blunders this far. The study also discovered that the lexicons used to describe youth have no statistical precision, since the concept of youth is fluid at least in Ugandan context.

Even more interesting is the fact that Uganda seems on a journey backwards in addressing the concerns of young people, yet the fundaments of youth inclusion and participation are as old as African culture. Why then were they not codified? Hence this backward journey in the wake of a legal framework to work with youth.

Many factors were found to shape the characteristics of youth such as the politics of the day, conflict, economy among others and youth, characteristics are so immense but this delineation helps a great deal in understanding the youth and the uniqueness of their challenges to be able to guide programming and policy.
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Youth and Public Policy in

Uganda
Effective Youth Participation in Policy Processes

Helena Okiring
2.1 Introduction

While the surge of Youth in population’s world over may be new, the participation of young people in policy processes in Uganda is not particularly new as youth have historically played a significant role in shaping the social, political and economic policy landscape in this nation. The questions emerging in development discourse should be centered on reviving or strengthening youth visibility in policy processes beyond the benign notion of care or political favor for special interest groups often looked at as “block” voters as is the case today. Consequently this paper is a more refined presentation of thoughts the author and colleagues in the field of Youth in development commenced in 2010; hence its advanced titling and seeks to go deeper and qualitatively establish the extent to which the different policy initiatives intended to benefit youth in Uganda have been successful beyond the now common numerical/quantitative appreciation of youth participation in policy processes. This paper argues that it is not enough to have youth numerically represented in policy processes if their numbers do not count for qualitative or meaningful outcomes in the lives of Ugandans, the bulk of who are young people.

This paper is structured around five sections. Immediately following is section two, which gives a brief contextual narrative on Uganda-its political history, the legal and institutional framework for policy making in the country at the time and today that shape the environment within which

1. Helena Okiring is the programmes officer, Youth Policy Advocacy and Engagement at Uganda Youth Network (UYONET), a youth based and youth led civil society network organization that provides a platform for building youth capacities for meaningful engagement governance processes nationally and regionally. Among other notable achievements, Helena is also a youth Leadership and development resource person and has been part of different successful initiatives at both regional and international level aimed at enabling and mainstreaming Youth participation in democratic processes. She is also a founding member of the Kondrad Adeneur Stiftung Young leaders think tank on policy alternatives as well the founder of the Dream Initiative for the Global Advancement of Social Arts (D.I), an institution that focuses on using music and social arts to create leadership, innovation, communication, advocacy and social entrepreneurship opportunities for young people through which they can contribute to different development processes worldwide.

2. LAROK, Okiring and Mayambala; At Cross Roads? The Youth, Politics of Interest Groups and Influencing National Policy Processes in Uganda: 2010
youth engage with policy processes. Drawing from the patterns in the section, it concludes by spelling out indicators of youth participation in policy processes which will help the readers of this study to appreciate the emerging issues around Youth Participation in Policy in Uganda. Section three presents case studies of youth participation in policy and on the basis of the indicators discussed earlier, interrogates the extent to which young people actually took part in the policy activity, what roles they played-or were expected to play, the extent to which they initiated and influenced the policy outcomes, how they organized themselves, the manner of issues raised and to what effect in the selected policy. The section concludes with a summary of issues emerging in the way youth participation in policy engagement is structured and how this affects the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of youth participation in policy processes. Section four concludes with suggestions on how young people can play a more proactive, significant role in influencing policy processes across the board by drawing greater attention to addressing internal considerations which will then affect external factors.

It is hoped that with a more critical approach, youth participation in policy processes will count for more inclusive and responsive policy remedies to the different political, social and economic challenges that plague Uganda as a whole so that young people become more valued actors in more mainstream policy discourse.

### 2.2 Definition of Youth Participation in Policy Processes

#### 2.2.1 What is youth participation in policy processes?

Youth Participation³ in policy processes refers to the human resources, programs, institutions and systems that provide young people with opportunities to meaningfully engage and inform economic, social and political policy processes and outcomes. Participation in policy is a means through which youth can empower themselves to influence policy and in essence, also contribute to the development of their communities, countries, continents and the world.

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³ [www.centerforyouthindevelopment.org](http://www.centerforyouthindevelopment.org).
Effective policy participation occurs when people, programs, institutions and systems are involved in an interplay of activities aimed at developing skills, habits, attitudes and a sense of awareness and responsibility in a young person so that in turn, a young person can translate these into opportunities to influence the social, economic and political policy affairs of one’s life, community, country and world. This interplay also involves a continuous process of expanding programs and opportunities that empower young people to participate in national transformation or progress of a given society or community.

2.2.2 Youth participation in policy indicators

Awareness of structures for policy participation

A recent study on gaps in youth policy used awareness of structures for youth participation as a credible barometer of the public’s trust in the capacity of youth to contribute positively to development. This further also shows that out of a random sample of 1036 youth interviewed, only 496 (48% of these) were aware of existing youth structures through which they could influence policy and other development related processes while 53% had no knowledge of or response to the same.

Involvement in Community organizations

Involvement in community organizations is also an important indicator of youth civic engagement as well as a predictor of involvement in civic and political affairs later in life. Broadly speaking, youth involvement in local leadership processes is very low as they do not know that they can greatly contribute to the development of their communities through involvement in design and implementation of policies.

2.3 Country Context and the Youth in Uganda

2.3.1 The Youth and Policy in Uganda: an Overview

Uganda has the world’s youngest population with at least 78% of the populace below the age of 30 and the bulk of her citizens falling between the ages of 12-30 years. The youth account for close to 11 million of the citizenry, with female youth accounting for 51% of these numbers. At least 80% of Uganda’s youth population resides in rural areas.

The definition of Youth in Uganda is age centric, defining youth as persons falling in the age bracket of 18-30.

The Youth in Uganda are not homogenous and find themselves in diverse contexts and realities such rural-urban, elite, skilled-semi skilled, to mention but a few. These figures point to a significant youth surge in the de-

7. UBOS 2010.
mographics of Uganda, thereby underscoring the urgent need to appreciate and rethink development programmes and related policies aimed at young people to ensure more young people benefit and influence policy processes more meaningfully across the board.

According to the National Youth Policy, planning for youth development dates back to the 1960s when government established a section on Youth Affairs within the ministry of Culture and Community development. The government also established three National Youth organizations namely: National Union of Youth Organizations (NUYO) which was replaced by Uganda Youth Development Organization (UYDO) in the 1970’s and National Union of Students of Uganda (NUSU) which targeted youth in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. Each of these fell under the mandate of different ministries for example NUYO was under the ministry of Culture and community development while NUSU was under the ministry of Education.

At the time these Youth agencies received substantive funding from both the state and international agencies like United Nations International Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) particularly for girls and vocational training.

Today, these organizations are nonexistent and have been replaced by different institutions such as the National Youth Council, the representation of Young people in Parliament, the rationale for which we shall see in the overview of Uganda’s history, following.

2.3.2 A short political history of Uganda

Present day Uganda was formed in 1962 following the attainment of Independence on 9th October of the same year. Youth were part of the struggle for Uganda’s independence and at the time, they organized themselves to influence the pro independence struggle and related policy discussions largely through the mainstream political parties and university structures that were in place governed by Young leaders themselves. These efforts by Young people were met by counter “insurgency” efforts to suppress pro independence movements, including the Youth. Consequently in the imme-

8. Interview with Mr. Leonard Okello, se.
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diate post independence period, most civic groups were co-opted into the state, a strategy that significantly affected independent organizing outside the state.

Uganda, like many African countries inherited a post independent predatory state infrastructure that remained largely operational years after the union jack was lowered. This infrastructure was set up to exploit Uganda’s natural resources through entrenching a highly centralized and unitary system. Immediate and successive leaders did not succeed at transforming this exploitative infrastructure in a meaningful way and many used it to further an agenda of state political and economic patronage. The significance of this reality is that since the period preceding Uganda’s independence, there has been a systematic attempt to suppress agents that challenged the status quo with varying degrees of success.

Youth organs have not been an exception to this trend⁹ as the increasingly repressive Ugandan state has over time either destroyed or re-engineered youth structures –as well as other outfits for citizen organizing such as co-operatives and women leagues in a bid to curtail dissenting voices from civil society organizations, political parties and youth organizations in their diversity.

While Uganda underwent a period of political instability during

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9. Despite strong resistance from civil society organizations, parliament, faith based institutions and Political parties, the State of Uganda has now passed the Public Order management Act POMA 2011, the Anti Gay Act, the Interception of communications act, the revised NGO Act all of which seek to control the extent to which citizens, the bulk of who are Youth organize themselves to engage with the state.
the post independence period between 1966 and 1986, some groups of young people were manipulated by different political leaders and became agents for mayhem. On the other hand, some groups of young people chose to set a more empowering example, particularly those in the student movement at the time organized under the National Union for Students in Uganda (NUSU). The student leaders under NUSU criticized the brutal acts of murder and killings that were rampant at the time that included Idi Amin's Military dictatorship.

The National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime headed by Uganda’s longest serving President to date, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni took over in 1986 with a promise to create structures to provide young people with platforms to engage in the policy making process.

Youth, women, persons with disabilities, workers and the army were identified as special interest groups that needed affirmative action at the time, which was granted through representation in the highest representative body, parliament, under the movement philosophy where every Ugandan was by law under one umbrella where individual merit-as opposed to political-and by extension policy orientation mattered.

For youth, women and persons with disabilities, the justification was largely their rather marginalized posture at the time hence the need for affirmative action and “special interest” representation in various structures including those in the decentralized Local government system. For those in the army, the special representation was more in honor of the role they played in the liberation war that brought the NRM to power.

While the affirmative action basis is the premise upon which youth participation in policy is hinged may have its positives, it is important to appreciate two significantly structural undercurrent dynamics that emerged as a result of this affirmative action, whose bearing translates into the pattern and nature of participation of Ugandan youth policy processes today. As discussed earlier, institutions initially designed for youth participation have suffered a systematic rundown while affirmative action approaches were being adopted across the governance spectrum.

1. Structurally, Youth are recognized as a minority group of citizens. This perception has not changed even though the demographic construct of Uganda presents a completely different reality from the time this special
interest provisions were made. This “special interest logic” still informs how youth engage today—as well as how the Ugandan state, development actors and youth themselves engage with young people. We shall further appreciate the implications of this in the case studies to follow.

2. That at the entrance of the NRM, existing structures at the time for Youth organizing and engagement were systematically run down as new structures were created. This run along the parallel ban of political parties as all Ugandans were now under one political party, the Movement, given the negative experience of political parties in Uganda as at the time. While parties were eventually revived following the referendum of 2005, Uganda experienced a long spell of having exclusive approaches for Youth organizing or engagement with policy processes, as all young people who wished to do so had to do it under the Movement system. Political parties provide a space for youth to engage with different ideologies that eventually shape policy preferences and positions in decision making.

3. The absence of alternatives for engagement with policy processes and standardization of other youth organs meant that youth had only one option for engagement with policy processes but also youth whose thoughts, views, or ideas on policy were not in line with the NRM agenda were all together excluded from policy discourse and this continues to be the case, albeit more glaringly and evidently because the population has bulged, and the absence of young people in their diversity in policy discourse, is only harder to ignore.

4. Affirmative action has been highly susceptible to political patronage because of its gift-like manner and as such, youth structures such as the National Youth Council established in 1993 are almost wholly dependent on the state and development partners, having failed to renew their leadership for the past 11 years because they have to rely on state funding for their organizing. Consequently, until 2006, all the preceding youth members of parliament were NRM leaning even though Uganda had returned to the multiparty dispensation. This reality also speaks to the nature of issues the youth representatives will advance in the positions of power they hold that have ability to significantly alter and influence policy and give insight into the politics of special interest group representation and effective participation of youth in policy nexus.
2.3.3 The Nature of the Policy Process in Uganda

Uganda has a fairly respectable legal, institutional and normative framework for policy making. The 1995 constitution has provisions that promote active participation of citizens in the policy process. More to this, Youth are also encouraged to engage with policy processes in the Youth Council Act and the Local Government Act.

The policy development process in Uganda has largely been inclusive even though the participation of Youth per se has been very selective.

Uganda also lacks the discipline to implement most of her policies and has been criticized for developing the best policies on paper but failing to implement the same, despite having the financial and technical resources to do so.

2.3.4 The Status of Uganda’s National Youth Policy

Uganda has a National Youth Policy that was first drafted and passed in 2001 but has not been implemented because it lacked an action plan at the time it was first passed[10]. The policy was developed to provide a framework through which the different challenges that Ugandan youth were facing would be addressed. These challenges included unemployment, poverty, HIV AIDS, unplanned pregnancies, to mention but a few. Furthermore, there were a number of disparities from broader regional and international youth action policy instruments particularly on the definition of youth. For example while the UN defined youth as persons between the ages of 15-24, the common wealth defines them as persons between the ages of 15-29 and the African Union as persons aged 18-35. This made streamlining a challenge because Uganda’s youth policy defined Youth as persons between the ages of 18-30 and yet it was initiated as part of a global effort to encourage participation of youth in development.

[10] Response to a question paused to the Asst commissioner of Youth and Children on the status of the National Youth Policy on the status of the National Youth Policy at a dialogue convened by Action Aid, Uganda Youth Network and International Alert to accelerate the implementation of the policy on Monday 14th April 2014 at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.
The National Youth Policy is currently in the latter stages of a review and at the time this study was commissioned, the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) was at the stage of developing an action plan for the budget.

It is also important to note that the revision of the policy in Uganda influenced international instruments such as the UNDP Strategy and they have revised their youth age to 18-35 years to accommodate the provisions for youth in the African Youth Charter. The revised National Policy will officially be launched in August 2014 at the National Youth Day Celebrations in Uganda.

### 2.4 Effectiveness of Youth Participation in Policy Processes in Uganda

#### 2.4.1 An Overview

In the last two decades, many of the youth structures either collapsed or fell into disuse as shared earlier. Youth involvement and participation in leadership in decision making remains largely low\(^{11}\), with the involvement of youth seen only as beneficiaries (sideline actors) of programmes and services rather than as active participants (mainstream players) in the development process. The National Youth council statute was enacted in 1993 to organise youth into a unified body that could engage with different policy processes. At national level, there is provision in the law for 5 youth members of Parliament, the National Youth Council, district youth councils, sub county and even village youth councils. Regardless of these provisions, the National Youth policy recognizes low youth participation in leadership as a significant challenge, sighting organizational regulatory barriers, limited knowledge on leadership and management as some of the reasons this is happening.

More recently though, efforts to revamp youth participation in the policy and development process with the goal to encourage young people to get involved in the policy process are in place, engineered mainly from outside

the state. Development partners, International agencies and civil society organizations remain the most prominent actors in enabling youth involvement in policy processes. The state also continues to engage youth in policy, although a number of the precedents are quite disempowering as we continue to see Ugandan youth used as fronts for political patronage. It is also extremely important to note that a number of youth efforts at participation in the policy process are not independent per se, raising concerns around ownership of the policy issues being fronted as the case studies below will help us to see.

Despite these difficulties, there are some buds of effort that represent some home for independent youth organizing and engagement with the policy process which need to be protected from over dependence on donors and state re-capture. The case studies that follow speak to the different realities of patronage and self determination. They are clustered into categories with case study examples that speak to each category on the different organizing fronts:

2.4.2 Category 1 Youth Engagement with legislative processes

The National Youth Enterprise Fund Bill

In 2008, the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) was first initiated in the eighth parliament of Uganda by the youthful legislators at the time, who wanted to make their presence in the house count for more meaningful impact in the lives of their fellow Ugandan youth at the time.\textsuperscript{12} The forum has however been more visible in the 9th parliament as Youth members of parliament have come out strongly to push for legislative reforms to address the plight of the youth they represent in the house:

With support from different development partners such as the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and Uganda Youth Network (UYONET), UPFYA led a process to develop and table a National Youth Enterprise Fund Bill to respond to the

\textsuperscript{12} Youth full legislators refers to both the MPs who were in the house on the affirmative action ticket as youth MPs as well as those who were in the house at the time as mainstream legislators but fell under the 30 year old age limit hence the collective term.
massive youth unemployment crisis in Uganda and more particularly to address a number of challenges that were emerging from an effort in place at the time (FY 2012/2013), the youth venture capital fund (YVCF) whose goal was to make entrepreneurship financing available to young people. Young people raised a number of complaints around the YVCF such as the high interest rates partnering banks were charging to already economically vulnerable youth, proof of prior training in entrepreneurship, possession of a minimum o-level certificate all of which were being seen as un-necessary restrictions for access to the fund. While one or two of these issues were revisited, the Youth Members of Parliament still felt the criteria was largely exclusionary and would not benefit its intended beneficiaries. To deal with the challenges more strategically, the Youth MPs fronted a proposal for a governing body and enabling law with which the YVCF would be operationalised.

On 14th May 2012, UPFYA convened a National consultative dialogue where youth leaders in their diversity convened to deliberate on the Youth Enterprise Fund Bill. Over 160 participants were drawn from 90 districts and comprised of district youth leaders, youth in civil society, development partners, members of parliament and representatives from the line ministry for youth, Ministry of Gender, labour and Social Development. The patron of the forum, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of the 9th Parliament, Rebecca Kadaga Alitwala was also part of these deliberations. The participants in the meeting unanimously agreed that the Youth MPs should advance the proposal to create the Youth Enterprise fund and draft a bill to be tabled on the floor of parliament.

Subsequent regional level meetings were held, including a content building meeting to review the final draft of the Youth enterprise fund proposal.

Achievements and Challenges

The Motion for the Bill was successfully tabled in parliament on 4th April 2012. The National Youth Enterprise Fund Bill is a private members bill sponsored by Hons. Monica Amoding (also chairperson of the PFYA), Ger-

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13. Uganda is estimated to have an unemployment statistic of 83% according to the 2009 African Development Indicators Report.
ald Karuhanga, Peter Ogwang, Acire, Nakabaale and Anite Evelyn. Its objectives included among other things the establishment of a center to ease access to information for young people on different initiatives including income generation, business management, business proposal development to mention but a few. Further, the process was fairly inclusive as efforts were made to seek input from different stake holders in the youth fraternity.

The challenges included the fact that the PYFA is largely donor aid dependent which creates its own dynamics, including questions of sustainability. Further, while the PYFA agenda has been largely reflective of the collective challenges youth in Uganda face, a number of the members of the forum continue to remain more loyal to political party interests which are many times in conflict with the cause for greater good. A number of Youth members of Parliament have been sucked into the system of patronage and despite the promising beginning at the start of their term; they have now become agents for state orchestrated patronage, being cited in the media for advancing issues that pause a threat to democracy and the entire policy engagement process at large.

The KAS Young Leaders think Tank for Policy Alternatives

The Young Leaders Think Tank for Policy Alternatives is an initiative of the Kondrad-Adenauer-Stiftung that was established in 2011 to enhance youth participation in governance and policy formulation in Uganda. The Think Tank is a group of 20 highly qualified and committed young Ugandan graduates who interact and work together on a regular basis in order to analyze policy issues and develop policy alternatives from the perspective of the young generation. The objectives of the think tank were to provide a platform for young leaders to discuss policy matters in a constructive and non partisan manner, enabling young leaders to develop and formulate alternative policy suggestions reflecting the interests and concerns of young Ugandans, give a voice to the young generation by publishing position papers and organizing public dialogues, strengthening the skills of young leaders.

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15. www.kas.de/uganda/en/pages
in analysis and debate and encouraging multipliers to lead by example in focused, issue-related and constructive political interaction and debating.

The policies are developed by different thematic working groups in the think tank which provide peer feedback to one another. The members also research and interact with different key policy actors in the policy development process in order to have a better informed and value adding output.

So far, the think tank has been able to present policy proposals to the 9th Parliament of Uganda. Significantly, on 8th August 2011, the think tank handed over their policy proposals to the deputy Speaker, Hon Jacob Oulanyaa so that these proposals inform any economic deliberations parliament may engage in.

**Achievements and challenges**

The achievements of the KAS Young leaders’ think tank include the fact that the Think tank has developed and published some policy alternatives which have been disseminated to key actors in line ministries, departments and agencies. An example of this was the paper developed on Youth (un)employment with proposals on how government can alleviate this. Some of proposals in the document included a call for tax incentives for companies who provide job opportunities for young people, the creation of national job centers, tailoring Uganda’s education system to the needs of Uganda’s economy, providing young people with access to financial resources to encourage entrepreneurship, and establishing transparent recruitment policies for young people

This contribution on how to protect the economic interests of young people is important towards enabling inclusive participation of young people in policy processes. The proposals have also been shared with different civil society organizations that work with youth on economic reform.

The challenge too, is the heavy dependence on aid which has a great bearing on the extent to which the think tank is maximized in terms of ownership of priorities and the extent to which youth in the think tank actually own the process of developing and sharing the policy proposals.

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17. Interview with Mr. Kaviri Ali, a founding member of the KAS Young leaders Think-tank for Policy Alternatives,
While the articulation of policy issues by young people also means the level and quality of discussion is significantly elevated, policy engagement is more technical than it may seem. While KAS has made investments in building the capacity of the Young leaders, gaps remain that translate into delays in developing alternatives because the Youth in the think tank still require skills on policy analysis.

Youth shaping the political agenda in Uganda

The 2010 National Youth Manifesto (NYM) process was a significant effort that gave prominent visibility to the issues that young people wanted key political actors who were contesting in the elections to consider. It was launched prior to the 2011 elections under the stewardship of Uganda Youth Network with the support of the International Republican Institute (IRI) and United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF). The use of an interest group manifesto was only the 2nd attempt at youth organizing around collective issues, following a similar effort in 2005 ahead of the 2006 general elections in Uganda. Through a series of regional country wide dialogues, UYONET convened different actors in the youth category ranging from student leaders to civil society youth leaders, all of who were asked what issues they would like to be at the forefront of the election agenda. Consultations were also done through radio talkshows and social media platforms, particularly for the 2010 Youth Manifesto process.

The issues that young people raised were youth unemployment, meaningful participation in political processes, increased access to quality health care and education. The Youth manifesto was meant to serve as a basis upon which youth would hold leaders and government accountable.

Achievements and challenges

The achievements of the manifesto processes included the fact that they both presented milestones in as far as youth organizing were concerned. The Youth Manifesto was presented to different political parties and a number of recommendations were taken into different political party manifestos.

Following the success of the NYM, a youth campaign, the green light movement emerged specifically to tackle the pressing issue of youth unem-
ployment and ensure different state and civil society actors remain committed to addressing the NYM concern of youth unemployment. The green light campaign continues to engage young people in policy discussions on youth programmes through district based meetings and an sms grid that has over 30,000 Youth subscribed to it. Further a number of youth organizations that focus on policy advocacy structured their programming to accommodate the different priority areas that youth had highlighted in the National Youth Manifesto. The Youth manifesto process also fed into the broader Citizen’s Manifesto, an initiative by the Uganda Governance Monitoring platform aimed at putting citizens demands at the center of governance processes.

On the other hand, the youth manifesto process, like earlier engagements was largely supported by development partners whose engagement and support dwindled in the post election period. There have also been challenges in sustaining the momentum and youth demands beyond the elections. Further, the scope of consultations for both the 2005 and 2011 Youth manifestos was limited to a few areas and the generally low levels of civic engagement and understanding of multiparty politics meant that youth did not have the capacity to keep the pre election momentum around the manifesto alive on their own.

Youth Participation in the National Development Plan and Vision 2040

Uganda’s Poverty Eradication Action Plan underwent review in 2009 and was replaced by the National Development Plan to guide development priorities for the country. This process was supported by DFID, which felt it was important to ensure that the process of developing Uganda’s new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) was as inclusive and as participatory as possible. DFID was also acutely aware of the youth bulge in the country and the need to address apathy among youth through involving them in key decision making processes. It was also hoped that by engaging youth in the NDP process, they would gain knowledge on the NDP itself and focus on key issues affecting young people.

DFID therefore supported a number of youth organizations to engage with the highly technical NDP process. The logic for supporting Youth was that they represent a demographic majority and their involvement would count for more inclusiveness in the NDP process.
In partnership with civil society organizations, DFID supported a National Youth Consultation in June 2009 that brought together a total of 52 young people, each representing a district. Their input was listened to and is clearly documented18 and incorporated into the final version National Development plan.

In 2013, the NDP was further upgraded to VISION 2040 and a similar process of developing an upgraded document was undertaken. The only difference was that in the consultation for vision 2040, the Youth were consulted in the validation process not from the onset as was the case with the NDP. The National Planning Authority (NPA) convened a youth leaders consultative meeting where they met youth leaders from civil society organizations and youth councils on 18th March 2013. This time round, the submissions and feedback that the youth made into the process included concerns that the Vision was very exclusionary, focusing on meeting the development needs of a minority as opposed to the majority who are largely young people. Youth also raised concerns around the corruption trends in the country and how that could compromise the attainment of vision 2040. Like the NDP process, the views were also taken into consideration by the NPA officials who were present.

Achievements and challenges

As a result, the draft National Development Plan mentioned areas of critical importance to Young people. For example USD5m was earmarked to support youth entrepreneurship development programmes.

On the other hand, increasingly the consultative process on Uganda’s PRSP has become exclusive. While the NDP involved youth from the onset, Vision 2040 brought young people onset to simply validate or comment on a process whose initial thinking process they were not part of. As such, comments from the youth at the Vision 2040 dialogue included the view from a youth CSO leader that the Vision should be renamed “Youth Vision 2040” to stress the importance of mainstreaming youth participation in these processes from the initial stages to the eventual implementation and monitoring.

2.4.3 Emerging Challenges to Youth Participation in policy

From the case studies presented above, it is clear that there are a number of impediments to effective youth participation in policy processes. It is clear that the bulk-if not all the case studies highlighted are supported by development partners/ international Aid agencies which raises concerns around the ownership of policy engagement processes and the eventual outcomes of this. Further, the absence of independently organized initiatives underscores the challenge of organizing youth in the absence of a robust inclusive genuinely owned youth infrastructure that they can use to set their agenda. This also explains why consultations are usually limited to a very small number of youth and the views expressed may not necessarily be representative of the diverse policy concerns different groups of youth may have. This section unpacks the internal and external challenges that militate against the effective participation of youth in policy processes. Internal challenges stem from factors in the youth movement and organizations that weaken them internally and undermine their ability to meaningfully engage with the external environment. External challenges are those that crop up from beyond the youth movement. They are factors that commonly affect most development actors in the Ugandan context. The extent to which youth are able to address and mitigate the internal challenges to their engagement in policy significantly affects how they interact with-and challenge the external elements in Uganda’s development process as a whole.

Internal Challenges

Some of the internal challenges highlighted include:

» **Weak and fragmented Youth institutions and structures:** A number of youth organizations in Uganda are institutionally still in their budding stages, with the oldest institutions having existed for only as little as 10 years. Given that most youth organizations are founded by young people, many of who lack the skills and capacity to build strong institutions, youth organizations tend to be very unstable, running informally many times, with limited internal checks and controls to build robust and credible youth institutions. In many cases youth organizations are run by elitist individuals who hold the organizations at ransom, running
them as personal projects as opposed to avenues through which young people can influence the state of affairs in the country.

» **Further, weak institutions are also very vulnerable to fragmentation:** While Youth are not a homogenous group, youth have more challenges in common affecting them than not. The failure to organise around collective challenges most times means youth organizations tend to destructively compete against one another as opposed to constructively complimenting and working together. A classic example of this was in the 2011 Youth Manifesto process spearheaded by UYONET. While UYONET was spearheading the Youth Manifesto process, many more Youth NGOs were succumbing to state patronage under the Uganda Youth Forum and openly dismissing the outcomes of the UYONET led youth manifesto process, regardless of the fact that the youth in the Youth Forum face the same problems that the National Youth Manifesto was challenging key political actors to address. This failure to resist state patronage which is often times used to negatively fragment the youth movement is largely hinged on the reality that Youth organizations are seldom self funded, with most relying heavily on the state and development partners for Aid.

» **The transitional identity of the youth and leadership renewal challenges:** Unlike other interest groups, youth is simply a transitional identity and this has glaring implications for youth leadership. Oftentimes, organizations founded by youth struggle with transitional issues when the founders are no longer legally youth. There is a significant challenge with succession planning in a number of youth organizations with founders often becoming gate keepers as opposed to brides for institutional growth. This challenge sets a context that makes organizations vulnerable to mission drift, founder patronage and compromised leadership development of other upcoming youth because this has implications for founder members who will have to give way to new youth leadership.

» **Limited Capacity of youth to engage:** Given the lapse in civic education in Uganda, the capacities for youth to engage with civic affairs let alone more technical policy processes remain low. Outside the support of NGOs or development actors, the state is not making significant contributions towards enabling young people build skills for involvement in public life. Despite demands from different state actors, the Ugandan consti-
tution for instance, remains untranslated into local languages and yet it is the most basic entry point into the policy participation process. As such, young people remain ignorant about the right and responsibility they have to influence public affairs including issues of policy, treating it as a reserve of politicians and other law makers.

» **The Victim Mentality:** The bulk of Youth in Uganda believe that responsiveness from the state to issues of key concern to young people is a favor as opposed to a duty of the state. As such youth engage with the state as helpless, apathetic victims, further entrenching patronage by seeking for political favor and in so doing end up maintaining the status quo as opposed to challenging it. In turn youth have been used as puppets in the political arena as opposed to being the ones that hold the puppet strings given the demographic strength of their numbers.

**External Challenges**

» **Funding constraints and donor patronage:** Given the unpredictability of aid and changes in the broader aid agenda with in which support to Youth organizations falls, donors and development partners are increasingly becoming more patronizing. The bulk of youth organizations-and broader civil society organizations remain significantly donor dependent which translates into heavy influence on programming in (youth) organizations. As was the case in all the case studies shared, the efforts were funded by development partners and as soon as the aid decreases, the visibility of the youth slumps with the same degree. The more significant impact of heavily dependent organizations is that the programming is focused on shorter outputs and not necessarily outcomes and yet this is where significant investments need to be made. Aid does not necessarily enable independent thought and organizing and in some cases where that was naturally occurring, aid has the ability to distort organizational growth through causing mission drift, causing many organizations to become opportunist and reactive in posture.

» **The Changing Nature of the Policy regime in Uganda:** As indicated earlier, Uganda has serious challenges when it comes to policy implementation. A number of policies that would enable youth participation in policy formulation remain unimplemented or altogether not passed. The ab-
sence of a fully implemented and operationalised National Youth policy in Uganda for instance means that youth do not have a legal framework within which they can contribute to policy processes. Beyond the National Youth policy, policy discourse in Uganda has increasingly become more exclusive, even in parliament, with political party positions (and interests) overriding the interests of the collective, largely representative of young people as we have witnessed. The supportive legal framework is fast eroding as the ruling elite focus more on survival than the national and more inclusive transformation of Uganda. Further, the nature of policies and laws being passed does very little to encourage youth participation on policy processes. An example is the revised NGO Act that stifles the operations of NGOs, the public Order Management Act that was passed despite the wide criticism and condemnation it received, the Anti gay Law that legitimizes exclusion of minorities, to mention but a few. Participation in policy processes becomes the exception as opposed to the norm in these circumstances especially among young people many of who do not have the knowledge and resilience to engage under the prevailing policy conditions.

This change is in tandem with the changing character of the Ugandan state that has become increasingly more imposing, intolerant, hostile and exclusive. This is made worse by the fact that Uganda, like many previous colonial states inherited a state structure that is predatory and exploitative. Such a state structure is characterized by highly centralized decision making systems, even when superficially it appears otherwise, being suspicious of and suppressing dissenting voices, which would otherwise add value to policy processes. The youth are thus sucked into this system as objects used to deliver the narrow interests of the regime. This situation often frustrates independent and effective organization of youth especially when they challenge the status quo.
2.5 Enabling effective Youth Participation in Policy Processes

The recommendations below highlight the areas that different policy actors and youth themselves need to draw attention to in order to participate more effectively in policy processes. The presentation following retains the internal and external dimension presentation of possible solutions.

2.5.1 Internal Recommendations

Internal recommendations remain the most important and decisive if the youth would like to ably and significantly influence policy processes in a manner that has a significant impact on the lives of Ugandans and the eventual transformation of the country.

» **Institutional building and strengthening:** It is extremely important that Youth organizations take steps to build strong, robust and resilient institutions. This includes having organizations registered and as much as possible adhere to standard guidelines of effective governance, commit to having succession planning as an ongoing part of their institutional development so that organizations build internal capacity to withstand the external pressure from an increasingly repressive Ugandan state.

» **Diversify the resource base of organizations:** In line with institutional strengthening, given the significance that aid has on influencing the agenda of organizations as well as the lack of self funding in a number of youth organizations, it is important that youth organizations need to begin to consider alternative forms of funding to encourage self dependence, there by securing their future. NGOs can legally engage in income generating activities such as social enterprises that would boost their resource base. This means organizations can be in greater control of how they engage with and intervene in policy processes as they would not be constrained by resource limitations as is the case currently.

» **Good Leadership:** The Youth movement needs to focus on building leadership given the transitional nature of youth. This leadership must be exemplary, politically conscious and inspiring. At the heart of good leadership is the place of values in engaging with the status quo. The
Youth must identify with a given set of values that shields the youth movement from opportunism and patronage. These values include 

**Inspiration** — which is to dare young people to believe that a better nation is possible, and by engaging with policy issues they are making a direct contribution to the realization of the country they dream of. This will challenge youth to think outside the box not remain inside of it, to challenge the status quo and not maintain it. Second is **aspiration**: the belief that young people can do what they will to do when they will to do it. This means that youth must commit to taking deliberate steps to implement the goals they set for themselves and their country. It is the commitment to stick to a plan with resilience and self determination. Third is **integrity** — the choice to walk the talk and be different from the actors of systems that perpetuate exclusion and social injustice through habits that leave more casualties than victors at the end of the day — things like corruption, impunity, indifference, apathy and the like cannot be an option. The fifth is **love and compassion** for humanity which enables one to choose to serve rather than be served, to seek collective good as opposed to being destructively self seeking.

**Rethinking the special interest group brand:** A key choice the youth need to take is whether they should stay on the sidelines and keep the politically useful but collectively disempowering tag of a “special interest group”. On account of their numerical advantage, energy and drive youth can alter the game by taking charge of the National Policy agenda, by posturing themselves as determinants and not simply recipients of policy outcomes. Youth need to stop asking for crutches to limp and start demanding for wings to fly. Youth issues must become mainstream national issues being seen in light of the broader development context as opposed to special issues. The former is a more empowering approach that challenges young people to take both individual and collective responsibility to shape the state of affairs in the country. An example of this was seen when the National Youth Manifesto demands were incorporated into the broader Citizens Manifesto as key areas of concern not just for youth, but for the entire nation.

**Investing in capacities for technical skills development:** As seen in the bulk of case studies, the issue of limited capacities to engage in policy pro-
cesses kept coming up. It is important that this is addressed through tailoring programmes that respond to the technical skill gaps in young people who want to engage with policy processes. This may include having programs within universities such as youth think tanks where these capacities are built as part of a broader process to restructure Uganda’s education curriculum. Competence builds confidence in young people to engage constructively in the policy development process.

2.6 Conclusion

Inspite of the fact that youth engagement with policy processes is more challenging than not, the gaps that exist are not insurmountable. Youth, organized in different organizations, political parties and the academia must determine that they will respond to the different issues they are confronted with. World over, many young people from all walks of life are rising up to have their demands heard. The effects of ignoring the voice of a demographically significant majority are etched in the walls of history for all to see.

Enabling effective youth participation is not an end in itself, but rather a means to ensuring that the promise of youth translates into the building of stronger, vibrant democracies where young people inspire positive policy change for collective good, rather than destructive outcomes.
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The case of Youth Political Inclusion – symbolic or authentic

Simon Opoka
“Democratic theorists who advocate a strategy of progressive inclusion of as many groups as possible in the state, fail to recognize that the conditions for authentic as opposed to symbolic inclusion are quite demanding.”

– John S. Dryzek, University of Melbourne

3.1 Introduction and Context

3.1.1 Introduction

The historical context of promotion of equality, non-discrimination and inclusion for all citizens in Uganda in the affairs of the state is articulated in national objectives and directive principles of the State policy as illustrated in the 1995 constitution of Uganda. Article I (i) of the constitution states that the national objectives and principles shall guide “all organs and agencies of the State, all citizens, organisations and other bodies and persons in applying or interpreting the Constitution or any other law and in taking and implementing any policy decisions for the establishment and promotion of a just, free and democratic society.” Some of such objectives and principles that mandate the inclusion of youth, both males and females, in the political affairs of the state include; Democratic Principle (Art. II clause iv) that “the composition of Government shall be broadly representative of the national character and social diversity of the country.” Article VI mandates the State to “ensure gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups on all constitutional and other bodies.” While Article X, which touches on the role of the people in development, stipulates that “the State shall take all necessary steps to involve the people in the formulation and implementation of development plans and programmes which affect them.

The constitution in Article 78, clause (1) (c), and (4) provides for youth representation in parliament. Clause (2) grants the periodic review of such representation under clause (1)(c) “for the purpose of retaining, increasing or abolishing any such representation and any other matter incidental to it” and clause (4) authorizes the enactment of the laws that shall prescribe the procedure for elections of youth representation in parliament. The legal instrument that prescribes the procedure of electing the youth in the parliament of Uganda today, and any such lower structures to ensure youth
political inclusion is the Uganda National Youth Council Act (CAP 319). The Uganda National Youth Council (NYC) Act offers the definition of the youth and provides for the structures and their composition in political affairs of the country. The practicable strategies of achieving a supportive socio-cultural, economic and political environment that empowers the youth to be partners in development of the country are contained in the National Youth Policy (2001). Besides the above national legal and policy instruments, other important international frameworks that advocate for youth political inclusion by Member States includes the African Youth charter (July, 2006). The African Youth Charter (AYC) offers legal frameworks that reinforces and or bridges gaps that were not addressed in the earlier mentioned national establishments. The AYC is rooted in international treaties that Uganda has assented to and ratified. These include; United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (1976), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (1986). This understanding should alleviate fears of the Charter being a foreign instrument that is likely to de-contextualise and destabilize the environment and preparatory intent of Youth political inclusion in Uganda by the framers of the 1995 Constitution.

Such legal and policy frameworks are essential in guaranteeing youth inclusion in government and her polity as a right. Uganda has been breaking age barriers in youth political inclusion. To illustrate, Uganda has the youngest national legislator serving anywhere in the world today. A twenty-year old Ugandan Member of Parliament (MP) is Hon. Alengot Proscovia Oromait of the National Resistance Movement Organisation (NRM-O) party was elected to represent the people of Usuk County of katakwi District in eastern Uganda at the age of nineteen. As with Hon. Proscovia and the other previous two holders of the informal title, baby of the house, as used in Great Britain, Hon. Odonga Otto, MP Aruu County in Pader district of Northern Uganda representing the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) party since 2001 – to-date and Hon. Nebanda Cerinah (NRM-O, 2011 - 2012) the former Woman MP of Butaleja District, were directly elected Members of Parliament – not beneficiaries of Youth MP affirmative action. The Youth

1. The revised version has not yet been approved by the relevant authorities.
MPs slots were predestined to guarantee youth voices in Uganda’s parliament.

However, such ‘impressive’ images of youth “inclusion” at parliamentary level are statistically isolated success stories that are explainable – based on individual merits and one’s unique opportunities. All the three babies of the house were elected in, by then, newly created districts. As for Hon. Proscovia, her win in a by-election where she replaced her father who died barely a year after successfully winning an election to assume office of the Member of Parliament, one cannot rule out that sympathy vote was in her favour unlike other candidates. The current youthful population structure of Uganda, reported by Uganda Population secretariat (2012), youth and children aged 30 and below make up 78% and is the leading country with the youngest population in the world. Against this background, there is little evidence to validate dependable political inclusion of youth in the country. Yet historically, the political independence leaders in Uganda and Africa at large were younger than their colonial counterparts in Europe, though ironically at such a time that the African traditional leadership reserved family and political leaderships for the elderly with exceptions of hereditary leaders that assumed powers as infants or youth.

Today, the average age of European national political leaders is much younger than their African counterparts – the cabinet. In contrast, the Ugandan macroeconomic performance under the current long serving national political leadership indicates impressive growth rates, but has marginally improved the income inequalities in the last 30 years (Anyanwu, 2012). Considering that possessing political power in any democratic society is not an end, but a means in a process of managing society and its resource, the political exclusion of the youth in partisan state governance, shall cost the majority of Ugandans - negatively.

This paper sets out to study the inclusion of Youth in the political processes in Uganda. It attempts to do it by focusing on legal instruments, both national and international, that provide for Youth partisan political inclusion. It also follows up the attempts by government to implement the relevant policy instruments with regard to youth, following the various phases of government planning. The study also sought to document drawbacks and the extent to which the Ugandan political youth leaders perceived that they had clear opportunities to participate in politics, be it in leadership or
involved in the formulation and implementation of development plans and programmes which affect them.

3.1.2 Scope and definition of youth political inclusion

The Uganda National Youth Council Act, 1993 (CAP 319)\(^2\) defines a youth as a person between the age of eighteen and thirty. The study considered youth political inclusion in terms of political power and their influences at key formal and informal public decision making spaces. Political power, here, stands for what Olum (2011) called a “type of power held by a group in a society which allows administration of some or all of public resources, including labour and wealth.” According to Max Weber (1997), such political power and authority that he called Rational-Legal authority, are essential for achieving [youth] desired ends through powers legally legitimized by laws and regulations of government. Any significant youth limitations to access such powers and authority, unfavorably affects the youth influence in society, and access, use and control of public resources. Therefore, the study considers Youth Political Inclusion to refer to the presence of that formal power held by the youth, both males and females, in the groups with legal authorities and responsibilities to influence the administration of public resources at national, regional, district and sub county levels of public administrative units.

The study examined relevant literature, publications and collected primary data relevant to interpret perceptions and realities of youth political inclusion in Uganda by employing a descriptive research method. Through Key Informant Interviews and a Focused Group Discussion among national and district youth partisan leaders, both qualitative and quantitative data was gathered for the analysis of the legal and policy frameworks for inclusion of the youth in Ugandan politics and the obstacles to Youth political inclusion in Uganda.

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3.2 The legal and policy frameworks for Youth Political Inclusion in Uganda

According to the National Youth Council Act of 1993 (amended in 2001), a Ugandan youth is one aged 18 to 30 years. However, the youth diversity of one; living with disabilities, HIV/AIDS, of varying employment status, dependant or caregiver, orphan or not, a household head, a wife or a husband, educated beyond primary seven or not, poor or rich, rural, peri-urban or urban, law abiding or a criminal, religious or not, a leader or led, travelled or not and so forth were not embodied for specific interventions, except that female youth be represented in the all youth structures. Alternatively, the national Youth Policy (2001, p. 9) recognises that the youth period is one of “great emotional, physical and psychological changes that require societal support for a safe passage from adolescent to full adulthood.

Besides political youth inclusion being a right, it is important and relevant that those included in the political processes of the state and or government exhibit justifiable powers that influence the resource allocation and management of public resources, policies and society. Otherwise, such inclusion is deemed symbolic rather than authentic in the Ugandan democracy. In a youthful country like Uganda, a democracy to be for, by and with the people – ‘the people’ should meaningfully include the youth with regards to their diversity. The study investigates to illustrate the attempt at which youth political inclusion has been attained as stipulated in; The African Youth Charter (2006), the 1995 constitution of Uganda Motatis motandis, The Uganda National Youth Council Act (1993), National Development Plan (2009/11 – 2014/15), Uganda Vision 2040 and 2011 – 16 Youth manifesto.

3.2.1 The African Youth Charter (2006)

The African Youth Charter (AYC) was adopted by the seventh ordinary session of the African Unity (AU) assembly, held in Banjul, the Gambia on 2nd July 2006. Uganda ratified the Charter on August 6th, 2008. The Ugandan youth age category falls well within AU’s 15 to 35 years (African Union, July, 2006, p. 3) The AU defines all citizens of member States as equals endowed
with rights and responsibilities in the politics of their respective governments as declared;


The African Youth Charter offers a converging perspective of the youth a value-based asset to self, family, neighbour, States, African heritage (positive), the international community and the environment (Article 26). This view is opposed to the notion that the youth are a burden, irresponsible and therefore, government (elders) know best how to help them out of their previous youth experiences. Consequently, the AYC recognizes that challenges facing the youth are inter-related and therefore, need to be attended to through cross-sectoral policies and programmes in a holistic manner for them to be valuable assets. The Charter’s recommendation on promotion and protection of the rights of youth is affixed to performances of duties by the youth as well as all other actors in society without disregarding the needs and aspiration of young displace persons, refugees and those with special needs (African Union, July, 2006, pp. 1-2).

To achieve a meaningful inclusion of the youth in the politics of the State, by Article 2(2), the AYC provides that: “States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that youth are protected against all forms of discrimination on the basis of status, activities, expressed opinions or beliefs”. Equivocally, it is pointed out that participation in all spheres of society is a right and that national prescribed laws shall guarantee participation of the youth in parliament and other decision making bodies ([Article 11 (1), (2) (a)]). Then, to achieve youth mainstreaming of government, the Charter in Article 12 (c), recommends that youth focal points be appointed in government structures to advance youth perspectives. It is important to note that ‘Inclusion’ guarantees presence and participation of the youth while ‘non-discrimination’ only suggests that qualification to participate is non-restrictive against the youth but one must overcome set parameters to gain presence to participate.
On her part, the African Union is committed by Article (28) of the Charter to broadening the channels of communication that enhance the discussions and mainstream youth-related issues by extending invitations to State Parties to include youth representatives as part of their delegations to ordinary sessions and other relevant meetings of the AU policy organs. The African Youth Charter, thereby, presents a legal framework that underscores the Member State’s need for youth mainstreaming and inclusion of youth in her polity with consideration to the diverse characteristic of the young person. However, the Charter challenges the big-man connotation that such high-level international meetings carry. In many African contexts, the youth are not welcome to such occasions, since all the elders were once youth; it is assumed that they will know what is best to say for their youth when the opinion is sought. Therefore, such ‘rights’ to attend AU policy meetings could have been designed in abstract realities to the Ugandan experiences that to-date youth are aliens to government meetings as they were even so in the 2007-2008 Juba – Lords’ Resistance Army and government of Uganda peace talks to resolve in the child dominated armed conflict.

3.2.2 African Youth Charter: Youth inclusion implementation gaps in Uganda

The youth inclusion policies as enshrined in the African Youth Charter was summarized and presented for implementation gap analysis and perceptions among 30 randomly selected national political party youth leaders, civil society youth, and youth voters at national and district levels. The sampling was by accidental interview method from among stratified sample frame consisting of National Party youth leaders and the 244 district male and female youth councils from 112 districts. The study tested the level of awareness on the AYC and then presented the summary for analysis. Below are the findings:

Level of awareness on African Youth Charter by respondents

Three statements were presented to the respondents to each, a respondents was to answer yes or no. The question were phrased in affirmative as (i) I have heard of the African Youth Charter (AYC), (ii) I have read the AYC
and (iii) I do remember at least 3 issues addressed in the AYC.

The figure 1 above shows the responses on level awareness youth respondents on the African Youth Charter and the issues it addresses. Of the 30 respondents, 19 members had heard of the AYC, only 3 read and 7 could remember at least 3 issues the Charter addresses. The study revealed a significantly low awareness of the AYC among the youth respondents. The implication of such a low level of awareness of a legal framework as the African Youth Charter that Uganda ratified in 2008, is that it weakens the Rights-Based Approach to demand youth political inclusion in the administration of some or all of public resources, including labour and wealth by omission.

African Youth Charter: Implementation gaps in Uganda

A Focus Group Discussion was conducted for 30 randomly selected politically active youth. A summary of the African Youth Charter was presented to the group for identification of youth inclusion gaps in Uganda. The key findings were summarized and presented below:

![Figure 1](image-url)

**Figure 1**
Awareness level on the African Youth Charter among Political Youth Leaders (Party-Youth Leaders, 2004)

- Yes
- No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have heard of the AYC</th>
<th>I have read the AYC</th>
<th>I do remember at least 3 issues addressed in the AYC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of respondents
Table 1
Respondents identify policy implementation gaps in the African Youth Charter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. States Parties protected youth against all forms of discrimination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>» There exist age restrictions in Ugandan electoral laws that exclude the youth from vying for the office of the president of Uganda or the chairpersons of Districts and Sub Counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» The youth electoral laws only cater for gender, but do not guarantee youth with disabilities in parliament.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Guaranteed participation of the youth in parliament and other decision making bodies in accordance with the prescribed laws</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>» Most youth Members of Parliament exceed the youth age in the middle of their tenure in office thereby, limiting the effective youth presence and voice in parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Only Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the president’s office and by default the Ministry of Education and Sports have a dedicated focal point person for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» There is no known Youth policy mainstreaming policy or representation in the board of any Statutory Boards and State Enterprises.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. State Parties to include youth representatives as part of their delegations to ordinary sessions and other relevant meetings of the African Union policy organs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>» There was low awareness about youth representatives to accompany African Union delegates on invitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Few and limited platforms are utilized by African Union youth invitees to solicit and give feedback in appropriate measures that consider the heterogeneous attributes of the youth in Uganda.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 above shows identified non-compliance gaps by Government of Uganda in implementing youth political inclusion as enshrined in the ratified African Youth Charter. The laws of Uganda discriminates against anyone younger than 35 years of age from vying for the office of the president and those less than 30 to assume political head of the 111 districts, and 1,026 sub counties. Surprisingly, the Kampala City Council Authority

(KCCA) and parliament, both higher in government protocol, have a bare minimum qualification age of 18 for qualification. These prohibitive laws exclude the youth from gaining what Max Weber refers to as political power and authority that is necessary to achieve desired ends through powers legally legitimized by laws and regulations of government. Such restrictions contravene Article 11 (2)(c) of the AYC that provides for “equal access to young men and young women to participate in decision-making and in fulfilling civic duties”. Besides, during the electoral campaigns, at such levels as presidency, district and Sub County chairpersons, the youth miss out on the direct opportunity to shape the agenda for consideration in the next local government’s tenure through issue deliberation. It was evident that during the 1996 and 2001 general elections in Uganda, the introduction of Universal Primary education and abolition of graduated tax were borne out of deliberation of Dr. Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere and Col (rtd) Kizza Warren Besigye respectively as presidential aspirants but implemented by President Yoweri Museveni Kaguta, the eventual winner. This shows that political inclusion is important in diversification of deliberations that affect the context of participating parties in all levels of life; social, cultural, educational, political and economic.

The laws that guarantee youth participation in Parliament of Uganda are silent on youth with disabilities. Even though Persons With disabilities have five slots of representatives in parliament, there is no condition for even one to be a youth. In the history of Youth MP Representation in Uganda, since 1995, none has been one with disabilities. Hence youth policy deliberations and focus are more than devoid of disability and handicap specificities. A case in point as noted by a youth representing Uganda National Associations of the Blind (UNAB) at a National youth political participation camp (2013) in Mbarara District of Western Uganda that “all voter materials in Uganda have never had blind person’s marks of identification of candidates.” Besides, it was not until the Association of Persons’ With Disabilities in Uganda sued commercial banks for lack of ramps to permit their access to such facilities that they were built. These are examples that signify the importance of political inclusion of youth in their diversities for their deliberation to contribute uniquely to the development of the country’s democracy.
The spirit of the framers of the 1993 National Youth Council Act, CAP 319 that provides for Youth MPs is self defeating when some of those MPs surpass the youth age while still serving their mandate. Over 50% of Youth MPs finish their mandate when they are above the youth age. This cancels out deliberation on youth legislation since such MPs are more focused consolidating on their next constituencies that are, of course, not youth constituencies. However, such behaviours of youth MPs are not isolated from the larger context of Uganda political practices that is characterized by the power of incumbency, who, campaign in each next election as serving MPs and accumulating resources that are influential in voter bribery and manipulation. Although, such identified drawbacks that should be addressed undermine the main objective of the NYC Act, the act offered space that groomed many middle aged national leaders of today.

Currently, it is only Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, The Office of the President and the Ministry of Education and Sports that have a dedicated focal point person for youth, though most often they are not youth themselves. It will not be sufficient to say that the youth of Uganda are included in the government. They are prominently missing at ministerial levels for policy deliberation, planning and implementation. It would be important to include youth representatives on the Boards of Directors of all statutory bodies and State enterprises or legislate on youth mainstreaming of government developed programmes. Currently, there is no policy to guarantee this implied position of the Africa Youth Charter. If duty bearers are to equitably serve Ugandans, 78% of whom are youth and children, it would be imperative that national programme designing and budgeting by each statutory body and state enterprise should earn a gender and youth mainstreaming certification as a condition for parliamentary budgetary approval were the youth MP among others would be of help in the vetting.

The political inclusion of youth international affairs of the State is equally important. It is evident that many individual Ugandan youths and or Youth Civil Society Organisations have received invitations to join in on the business of among others, the African Union. What is not clear is the criteria of selection, the representativeness of the delegate(s), and the opportunities for the invitees to give a feedback that appropriately takes into consideration the heterogeneous attributes of the youth in Uganda. This analysis is healthy and essential lest we keep accumulating public infor-
mation and documents stashed in inaccessible places, files and formats. However, locally, the necessities of such AU invitations are limited among very few. This curtails access to information that should serve to inform and heighten the demand for authentic youth political inclusion.

It is important to note that the African Youth Charter (2006), as powerful a Legal Framework as was intended is among the least known and publicized advocacy documents among the youth and many policy makers. There is no direct reference to the African Youth Charter in the Uganda National Development Plan (2009) as well as in the Uganda Vision 2040. Needless to stress, Uganda still hosts the Global Pan African Secretariat – that is responsible for International Pan-‘Africanization’. Youth leaders and stakeholders need to lobby the government to fully comply with the African Youth Charter, as it shall enhance youth political inclusion in Uganda. Although, knowing the intention of the AYC is not an end in itself, government should use the available systemic National Youth Council and local government structures to consult and understand the problems and allow the youth to own the process of solving the problems in a sustainable manner than the current top-down solutions offered to the youth in programmes such as youth venture capitals whose criteria of access is still discriminatory to a section of uneducated youth with no collaterals to mortgage.

3.2.3 The 1995 constitution of Uganda

The constitution of Uganda, Chapter one, Article one on the Sovereignty of the people, provides that;

1. All power belongs to the people who shall exercise their sovereignty in accordance with this Constitution.

2. Without limiting the effect of clause (1) of this article, all authority in the State emanates from the people of Uganda; and the people shall be governed through their will and consent.

5. Public Documents and reports for youth consumption should take into consideration that one format cannot fit all. There is adequate information to enhance youth political inclusion, but most as large volumes in limited hard copier filling shelves and cabins.
(3) All power and authority of Government and its organs derive from this Constitution, which in turn derives its authority from the people who consent to be governed in accordance with this Constitution.

(4) The people shall express their will and consent on who shall govern them and how they should be governed, through regular, free and fair elections of their representatives or through referenda.

Based on the articles that follow the sovereignty of the people and the national objectives and directive principles of state policy, the following youth inclusion laws were identified and analyzed against the state of reality today in Uganda.

### 3.3 Youth political inclusion status in compliance with the constitution of Uganda

Based on secondary data; newspaper reports, parliamentary reports, local government reports, Uganda electoral Commission – election reports, Television news clips, the laws found in the constitution of Uganda was subjected to a compliance test on youth political inclusion by 30 randomly selected members in a Focused Group Discussion. The respondents also gave feedback on their perception of Youth Political Inclusion in Uganda. The key findings were summarized and presented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deterrence or provisions for youth political inclusion</th>
<th>Youth Inclusion gaps by respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Sovereignty of the people</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>» Article 1 (4) Regular, free and fair elections</td>
<td>» There is no legislation on election campaign financing. Election is mainly the highest bidders business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» Electoral fraud is not criminalised, just an irregularity – not a crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>» The National objectives and directive principles of state policy are not enforced in political parties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
» Article 1 (1) ... the people shall be governed through their will and consent

» Most Government youth-programmes such as Youth Venture Capital funds (youth fund), and now, the Student Loan Scheme are top down intervention

» National Budgets priorities do not necessarily reflect those of Sub-counties and Parish Development Committees’

» MPs do not regularly consult their constituencies during on-going businesses of parliament

2. Democratic principles, Gender balance and affirmative action

» Article II (iv) on Democratic principle “the composition of Government [and her organs] shall be broadly representative of the national character and social diversity of the country”.

» Article VI on Gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups ‘the State shall ensure gender balance and fair representation of marginalised groups on all constitutional and other bodies”.

» Article (32) grants affirmative action in favour of marginalised groups

» Currently, the cabinet of Uganda has no single youth, but two Deputy ministers, Hon Ronald Kibuule and Hon. Barbara Oundo Nekesa for Youth and Children and Karamoja affairs

» Of the over 80 presidential advisors by 2012, none is known to be youth.

» There is no fair representation of youth on Statutory Boards and State Enterprises

» The District Service Commission is a resemblance of a retired peoples exclusive club with no youth.

» Female youth and youth with disabilities are the most excluded from the above authorities

3. Qualification for President and District Chairperson

» Article 102 (b) states that a person is not qualified for election as president unless that person is not less than thirty-five year

» Article 183 (2) (b) A person is not qualified to be elected district chairperson unless he or she is at least thirty years

» Youth are excluded from vying for presidency of the country.

» Youth are excluded from competing to head the 111 districts of Uganda, except of the position Kampala Lord Mayor

» Youth are excluded from qualifying to head 27 municipalities and city divisions, 295 towns and municipal divisions and 1026 Sub Counties, in Uganda.

» 1460 key budget-holding elective political office the youth cannot vie for in Uganda.
The table 2 above represents the opinions of the respondents as supported by secondary data. The State of Uganda Population Report (2013) affirmed that the youth (aged 18 – 30) accounted for 6.5% of the population. In consideration of 78% of the population being youth and children as stated by the same report, the youth make 49% of the total eligible voter population. For a fair youth representation in the state and government businesses, though it does not mean a near one-to-one proportion, but for a 49% youth voter share that representation ought to be significant for one to conclude that youth political inclusion in Uganda is authentic but not symbolic.

The respondents noted that in the national regular, free and fair election, (though challenged, unsuccessfully, thrice in the Uganda courts of law since 1996); youth political inclusion in the country has been held back by the lack of legislation on election campaign financing. Elections in Uganda have been highly monetised that the highest bidder is the most likely winner at any ‘democratic’ election. At least 83% of the youth (mainly rural based) have no formal employment and are “impoverished by their inability to access benefits associated with urban life such as market for farm produce and employment, albeit informal” (UNFPA - Uganda, 2013, p. 89) Such negative youth characteristics undermine youth political inclusion in the absence of fair and regulated financing of the democratic elections. Besides, electoral frauds are not criminalised under the existing penal code or rather someone is yet to be sentenced for the many elections that have been nullified for malpractices and fraud. Even though, re-election have been conducted in such cases, further research is required to explain why such punishments have not offered a deterrence to significantly reduce cases of election malpractices and fraud.

To be governed through the people’s will and consent as stated in Article 1 (2), does not imply that all is settled when the people express their will and consent on who shall govern and how (governance system) one should govern them as in clause (4), through democratic elections or referenda. However, the elected leaders are mandated, as reflected in the national objectives and directive principles of state policy on the role of the people in development to “take all necessary steps to involve the people in the
formulation and implementation of development plans and programmes which affect them.”

It is through authentic inclusive consultations and consequential deliberations with, by and for the people that their will and consent is harnessed in any dependable democracy. It is important that the youth are not misted-up in the term ‘the people’ as is used in the constitution. However, no wide consultations were made with or involved the youth through the available youth structures to design, and implement youth specific programmes such as Youth Venture Capital funds (youth fund), and now, the Student Loan Scheme have continued to be a top down intervention for the youth, undermining youth inclusion. Interviews with youth from the ruling NRM-O party to ascertain whether they were consulted though the existing structures on these schemes was conclusively negative. As for the youth in opposition political parties and the majority in civil societies, the situation is even worse as there is no existing forum for exchange of ideas on future and current youth government programmes.

On democratic principles, gender balance and affirmative values of the constitution, it was views of the respondents, like that of Habati (July 28th, 2012), that noted an offensive exclusion of the youth in politics or the State beyond elections. Habati, through The Daily Monitor exerts that of the 28 cabinet ministers, their median age is 62. Habati put forth that even though 8 of the ministers were below the age of sixty, none was a youth. By survey, the trend is confirmed among the over 80 presidential advisors, dignitaries serving in foreign missions and on Boards of Statutory Bodies and State enterprises. The only two deputy ministers who are of youth age are Hon. Ronald Kibule and Hon. Barbara Oundo Nekesa. At district levels, similar appointing authorities like the district service commissions are truly a retirees’ club. Youth leaders in the districts agree that “the District Service commission is a club of retired and old people (and) this explains why the most successful job applicants are children of their successful colleagues”. The factors that explain this phenomenon are both internal and external to the youth. When a political class in the state reigns for ‘too’ long, the inner power circle of individuals that control the state power, age as they hang on with the regime, and wield powers of admission that are favourable to their

peers than younger ones. Besides, the fewer opportunities for the young political leaders to gain high level political and administrative experiences limits their admittance by the duty bearers to inner power circles. However, in the absence of any law that favours the appointment of younger and diverse political leaders in places of influence in government, the average age of the ruling class in Uganda shall be determined by the ultimate power holder in the state – the president.

In Affirmative action; youth, army, workers and People with Disabilities (PWDs) were to be in parliament in numbers as parliament may determine. With exception of Women Members of Parliament (MPs) representing each district, the other special interest group representatives to parliament are a handful and also elected through electoral colleges.

The process of electing the youth MPs, excludes most of the youth from deliberating on the youth agenda. Many youth are detached from their MPs’ elections that are carried out at regional levels. The regional electoral colleges serve only one purpose – election of their representatives to the next parliament. At such gatherings, no space is created to generate consensus on the next youth agenda, neither provide a permanent platform for consultation with their elected Youth MPs nor create any form of constitutional checks to guarantee delivery on youth interests throughout the MP’s tenure. Such a scenario purges the youth off their Youth MP, thereby, down playing youth political inclusion through representative democracy. Many have argued that the Youth MPs are a waste of public finance with no meaningful youth inclusion in their deliberations in parliament. Such a debate should rather focus on how the election of Youth MPs can be more inclusive to generate a national youth agenda, more representatives making them accountable to the youth. This same opinion holds true for youth elections at lower administrative units in Uganda.

The greatest beneficiaries of affirmative action among the interest groups at national level are the Women who are guaranteed participation in parliament, at least, as many MPs as the number of districts in Uganda but women and female youth are yet to significantly participate (contribute 5% and above of candidates) at parliamentary and local government levels to contest for directly elected political leadership. A female youth po-
political leader and woman activist, Ms. Frank Ngobi, says that Hon. Salaam Musumba, a female district chairperson of Kamuli District would not have contested and won easily if she was not a former MP who ‘grabbed’ the opportunity after losing a race to become member of the regional parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly. Thereby, positively advocating for a two term limit for successful Woman MPs so as to increase the turnover of empowered women ‘graduating’ out of parliament that can take on men in directly elective political positions and other civil society spaces, and business with higher chances of winning.

The table below shows the participation of women compared to men in directly elected Local Government Councils in 2011.

Table 3
Nominated Candidates at Local Government Councils by elective position and sex category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Elective Position</th>
<th>Vacancies</th>
<th>No. Females</th>
<th>No. Males</th>
<th>% of Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Chairpersons</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>1.66 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Directly Elected Councillors</td>
<td>1339</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3632</td>
<td>1.98 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality/City Division Chairpersons</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2056</td>
<td>0.19 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality/City Division Directly Elected Councillors</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>3.01 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub county/Town/Division Chairperson Chairpersons</td>
<td>1321</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3791</td>
<td>2.14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub county/Town/Division Directly Elected Councillors</td>
<td>7332</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>13865</td>
<td>0.99 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Uganda Electoral Commission data
In the 9th Parliament, there are 244 males and 131 females, and 4 female and 11 male ex-officials. The females MPs make 34.93% of members of Parliament. There are 6 male youth aged MPs that make only 2.46% of the male MP population and 1.60% of the total house. Only 5 female MPs were youth at swearing-in by 2011. The presence of female youth in parliament is a decimal 3.82% of the total number of women MPs and 1.33% of the total House. With the exception of Youth MP elections, the other opportunities to join parliament is a survival for the fittest state of affairs with a very wide varying attribute of competitiveness for the voters to chose from.

This paltry presence in number of youth-aged MPs in parliament is a manifestation of them being victims of cultural, traditional and capability constraints that have favoured men and to some extent older women. The double punished are female youth but most segregated against are the disabled youth, worse still if one is female. No single Youth MP has ever been a disabled one in the history of Uganda’s Parliament.
In 2011, ten directly elected MPs were women out of only 55 that contested in 238 such available constituencies. Ironically, 444 women preferred to contest for the 112 Woman MP slots than ‘risk’ with the men in the direct constituencies. The absence of term limits in Woman MP Representation, yet an affirmative action, transfers the injustices inflicted on females by males to one by ‘empowered’ incumbent females against other females to access office. The establishment of term limits for position Woman MP and other women in elective positions shall improve the mobility of ‘empowered’ women to contest for directly elective political positions at national and local governance levels. Such deliberate measures open windows for other women, especially, the female youth to gain the vacated affirmative action positions to improve on female youth political inclusion in the country and get empowered enough to run with men in direct elective position too.

By the electoral laws of Uganda, for one to qualify for election as president or the chairperson of a district or sub county one must be at least thirty years to qualify to be elected district chairperson or 30 years old respectively. The laws do segregate against the youth to occupy these offices regardless of other eligibility requirements. The adult age in Uganda starts at 18, so why must there be a minimum age ceiling of 35 or 30 for a candidate to qualify for such offices?

The exclusion of the youth from qualifying to participate in the political elective democracy to assume the offices of Presidency, district, sub county chairpersons denies the Ugandan youth, as stakeholders in shaping the affairs of the state, through deliberating their issues at such campaign platforms. One national youth party leader of a political party with representation in the 9th parliament of Uganda shared his disappointment that “Constitutionally I cannot vie for presidency of the Country. It is a preserve for those aged at least 35.” Another young aspirant for chairperson of a Sub county in Gulu district, Northern Uganda said “I had to forge a birth certificate to show that I am 30 years to contest for LC III chairperson. Still, many voters said that I was too Young to lead them”. In contrast, the 26 year old candidate for LCIII chairperson was a senior four certificate holder but his over 30 year old opponent and the winner was a primary school dropout. Such age limitations do not only fuel the stereotype that the youth are incapable of leading a democratic society, but also disadvantages youth political leaders from contributing to the mainstreaming of youth agenda into
the larger context of their society. This further marginalizes and excludes them from the mainstream polity of the state.

In summary, the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, guided by national objectives and directive principles of state policy, guarantees all freedoms and rights, and the will and consent of all citizens to be sought and in their characteristic diversity included in all spheres of government and her organs. However, it was noted for a substantial youth political inclusion in the affairs of the state to be achieved the restrictive electoral age limits shall have to be abolished. The age restriction prohibits the youth from qualifying for the Office of the President, 111 district chairpersons (The office of the Lord Mayor of Kampala City Council Authority is an exception), 27 municipality chairpersons, and assuming the 1,321 positions of Sub County, town Council and division chairpersons. These are a total of 1,460 positions that the youth cannot qualify to contest for - just because they are below 30 years of age. The doubly punished minorities by political exclusion are youth living with disabilities and young females.

### 3.4 The Uganda National Youth Council Act CAP 319

The 1993 National Youth Council (NYC) Act is a statutory body corporate that is charged with the national responsibility to “(a) organise the youth in a unified body; (b) encourage the youth in activities that are of benefit to them and the nation, and (c) protect the youth against kind of manipulation”. The NYC Act Article 1 (g) is the document that defines ‘youth’ legally as “a person between the age eighteen and thirty years”.

Article (5) of the NYC Act establishes youth council at such structures as; (a)Village, (b) Parish or ward, (c) Sub county or division or town (d) County (e) District. The national delegates conference is composed of chairpersons of the county and district youth councils, the district secretary for women affairs and eighteen students elected by the Uganda National Students Association (UNSA). The National Delegates conference elects the Youth Council Committees of nine persons, one of whom must be a female for Women affairs. The same national delegates elect a 3-year term National

Executive Committee (NEC) of eleven members, one a female for women affairs. Article (12) mandates the election of Youth Members of parliament. Two of whom shall be females.

The NYC provides an opportunity to forge unity of youth voices in Uganda. The challenge, this pre-1995 Constitution of Uganda law (NYC Act, CAP 319) has is a very weak gender perspective. In the 8th parliament, the system of Youth MP Election could not guarantee more than one female other than the National Female MP. The Act offers what Dryzek describes as O’Donnell’s ‘delegative democracy’, a competitive election were the winners have no constitutional checks, accountability, (and) or respect for the rights of their people\(^8\) (O’Donnell, G., 1994; Dryzek, 2008). The Youth MPs get a one-way ticket to serve as most are not elegible for re-election\(^9\). Today, this seems like a drawback only when the Youth MP’s performances are below the expectation of the public. Otherwise, the NYC should institute measures and regional platforms for holding the MPs accountable to the available youth structures on a regular basis since they are practically accountable to no one.

The NYC structure is the most systemic and provides for the most diverse representation of the youth in the country. However, a compound of factors render council underutilized. The factors include; the partisan political patronage and environment embodied in its formation under the Movement System\(^10\) era of political governance that renders a biased organization among opposition youth. The Council is chronically underfunded to satisfactorily fulfill her mandate. Due to the Electoral College and secret ballot voting processes of electing her members, most youth are disenfranchised from the exercise and consequently from supporting the council. Thus, we realise a weakened inclusion of the youth in the polity of the country through the National Youth Council that needs to be renegotiated to suit the multiparty setting of today!

\(^9\) The political power structure and the educational system in Uganda allows only the older youth, mostly those above 25, do get the approval of their party endorsers to succeed in elections as Youth MPs. Thereby not re-electable.
\(^10\) Is a semblance of one party system of governance based on an individual’s merits that were introduced by the National resistance Army/Movement in 1986.
3.5 The National Development Plan 2009/10 – 2014/15

The National Development Plan (NDP) is a five year strategic document designed to guide the realisation of Uganda's national Vision; a transformed modern and prosperous country under the theme “Growth, Employment and Prosperity for Socio-Economic Transformation.” This NDP, the first of six – five year plans is to transform the Ugandan society, completely from a predominantly peasant-based economy to a just, peaceful and prosperous middle-income country with a per capita income of at least US$1,000.

To realise the vision, the NDP was designed with very explicit strategies and interventions necessary for overcoming specifically identified constraints. The NDP recognizes Uganda’s high dependency ratio due to a youthful country status with a median age of 15 years (National Planning Authority, 2009). Against such backgrounds, strategies and interventions that directly focus at redressing youth encumbrances were analysed to offer any evidence of youth inclusion in the problem identification, intervention design, and programme implementation. Priority was given to strategies that mentioned and targeted the youth directly. Each intervention was subjected to randomly selected youth measure for appropriateness to the needs of the youth.
Table 4
Comments on the Youth intervention description in the National Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NDP Intervention description</th>
<th>Comments by youth respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Redressing constraints to trade development (National Planning Authority, 2009, p. 169) | » The Strategies made no considerations to the unique challenges and heterogeneous nature of Ugandan Youth in trade business development  
   » The high cost of registering a business (Company) in Uganda was not looked at.  
   » High taxes and cost of living makes saving to raise capital very difficult.  
   » The high cost of acquiring title deeds to serve as collateral makes borrowing difficult and expensive  
   » Lack of apprenticeship opportunities |
| » Empowering disadvantaged groups particularly women, youths and people with disabilities to enable them to participate more in trade through training in trade skills and competencies,  
  » Reintegrate the formerly war affected persons in the production and trade systems,  
  » Raise awareness about HIV/AIDS in the trade sector                                                                 |                                                                                                 |
| 2. Social Sector Sustainable Population (pp. 187)                                                                                       | The strategy lacked the “how” specifics.  
  » Promote the strengthening of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services.  
  » The intervention did not address the problem it pointed out relating high number of children to poverty (use of children as family labour) and lack of social safety nets and as insurance against high infant mortality rates |
| 3. Improving on Quality Employment (p. 254).                                                                                           | The first phase of the NDP is coming to a close and so far the youth have not been involved any such planning.  
  » Entrepreneurship training for youth in business planning, expanding business programmes, competing through quality, accounting and book keeping among others.  
  » Establish enterprise start-up business clinics and Develop techno-Entrepreneurs Park and SME business incubation programme. |
4. Improving Sub – National (District and Sub – county ) Performance (p. 333)

» Peaceful Disarmament of Karamojong Youth

» Armed Karamojong Youth are not the youth sole hindrance in the performance of Local Governments at Sub national levels

The review of the National Development plan reveals that there is no specific youth intervention description that was identified throughout the document to pinpoint, as evidence, that the youth were consulted, listened to and their views were incorporated. The Plan lacked in interventions to serve as indicators that the framers interacted with the youth, youth of diverse characteristics with the exception of armed Karamojong youth. For example, an Amuru youth and a farmer claimed that government was not investing in agricultural rural youth through provision of modern equipments and protecting them from dumping of commodity prices during bumper harvests by saying

_The problem is not that we the youth do not have employable skills. We have a lot of available fertile land here. We cannot use a hand hoe to develop. The year we produce much, the produce prices go down. People from Sudan and Kampala are buying from our gardens cheaply. Middle men get richer; we get poorer and weaker while government is just looking at as. Tractor hire is too expensive. Government wants us to give our land to investor, are we not investors?_

The interviewed respondents had a wider understanding of social protection beyond those pointed out in the NDP to include inter-relating ministries to enhance social protection. The respondents argued that most of the ministries that contribute to the inadequate social protection of the youth are ‘independent’ of Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. To mention, the Local Government Ministry and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, and the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) have not pronounced youth mainstreaming policies that could improve on their social protection of, especially, rural youth through preserving quotas of tender for the youth. One district youth leader said;
From the composition of district tender boards to the requirements for public procurement, the youth are segregated against. Even for bids that could be adequate within the means of the youth in their areas of location have prohibitive requirements.

Youth social protection could be advanced through the Subsidiarity Principle. The principle holds that human affairs are best handled at lowest possible level, closest to the affected people if they are competent enough to realise the intended goals. This includes direct bids for ‘some’ road maintenances, and youth quotas in other government programmes such as the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS). However, the current political environment is heavily controlled by the Central Government as explained by one district councilor below to allow for flexible adjustment of social protection of the youth by the local government.

On improving sub-national performances in a decentralised system of governance, the only NDP directly mentioned youth intervention was for Karamoja and it was on disarmament programme. However, the Plan is silent on how the sub-national authorities should strategise to include youth, especially rural out-of-school and in-school males and females, to benefit from government programs such as Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF); and Karamoja integrated disbarment and development programme (KIDDP), Equalization Grants to underperforming districts to ‘catch-up’ bring them to the level of National service delivery and Peace, Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP). The best solution here is to meaningfully enhance youth participation in Sub – National performances.

The opinion of district youth leaders and youthful councillors was best reflected as;

The biggest challenge in the performance of districts are (i) the poorly coordinated bottom-up planning process from the Parish Development Committees’ through both the sub county and district to feed in the National Budget conferences. (ii) As a district we have the Strategic and annual District Development Plan that incorporates youth concerns, but such better facilitated programmes as NUSAF, PRDP, and NGO interventions run parallel to it. (iii) The district collects very low revenue and yet most of the Central Government funding is conditional and
based on national sector priorities. Therefore, we have limited powers to amplify the youth voices and meet their needs (Okwir, 2014)

The NDP best captured the youth in each sectoral situational analyses but largely as a burden not an asset. Little effort was made to identify and harness the potentials of the youthful population to spur growth and development but rather the few interventions for the youth were aimed at mitigating their burdening effect. In the other sectors such as; Oil and gas, Housing, Public Sector management, mining, information communication technologies, tourism, agriculture development, housing development, science and technology ... no single strategy was designed to directly redress constraints of faced by the youth. Yet even, where youth intervention descriptions have been planned, the NDP lacked in specifics and vivid home grown solutions that are commensurate with the unique challenges of the youth and their varying environments. This may signify lack of or inadequate inclusion of the youth in the National Development Plan formulation.

3.6 Uganda vision 2040

The Vision 2040 is a document that the National Planning Authority (NPA) in consultation with stakeholders developed to build on previous progress and deliver “a transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years”. The vision foresees each Ugandan earning an average of USD 9,500 per year by 2040.

The vision’s attributes are consistent with the principles of the constitution that entails: (a) independence and sovereignty; (b) democracy and the rule of law; (c) stability and peace; (d) knowledgeable and skilled citizenry); (e) ability to exploit and use resources gainfully and sustainably; (f) be in a strong federated East Africa with an effective African Common Market and a strong African De-fence Mechanism11 (Vision 2040, 2010, p. 4).

The vision 2040 projects hope in the “country’s most important resource”, the young population that presents an “opportunity for leapfrogging in technology, innovation, speed, and dexterity ... (that) the young population shall provide a potentially big domestic and local market as

well as incentive for industrialization and urbanisation” (p. 53). Government contends that modernizing agriculture, providing of national service, keeping female youth in school, absorbing the educated into the job market and civic education programmes are important in mobilising and sensitizing all citizens, especially the youth, to facilitate development of a common identity and enhance civic responsibility (pp. 96, 98, 109).

The study revealed that Uganda’s Vision 2040 was actually launched two years into the implementation of the first National Development Plan (NDP) 2010/11 – 2014/15. Ironically, the Vision 2040 is the ‘master plan’ that is set to be incrementally achieved through five year based NDPs. A review study of the identified key core projects of Vision 2040, namely; a Hi-tech ICT city and associated ICT infrastructure; Large irrigation schemes in different parts of the country; Phosphate industry in Tororo; Iron ore industry in Muko, Kabale; Five regional cities (Gulu, Mbale, Kampala, Mbarara, and Arua) and five strategic cities (Hoima, Nakasongola, Fortportal, Moroto, and Jinja); Four international airports; A standard gauge railway network with high speed trains; Oil Refinery and associated pipeline infrastructure; Multi-lane paved national road network linking major towns, cities and other strategic locations; Globally competitive skills development centres; Nuclear power and hydro power plants (Ayago, Isimba, Karuma, and Murchison Bay); Science and Technology parks in each regional city; International and national referral hospitals in each of the regional cities, had been designed based on a top-down approach with no involvement of the youth.

Some of the youth responses on whether they were included in the formulation of the Vision, this is what some had to say;

As a party youth leader, in the politics of Uganda, beyond canvassing for votes, I am a mere recipient of government and political party programmes – said a youth councilor in Kampala.

The Vision 2040 is just a tool to appeal to voters. After elections, their phones are always too busy for yours to be received. Local party offices are also closed waiting for next elections only. So whom do they serve? – complained former campaign agent.

The recent remarks of the president to disband the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) in favour of the UPDF in the reform the extension system in the country to increase information access, knowledge
and technologies to the farmers is a classical example of government programmes that is reactionary with total disregard for the people’s opinion in what affects them most, especially, the youth majority live in rural areas and depend on agriculture. This is also an example of how the Vision is formulated with emphasis on the ‘what’ and ‘why’ with little specifics on ‘how’, which ‘how’ would necessitate youth political inclusion.

The Uganda Vision 2040, like the NDP, viewed the youth as a homogeneous group. The youth vulnerability and their potential, in both documents, were not clarified in specific features. This can be interpreted as a Vision formulation process that did not accord the Youth due consideration to deliberate the vision they desired in the Vision 2040.

3.7 National Youth Manifesto 2011 – 2016

In contrast to the National Development Plan and Uganda Vision 2040, the National Youth Manifesto (NYM) 2011 – 2016 clearly demonstrated the essence of youth political inclusion. The NYM was a youth led and focused process that nationally generated and unified youth demand. The Youth Manifesto placed demands in areas of; youth employment, education, health and participation in decision making with matching indicators (Uganda Youth Network, September, 2010).

To elucidate, on employment, the National Youth Manifesto demanded for (a) National Labour Force survey and the regular publication of the Labour-market information by government, (b) Revision of national education curriculum to match the job-market skills requirements, (c) Implementation of Youth Entrepreneurs Scheme (YES) with a youth friendly credit component (d) Creation of incubator business parks in secondary school and universities, (e) a Cabinet Youth Ministry. These demands were assigned with precise and matching indicators against which the youth would measure progress, such as “number of Youth employed per district per year from 2011 to 2016” (p. 6).

The other unique key demands in education, health and youth inclusion in the state were; School re-enrolment of youth drop-outs, Child-mother school resumptions, introduction of and access to mobile health clinics, access to family planning services for youth, increased funding to the Na-
national Youth Council, the consultation of district youth councils and other youth groups at all levels on youth-related programmes and policy formulations.

As good and specific as the National Youth Manifesto was, there is little evidence that it was consciously considered as a genuine benchmark on youth national demands by government and her policy formulation. As one political party youth leader calls it being recipient of government initiatives. However, through a consortium led by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA), the Youth MPs successfully drafted a National Youth Enterprise Trust fund Bill that was discussed by members of parliament as a response to the top-down Youth Venture Capital that was introduced by government in 2012/2013 financial year with little success among the youth.

The lack of government interest in the National Youth Manifesto can be interpreted as an exercise of domination techniques over youth demands because it is not an isolated act. Ever since 2001, two draft amendments to the National Youth Policy have not been approved by both cabinet and parliament. Reading into the recent history of government, the absence of cabinet ministers who are youth, and also the arrest and treatment of NRM-O youth who don’t support Kyankwanzi -Resolution12 as criminals in a multiparty democracy indicates that Youth political inclusion is selective and dissenting views have no space in government

3.8 Summary of findings and conclusion

Little effort has been made to align Uganda’s youth-related laws, policies and practices with the African Youth Charter that the State ratified in 2008. There is extremely low awareness about key legal frameworks like the African Youth Charter among youth leaders to significantly empower and inform their policy advocacy efforts. The emergence of vibrant youth-aged legislators in the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Parliaments of Uganda were more due to personal attributes not significantly an advantage associated with youth empowerment by the state and government. Age barriers to youth political inclusion do exist in our laws for one to be eligible for presidency

12. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni sole NRM-O candidature for the 2016 election resolution made by NRM parliamentary caucus at Kyankwanzi in February/March 2014.
and Local Government chairpersons at district and sub county levels. The combined male and female strength of youth voices in numbers is just a 2.93% of the total MPs in parliament yet they make 49% of the eligible voters. If number counts, as it does in an electoral democracy, then youth perspective is already endangered. The electoral laws for the Youth MPs purges most of the youth from the process. Besides, it provides no constitutional checks to hold such MPs accountable as responsible representatives in Parliament. The youth are disqualified from contesting for the Head of State, cannot vie to head 111 districts and 1460 sub counties, town and division just because of being less than 30 years of age. The cabinet, government Statutory Boards, State Enterprises and District commission such as the service commission are a preserve of persons above 60 years yet the main qualification is an affordable ‘high moral character and proven integrity’. It is near conclusive that the National Development Plan and the Uganda Vision 2040 neither considered the Youth as a heterogeneous transitional age group nor adequately included them in the plan and vision formulation process since they lacked new, unique and multifaceted interventions that reflect their heterogeneity.

However, supporters of democratization of the State and society are content when their stipulations of free and fair democratic electoral competition and observance of basic civil and human rights are increasingly attained. This notion is the basic mirror image of Abraham Lincoln’s coinage on democracy as “Government of the people, by the people, for the people” that can be interpreted as the government of the poor, by the thieves, for the thieves. This is in view of the high level of corruption in all sectors of the political process in Uganda, where, you see the corrupt deceiving the poor – the majority are youth.

Unlike the concerted efforts and progress registered in defining ‘the people’ with respect to women and Persons With Disabilities (PWD), or in some case, minority ethnic and religious groups, little effort and emphasis has been put forth to ensure that key policy making and implementation spaces, includes the youth, both male and female, into consideration.

While it is common criticism that many government programmes don’t include youth at the design stage, youth inclusion in Uganda has achieved commendable structural and elective political dimension but weak democratic deliberative aspects for the youth representatives in the organs of
government and worse, the capabilities of the few representatives are limiting. In summation, the youth in Uganda are active on electoral democracy for exploitive reasons but excluded or over dominated in the deliberative political spaces to justify formal exclusion.

Where the youth have gained presence in the political process in government, their political powers are limited by the positions they hold. By law, such youth are not accounting officers neither budget holders nor political heads of any district, Municipal, Division, Town and sub county in the country to exhibit any justifiable powers that can direct resource allocation and management of public resources, policies and society. Such political inclusion of all youth in government is rather symbolic than authentic.

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Youth and Public Policy in Uganda
Patricia Achiro Olwoch

Youth Culture in Uganda

A Case Study on Hip Hop and the influence it has on the Youth and Culture in Uganda
The Uganda National Culture Policy (UNCP 2006) defines culture as the sum total number of ways in which a society preserves, identifies, organizes, sustains and expresses itself. This chapter is a case study on Hip Hop Culture and the influence that it has had on the Ugandan Youth over the years.

4.1 Introduction

Uganda is very culturally diverse boasting of almost 65 indigenous cultures each with a very unique sense of identity. In the pre-colonial times, the different traditional communities all across the country in what is now Uganda, consisted of very closely-knit units. Their social, political and economic organisation revolved around the family, clan and/or the institution of the traditional leader. The daily activities of men, women and children, whether as individuals or as groups were intrinsically linked to, and determined by their cultures.

However the exposure to various influences, cultures as well as foreign rule at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century led to the weakening of traditional socio-political setups. Aspects of culture such as indigenous knowledge and traditional healthcare systems were ignored or belittled. People started to rely more on modern medicine and forms of healthcare while ignoring their former herbs and medicine. In this way, innovativeness and the whole social fabric were undermined. In spite of this, many communities continued to attach great value to their cultures and endeavored to conserve, inculcate and sustain it. Through information, education and community development work, the colonial Government promoted certain forms of culture. This was done through broadcasts in local languages, teaching of local languages in schools, and through traditional cultural festivals.

After independence, the government of Uganda established a Ministry of Culture and Community Development (MoCCD). The Department of Culture therein was charged with the responsibility of ensuring the preservation, promotion and development of Uganda’s cultures. The Government enacted the laws to strengthen the culture function. These included; the Historical Monuments (Amendment) Decree (No.6) of 1977, The Historical Monuments Act of 1967, Uganda National Culture Centre 1965 Amendments
Act, Copyright Act of 1964 (This Act has been repealed and replaced with the Copyright and Neighboring Rights Act, 2006) and the Stage Plays and Public Entertainment Act of 1964.

Still despite the above initiatives, Uganda did not have a well documented policy to guide and coordinate culture. Thus the Uganda National Culture Policy 2006 was formulated to guide the formal and informal systems of managing culture at all levels (Ref: UNCP 2006)

4.2 The History of the Regions in Relation to Culture

The contrast between the different peoples of Uganda reflects the multiplicity of the Ugandan tradition, culture and lifestyle. Uganda was created by a union of many tribes of people each with their own unique culture. There were four main migration groups mainly; the Bantu, the Sudanic Nilotics, the Nilo Hamites and the Hamites.

Around 1100 A.D, Bantu-speaking people migrated into the area that is now Uganda, and by the 14th century they were organized into several independent kingdoms.

Indigenous kingdoms were established in Uganda in the 14th century. Among them, there were the Buganda, Bunyoro, Batooro (Toro), Ankole (Nkole) and the state Busoga. Over the following centuries, the Baganda people created the dominant kingdom. The tribes had plenty of time to work out their hierarchies, as there was very little penetration of Uganda from the outside until the 19th century. Despite the fertility of the land and its capacity to grow surplus crops, there were virtually no trading links with the East African coast. Contacts were finally made with Arab traders and European explorers in the mid-19th century - the latter came in search of ivory and slaves. The colonial administrators introduced coffee and cotton as cash crops and adopted a policy of indirect rule, giving the traditional kingdoms considerable autonomy, but favouring the recruitment of Baganda tribe for the civil service. A few thousand Baganda chiefs received huge estates from the British, on the basis of which they made fortunes. Other tribes’ people, unable to find work in the colonial administration or make inroads in the Baganda-dominated commercial sector were forced to seek other ways of gaining influence. The Acholi and Langi, for example, were
dominant in the military and to this day are considered more aggressive and more suited for posts in the military and police. Likewise, the people from central Uganda are more dominant in business than the other tribes in Uganda. (Ref: UNCP 2006)

The 1969 census numbered the Asian population in Uganda at about 70,000. Asians were officially considered foreigners despite the fact that more than 50 per cent of them had been born in Uganda. By the 1970s South Asians had gained control of the retail and wholesale trade, cotton ginning, coffee and sugar processing, and other segments of commerce. President Amin deported about 70,000 Asians in 1972, and only a few returned to Uganda in the 1980s to claim compensation for their expropriated land, buildings, factories, and estates. To date, the number of Asians in Uganda is considerably growing.

4.3 Culture from a Youth Perspective

Culture concerns itself with socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions and all other products of Human work and thought. Culture includes tangible and intangible heritage which is varied, complex and in constant evolution. The cultural heritage of Uganda includes artistic and cultural expressions. These are language and literary arts, performing arts, visual arts and handicrafts, indigenous knowledge, cultural beliefs, traditions and values, cultural sites, monuments and antiquities.

Uganda’s population is made up of a complex and diverse range of tribes. Lake Kyoga forms the northern boundary for the Bantu-speaking peoples, who dominate much of east, central and southern Uganda. They include the Baganda people and several other tribes. In the north live the Langi and the Acholi, who speak Nilotic languages. To the northeast there are the Iteso and Karamojong and who also speak Nilotic languages. Pygmies (Batwa and Bambuti) live in the forests of the southwest. The earliest human inhabitants in a contemporary Uganda were hunter-gathers. Remnants of these people are today to be found among the pygmies in western Uganda. Between approximately 2500 to 1500 years ago, Bantu speaking populations from central and western Africa migrated and occupied most of the southern parts of the country. This culture was part of the Urewe, or
early eastern Bantu cultural complex. The migrants brought with them agriculture, ironworking skills and new ideas of social and political organization, that by the fifteenth or sixteenth century resulted in the development of centralized kingdoms, including the kingdom of Buganda, Bunyoro-Kitara and Ankole (Ref: UNCP 2006).

Each tribe has its musical history; songs are passed down from generation to generation. Endigindi (fiddle), endongo (lyre), amadinda (xylophone) and akogo (thumb piano) are commonly played instruments. An Acholi, Okot p’Bitek, is one of Uganda’s most famous writers of folklore, satirical poems and songs. His books and style of writing has given birth to more works of art amongst the young people especially. The use of the spoken word and poetry is on the rise amongst the youth of Uganda.

Music is gradually being integrated especially in the capital (Kampala) where instruments of different regions are commonly used together in an orchestra or accompany a dance of another region. All instruments that can be tuned to a similar scale (equidistant pentatonic scale) are now used in the same orchestra for example a combination of adungu (harp), amadinda (xylophone), endingidi (fiddle) originate from different cultures but produce beautiful and pleasant music while in succession.

In the past years, native art has always been very popular. Some tribes regarded the decorative painting of their huts or pottery as being more important, others held the carving of masks in great esteem. Among the Bantu people, sculpture was highly developed, its distribution quite clearly demonstrating that women assumed social supremacy.

Youth and young people will always use modern mediums available to them to express themselves. Music is an important cultural and communicative tool in Uganda and it has been embraced by most of the youth in the country today. The last ten years has seen the emergence and bloom of young musicians from all cultures cut across the country. Bebe Cool, Chameleon, Juliana Kanyomozi, Irene Namubiru and Susan Kerunen, to mention a few are a couple of youthful musicians who are taking music and culture to a whole new level. Today, music that originates from Uganda has been placed on the map with almost all the musicians singing in their local language.
While music is a strong medium, the use of film is another medium the youth in Uganda use to convey a message. The Ugandan film industry is still relatively young although the youth are using it as a medium for communication. Recently there has been support for the industry as seen in the proliferation of film festivals such as Amakula Film Festival, Pearl International Film Festival, Maisha African Film festival and Manya Human Rights Festival. Still, youth film makers struggle against competing film markets from other countries on the continent as well as the big budget films from Hollywood. Young writers and film makers continue to express themselves through the art of filmmaking in Uganda today.

Stage plays have always been a medium to convey a message and children are taught how to act right from the time they start school. More recently playwrights are taking a step of bravery and writing even about the more controversial issues that affect our society today. Silent Voices is one such stage play that has been widely acclaimed for the message and viewpoint of the war in Northern Uganda. The writer Adong Lucy Judith, herself a youth grew up during the war in Gulu and writes her experiences into the play. Organisations working with the youth often use stage plays and skits to convey a message to the communities that they work with.

The embracing of culture in Uganda is also promoted through sports by the young people. Football and netball is widely played in all the corners of Uganda with football being a language that cuts across all the cultures. Hockey, cricket, golf and rugby are still games enjoyed and understood by mainly the elite in society. Almost all these games are being introduced in schools and young people are being encouraged to learn and play. The National Report on the Development of Education in Uganda in the 21st Century (2004) as researched by the Ministry of Education and Sports states that the broad policy objective of developing physical education and sports is to create a healthy united democratic and productive nation through physical activities and sporting. The ministry also seeks to identify and reward talent in games and sports among children both at school and those out of secondary school for further training and specialization. The Government has also allocated resources for physical education and sports to address issues relating to health, culture and social cohesion and harmony among the communities and societies.
The Uganda National Youth Policy, (UNYP 2001), cites that over 50% of young women marry before the age of 18 while their male counterparts marry at 23 years. As such, religious societies are being called in to mentor the young people from very tender ages. In almost every aspect of society, religion always plays a big role. The concepts of traditional values are being instilled in youth using different mediums.

4.4 Society and Youth

In the past, communities revolved around the family, clan or traditional leader. Everything that happened in the community was directly linked to the head. In every society, there will always be a culture and values attached to it. The same is true in Uganda and with the wealth of the older generation fast dying out; the youth are expected to carry on from their forefathers. Youth in Uganda are the youngest population in the world, with 77% of its population being under 30 years of age. There are 7,310,386 youth from the ages of 15–24 years of age living in Uganda according to a study done by UNESCO on the youth statistics of the world.

For this reason, the youth are taken in high regard. They are looked upon as torch-bearers for their clans and communities. The emergence of modernity and new trends has caused much of the societal values to die out as the youth are not as learned about their culture as it was in the past. Instead, they are being influenced by what they see on TV and the internet. Because of what they watch on Television, the majority of young people in Uganda see cultural values as old fashioned and out dated. Instead, they would rather identify with the culture that their counterparts in the Western world are identifying with.

4.5 Youth and Culture

The youth are influenced by trends around the world and the only way to get them to respect and preserve their culture is by integrating the same with a trend that they understand. Youth in Uganda are open to new things and will move with the trends that are happening around the world. As
such, the emergence of the Hip Hop culture has taken root in the lives of the youth in Uganda.

### 4.6 The Hip Hop Culture

The Hip Hop culture was born in America in the 1970’s by underprivileged young people who sought to make a difference in their lives. Hip Hop takes on various artistic forms of music, dance and art. It is a subculture defined by four stylistic elements; rapping, break dancing, graffiti writing and DJing. The culture behind hip hop stands by the values of community empowerment and improvement of young peoples’ lives. (Ref: Brown, Lauren, February 18, 2009. “Hip to the Game – Dance World vs. Music Industry, The Battle for Hip Hop’s Legacy”- Movement Magazine.

Abraham Tekya is the founder of Breakdance Uganda Project and he cites that the Hip Hop culture has long been misunderstood by many people in Uganda and is perceived to be all about loud music being played by young people that have nothing else to do with their lives. Alongside a number of youth in Uganda, he is trying to change that perception as they are building their lives around the Hip Hop Culture and the values that Hip Hop embraces.

Youth founded and run organizations like; ‘The Bavubuka Foundation, Breakdance Uganda Project and the Skateboard Association Uganda’ all have one thing in common. Aside from the fact that they were founded and are being run by youth teams and individuals, they all live by the values that they have learnt in the Hip Hop culture.

The emergence of Hip Hop comes with it a fear that the Western cultures are going to take away from the local culture. Abraham Tekya and Silas Balabyekubo are confident that there is no fear that the rich and diverse culture in Uganda will fade away. What they as young people are doing is to embrace the values of Hip Hop and integrate their own indigenous culture to come up with their own style. That way, it is their style and not just something that they have learned from television.

The Bavubuka Foundation uses hip hop style music and activities using the local languages to reach a wider audience and identify with the young people in the society. Hip Hop in Uganda is making its mark amongst the
young people especially. Many of them are attracted to Hip Hop not as a trend but rather what it stands for. When Silas Balabyekubo aka Babaluku created the Bavubuka Foundation, which in English means the Youth Foundation, he wanted to impart knowledge while empowering the young people in the community. He believes that making a change in society begins with giving a voice to voiceless young people. Hip Hop reconnects the youth in the continent to their indigenous languages. The Bavubuka Foundation is an organization that seeks to build an identity and the legacy of Hip Hop in Uganda.

They realize that each child is unique and has different talents. That is why they created different projects within the foundation. Northern Uganda was for almost 22+ years’ war ridden and most of the young people alive today were born during the war and grew up holding on to hopelessness. The All Starz Music Project deals with young talent in music trying to break into the music industry. The youth involved in The All Starz Music Project use music as a tool to spread the word of peace and hope in their communities. It keeps them out of trouble and alongside music; they are involved in community building projects like carpentry where they express their feelings through art.

The Gathering is this independent of Abavubuka is an annual event that brings together youth from all corners of Uganda to express themselves using Hip Hop. Here poets, writers, rappers, young MC’s gather and share with each other in the safety of their art. The Gathering promotes a culture of respect for each other and each other’s art form and it gives the young people a platform to share their opinions of what is happening their society.

Girls in Uganda have always been marginalized today as much as they were in the past. This is because they are raised with the notion that they are meant to raise babies and look after their homes. As a result, fewer girls are educated and most are married off before they even hit puberty. The Bavubuka Girls Project was birthed and dedicated to girls to curb this phenomenon.

For many of these young people, this project is all they have. Whether or not they understand the Hip Hop culture, one thing they do understand is that they now have a second chance at life and can voice their opinions in
a safe space and make a difference in their lives. They celebrate the impact that Hip Hop has made in their lives.

Hip Hop in Uganda is making a name for itself as more and more artists join hands to become one voice. They teach that there is nothing wrong with their indigenous languages and celebrate the power of the different tongues. Together, they seek to celebrate the transforming power of sending out messages in their different indigenous tongues. They try to instill discipline and respect for elders. They are not trying to lose their roots; instead they try and embrace the values of old in a new age of understanding.

Break dance Project Uganda (BPU) conveys the same message with the art of break dance while the Uganda Skateboard Union celebrates freedom of expression using the skateboard. Both projects were started by young men who had dropped out of school and had nothing and nowhere else to turn.

Break dance Uganda uses dance as a path to teach values and share views amongst the young people involved. This project cuts across young people from all walks of life no matter the age, background, or sex. More than just danced, the young people learn to appreciate themselves and have a safe place to communicate and express their opinions with constructive feedback.

Different organizations in Uganda who identify with youth have joined hands with the Break dance Uganda project to use their approach to reach the young people that they have under their wing. The Invisible Children organization in Gulu is one such project and they acknowledge the difference using dance has impacted the children that they rescued from the war. Break dance offers an escape from reality and they young people get to use their energy on the dance floor instead of on fights with each other as was the norm. The values this project runs on and what they try and instill in the lives of the young people that come to learn the art of break dance include; order, respect and discipline.

Dance troupe like Ndere Troupe and Makmot Dancers set the stage for dance and culture in Uganda. These culture groups are made up of youth and they travel the world sharing the culture from different parts of Uganda. They consist mainly of under privileged young people who are being
looked after and schooled even as they perform for millions. They not only perform dance but also stage plays featuring the many folk tales of Uganda.

The Uganda Skateboard Union has dispelled the fact that youth in Uganda are dominated by fear. Having built the first skate board ring in East Africa, it is made special by the fact that it was built by youth, have no government support and the young people have put their village on the map. The founder, Jackson Mubiru dropped out of school because his single mother could not afford to pay his school fees when he was a teenager. After walking around for a while being idle and feeling sorry for himself, he decided to follow a dream that was birthed as he watched young people skate on television. As a youth, he advises his peers not be defined by where they are. This he says is a value that has got him to where he is right now. His vision is to expand and make more skate rings across the country and introduce skateboarding in schools as he grooms young people to represent Uganda internationally. Jackson is not aware that he is embracing the art of hip hop through his sport; instead he believes that any young person in Uganda can make a difference in their lives and in the communities to which they belong if they put their minds to it.

Visual artists too are trying to break the typical gender moulds; they are expressing themselves by using stereotypical characters. This counter acts their intentions, and instead of inventing new traditions, they are complying with old reactionary traditional values. More and more artists are coming out of their shell and sharing their culture through the various forms of visual art. They may not yet be widely received just yet as art is not a medium widely acknowledged in Uganda. Still, out to make a difference and share their cultural values through works of art, artists across the country are not being deterred by public response. The raw materials used in the production of visual arts and crafts are readily available in the country. Visual arts and crafts are produced in almost all regions of the country with product differentiation based on culture and history. This has promoted the identities of the various communities and created avenues for income generation.

The rise of stand-up comedy has taken the country by storm with the young people spear heading it. Groups like Theatre Factory and Fun Factory share their views and opinion of what is happening around them and their society through the use of comedy.
Youth artists are using graffiti forms of art to share their talent and cultures. Using what they have access to from discarded plastic bottles to bottle tops amazing works of art are emerging from the young artists.

Youth writers and actors are rising up to document their heritage in the form of stage plays and film works. Using the modern mediums, their work is seen across the globe and they get to share their craft as well as their culture. In the past, they tried to copy the western style content but now artists realize the wealth in culture and the variety they can explore that the western world has not yet done. A lot of this realization came as a result of viewing the workings of their counterparts in other parts of Africa. The use of spoken word and poetry is on the increase with young people gathering to share their works and voice their opinions through the spoken word.

Like any organisation or new trend, the hip hop culture in Uganda is not without its challenges. Because it is not widely understood, it has no government backing and very few or no one locally celebrates it at all. The organizations that use Hip Hop as an avenue have to depend on International help to keep going. Still, the young men and women behind the Hip Hop culture in Uganda have a dream to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of the youth that come under their wing. They have tried everything else and Hip Hop and the culture of Hip Hop has worked for them.

At the end of the day, the Hip Hop culture in Uganda is here to stay. Young people are getting knowledge about the culture and the values behind Hip Hop and they are being empowered to make a difference in their lives and the lives of the people around them in their communities while preserving and celebrating culture. No matter what tribe, culture or art form, there is a lot more to come on the Hip Hop scene in Uganda.

4.7 Other Youth organizations in Uganda

Uganda is blessed to have a number of youth organizations spread around the country helping young people to have a voice of the happenings in society. Still most of these organizations are more concerned with the development, economy, advocacy and capacity building. Almost none of them seek to preserve the culture of Uganda as a whole.
They play a big role in giving the young people a platform to make a difference in the society. A couple of youth organizations in Uganda include:

» The Africa Youth Initiative: AYINET is committed to making peace and justice a reality for victims and survivors of war.

» The Uganda Youth Network has developed a ‘black Monday’ where they wear black to protest corruption in Uganda.

» Youth Action Uganda concentrates on helping young people get an education. Those that dropped out of school for one reason or another. Here the young people have a second chance to fulfill their dreams through the hope of an education.

» Teens Uganda is a youth led organization focused on promoting healthy lives in communities, youth (socio-economic) empowerment, and addressing environmental issues. TEENS recognizes the contribution of real offline solutions to the risks (challenges/vulnerabilities) of youth/children and women, currently the most marginalized groups by engaging them in decision making processes and orienting actions campaigns.

These and other youth organizations stand out in Uganda and they are all making a difference in the lives of the youth in Uganda in one way or another. The advantage of this is that then the youth can decide for themselves what kind of help they want and where they can get it and it is readily available.

4.8 Urban Youth Culture vs Rural Youth Culture

The youth in the urban setting of Uganda have a bigger opportunity to go to school and choose from a variety of activities and careers to better their lives. These young people tend to lean towards the Western trends that they are exposed to. They have access to different lifestyle choices and end up shunning culture and the values there in. The opposite is true with the rural youth who in most cases drop out of school before they reach teen age. They have to fend for themselves and make life work for them. They end up grasping at straws and make do with whatever life hands them. Thus, the
dilemma of youth who are over exposed and those who are under or not exposed at all.

The one form of media that both categories of youth have is visual media. Television sets and magazines have replaced the career guidance counselors’ and village elders for the urban and rural youth respectively. Here they are exposed to another way of life that seems appealing through films and documentaries. The few that can afford it go ahead and leave the country in search for greener pastures. The others who remain find ways to live their dream within the confines of what they have. Still there is a smaller number of youth who live frustrated that they cannot get what they want.

Young people also use the media to express their feelings and a number of youth shows have come up on the local television stations giving them a platform to comment on the societal values being impressed upon them.

Still the one thing that connects both the urban and rural youth is their love for Hip Hop. Whether they know it or not, they are embracing a culture that is keeping them grounded and helps them embrace their culture in whatever artistic form they go for. Young people in Uganda want to make a mark in the society and are tired of being left behind by their East African counterparts. Thus, they are out to make a difference by use of their talents. Within the Hip Hop Culture, they are learning that there is a beauty and a wealth in preserving and showcasing their cultures. That is what they are working with and armed with culture, are determined to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of their peers and the community at large.

With the emergence of the East African Community (EAC) the doors have been opened allowing the youth of Uganda to explore the culture in the other East African countries. As such, a number of Ugandan Youth have ventured armed with their culture and are making trips back and forth the other East African countries. A few others have found jobs in various artistic and cultural sectors in Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan and Rwanda. From time to time, Ugandan youth will hold a get together inviting artists from the other East African countries to come and showcase their cultures and ideologies.
4.9 In conclusion

Research has shown that the youth in Uganda in regard to culture, will identify and resonate with what they know and what is in trend. The Hip Hop culture may seem new and not be very widely understood but it is a trend that the youth understand and are fast embracing in one way or another. Through Hip Hop, the youth in Uganda are on a quest to see Uganda speak native languages and embrace their cultures through artistic forms.

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» Teens Uganda
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Youth and Public Policy in Uganda
Youth and Economic Inclusion in Uganda
A Study of Government Policy Interventions
5.1 Introduction\(^1\)

With more than 21 percent of Ugandans living in abject poverty,\(^2\) Uganda’s demographic profile is one of the country’s most salient development challenges. Driven by a very high fertility rate of 6.2 children per woman,\(^3\) Uganda’s population nearly doubled in the past 20 years, now making it the youngest population with over half the population less than 15 years old.\(^4\)

In her National Development Plan (NDP, 2010/11-2014/15), the Uganda Government envisages transforming the Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years. Various policies to this effect have been laid down as a means of raising productivity, incomes and enhancing competitiveness of the economy. Vision 2040 is a policy focused on transforming the society from a peasantry to a modern and middle class economy with a per capita income of $9,500, up from $506 in 2010. This is welcome news to the population because in order to achieve the above, sustainable development that involves participation of all citizens in the economy has to occur on a wide scale. But the question for most is how this will be achieved.

A look at Uganda’s labour market characteristics shows that Uganda has the highest youth unemployment rate in Sub-Saharan Africa.\(^5\) Because the youth now constitute the highest and fastest growing proportion of Uganda’s population, there is need to understand the dynamics and complexities of youth, the realities of the economic situation in Uganda and what gaps still exist in the programs designed for increased youth inclusion economically. The unemployment situation is projected to even worsen if the youth bulge fully develops and no deliberate efforts are made to address the un-

\(^1\) Irene Ikomu is the coordinator of Parliament Watch Uganda, a Parliament monitoring and tracking initiative with the Centre for Policy Analysis. She is a lawyer with over four years experience in the non-profit sector, working towards increased youth participation. She has previously worked with Early Life Online Radio, the National Debate Council, the Open Society Initiative for East Africa, among others.

\(^2\) National Employment Policy, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development


\(^4\) National Employment Policy.

\(^5\) ILO.
employment trends; its effectiveness and magnitude depends on the ability of the economy to absorb and productively employ the extra workers. There is need for government to take definite steps to provide leadership in all fronts to prepare to harness the benefits that accrue from the dividend

Uganda has managed to achieve macroeconomic stability as well as impressive rates of GDP growth. However, the biggest proportion of labour has been absorbed in agriculture yet investment in agriculture has remained very low, which has led to very low growth of agriculture averaging about 2 percent per annum for the period 1990 to 2012. Even in urban areas, the private sector that was presumed to drive Uganda’s economic growth seems to have failed in terms of creating descent jobs especially for university graduates.

Moreover, going by the official calculation of unemployment, Uganda’s unemployment rates need to be reviewed as disguised employment remains a challenge and public demand for formal sector jobs especially of university graduates continues to increase every passing year and to outstrip the increase in jobs created by the formal sector. In rural areas, own account activities (where majority of the labour force is disguisedly employed) are largely looked at as a form of subsistence.

The focus of this paper is to evaluate the status of inclusion of youth in Uganda’s economy and then review the government’s policy interventions towards increased youth inclusion. While the author acknowledges that there are various stakeholders in the economy, this paper focuses on government programming and policies aimed at creating a more inclusive economy for young people through employment creation. It should also be noted, that information on the status of employment has been scarce in Uganda. The last manpower survey was conducted in 1987. The statistics and facts in this paper are heavily based on the household surveys conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) to address some of the data gaps.

This paper is structured around four sections. Immediately after this is section two that looks at the current economic situation of youth in Uganda, highlighting economic changes and the realities of youth employment in the various sectors and their contribution to the employment status of youth. Section three reviews government policies and programs that are
targeted towards young people in Uganda, specifically looking at whether young people have benefited from the program or not as well as its weaknesses. Section four is the final section and makes two key policy recommendations; a need for a regular manpower survey and a functional National Youth Policy making the argument, in conclusion, that government cannot effectively implement policies targeted at greater youth inclusion without them.

5.2 An Overview of the Current Economic Situation of Youth in Uganda

5.2.1 Uganda’s Youth

Uganda has the world’s youngest population with over 78 percent of the population below the age of 30;⁶ about half of the population is below 15 years of age.⁷ Uganda’s labour force is estimated by the Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) to be 11.5 million people, with an annual growth rate of 4.7 percent, a growth rate above the national population growth rate, estimated at 3.4 percent.⁸

The cohort of youth in Uganda is the largest in history and is growing.⁹ The potential for this demographic trend to bolster or undermine national objectives in the areas of economic development is real as this same cohort also has the highest unemployment rates. The youth (18-30 years)¹⁰ represent approximately 21 percent (7 million) of the population and they comprise 64 percent of the unemployed persons in Uganda.¹¹ Due to the criticality of the human resource to development, the youth form an investment opportunity for the state as it strives towards middle-income status.

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⁶ International Youth Foundation (IYF) 2011, Youth Map Uganda; Navigating Challenges, Charting Hope.
⁸ UNHS.
¹⁰ While the UN and ILO define youth as those aged 15-24, this study adopts the national definition of youth as those aged 18-30 years.
¹¹ UBOS 2012.
Interpretation of the open unemployment and employment rates as indicators of a well-functioning labour market is problematic in developing countries. When unemployment is not an option where a person can survive, work of some sort has to be found, often casual and informal work. Majority of labour, including youth is disguisedly employed in agriculture, giving an illusion that unemployment in Uganda is lower than it actually is.

5.2.2 A Brief Economic Background

Uganda enjoyed a strong and stable economy in the years approaching independence and soon after. Agriculture was the dominant economic activity with a major focus on cash crop production. The economy deteriorated under the rule of President Idi Amin Dada who in 1972, expelled holders of British passports, including approximately 70,000 Asians of Indian and Pakistani descent. Many Asians had been active in agribusiness, manufacturing, and commerce. Their mass expulsion and Amin's efforts to expropriate foreign businesses undermined investor confidence in Uganda and was a big blow to the economy. Civil war in the early 1980s worsened the country’s economic performance. After seizing power in 1986, the NRM government economic focus was on stabilizing the economy and promoting economic growth.

In the early years of independence, government was the biggest employer, with the majority of University graduates getting absorbed in the civil service but with the critical state of the economy, the NRM government, with the support of the IMF, undertook major policy changes to reign in the economy that included devaluation of the shilling, commitment to budgetary restraint and liberalization of the economy. Some of the negative effects of this included retrenchment of government workers due to downsizing of the public sector as an employer.

13. Several points in the Ten-Point Program emphasized the importance of economic development, declaring that an independent, self-sustaining national economy was vital to protect Uganda's interests.
Over the last three decades, Uganda’s economy has moved from recovery to growth, and the growth has been significant. Over the past two decades Uganda has recorded a significant economic structural shift,\textsuperscript{14} the shift has leaned mainly towards services, driven mainly by developments in the banking, telecommunication, and transport services.\textsuperscript{15} The contribution of agriculture to GDP declined by more than half from 46.4 percent in 1990-1999 to 22.0 percent in 2006-2009. Over the same period, the contribution of the services sector increased from 35.1 percent to 48.4 percent.

The data on youth distribution shows that Uganda is witnessing a mismatch between location of labour (majority living in rural areas) and opportunities for economic growth (mainly in urban areas). While its contribution declined significantly, the 2005/06 UHNS and 2009/10 Uganda National Population Survey (UNPS) micro data disaggregated according to age groups show that over the last five years; more than 70 percent of the youth still depend on agriculture for their livelihood.\textsuperscript{16} The services sector, which registered significant increase in its share of GDP accounted for only 21.5 per cent of Uganda’s youth labour force in 2010.

While the economy will continue to grow into the future, presently a significant proportion of the country’s population— the youth, are not benefiting optimally from this growth.

5.2.3 Uganda’s Youth Employment Outlook

Access to adequate livelihood opportunities is one of the most critical issues that youth face and finding employment plays an important role in the transition to adulthood. Persons are considered to be employed if they are of a specified age (14-64 years) and if they perform any work at all, for pay or profit or pay in kind during a specified brief period or are working without pay in family business or farm for at least one hour during the period. This paper categorizes employment into two forms: informal and formal

\textsuperscript{14} Lawrence N Bategeka, 2012 The Role of the State in Economic Development Challenges in Uganda, pp. 2-4.

\textsuperscript{15} BTVET Strategic Plan, Ministry of Education and Sports, 2011.

\textsuperscript{16} The percentage of the youth in agriculture fell from 82.3 percent in 2005/06 to 71.2 percent in 2009/10.
employment. Both forms are assessed in this paper as avenues of economic inclusion or exclusion for that matter of young people in Uganda.

Both the formal and informal sectors generate the currently existing employment opportunities. Only 20 percent (about 2.8 million) of the total workforce is employed for wages of which only 14 percent are permanent employees and 86 percent are temporary. As high as 79 percent of the labour force is self-employed or employed as unpaid family workers in the agricultural sector.\textsuperscript{17} The youth constitute the highest percentage of the labour force and the vast majority of new entrants in the labour market and so the statistics paint a dire picture for young people in Uganda.

The table below shows the employment distribution of youth.

\textsuperscript{17} National Employment Policy.
Table 1
Distribution of the Youth by Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
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<td>12-14</td>
<td>15-24</td>
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<td>17.4</td>
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<td>14.6</td>
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<td>Contributing family worker</td>
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<td>66.1</td>
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<th>Gender</th>
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<tr>
<td>Self employed</td>
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<td>Contributing family worker</td>
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<td>Wage employee</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Industry of Employment</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Forestry</td>
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<td>68.5</td>
<td>64.0</td>
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<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AAU, DRT, UNNGOF [2012].

Sector Formal; Current Status and Gaps

Formal employment identifies persons who are entitled to basic benefits such as pension or retirement fund, paid leave, medical benefits, deduction of income taxes and with signed contractual agreements. Because of the social safety nets it offers, formal employment is the safest and most ideal
form of employment, but it is not growing fast enough to absorb the overwhelming number of youth joining the labour market every year.\textsuperscript{18} Only 20 percent of new entrants into the Ugandan labour market find formal jobs, leaving the rest to self-employment and other informal activities.\textsuperscript{19}

Because the education sector directly feeds the formal sector with labour, it has always been criticized for many gaps. It has been criticized for not being wide enough to cater for the large pool of post-secondary school youth looking to study; only about 2 students out of every 1,000 people in Uganda are able to enter University studies, and only 4.4 students out of 1,000 people in Uganda are able to enroll in any kind of post-secondary institutions-public or private.\textsuperscript{20}

Once students reach university, there is always the question of post university employment opportunities; while more than 40,000 young people graduate from Ugandan universities each year, the formal market can provide only 8,000 jobs annually.\textsuperscript{21} This non-absorptive nature of the formal sector makes its unemployment ratio more acute than the other sectors. This can be attributed to the fact that the less educated youth are more open to seeking employment opportunities in the informal sector while the more educated youth prefer white-collar jobs they have trained for in the formal sector.

However, an even bigger problem is that the education sector does not seem to be producing a labour force that matches the needs of the market. Among many youth, there is also increased disgruntlement over the perceived influx of foreign workers in management positions in the lucrative formal sectors like; banking, advertising, oil, insurance, capital markets, hospitality industry and even the media. According to Agnes Asiimwe, employers have argued that this is because Ugandans have a large skills gap

\textsuperscript{18} MGLSD, 2009 ‘Employment and Job Creation in Uganda, Status and Growth Prospects’ Discussion paper 9.
\textsuperscript{19} IYF, 2011 Youth Map Uganda; Navigating Challenges, Charting Hope.
\textsuperscript{21} National Youth Policy.
that university education does not equip them with.\textsuperscript{22} The trend of foreigners continuously taking up jobs in Uganda’s hotels is a result of three major factors; Uganda’s poor training capacity, weak non-operational labour laws and the perception that Ugandans are less productive compared to their counterparts in the region, particularly Kenya.

Experience being a popularly used criterion to fill positions in this sector further disenfranchises many young people. Many university graduates do not have the years of experience needed for lucrative white-collar jobs and this hinders their chances of getting employed.

Related to urban unemployment are the youth who were neither in school nor in employment particularly in urban areas (14 percent). The majority of them in this category are women (9 percent) as opposed to males (3 percent).\textsuperscript{23} This group is particularly vulnerable to exploitation by the urban elite. The higher unemployment among women may be explained by the socially constructed gender norms that discriminate against women’s access to employment especially in the private sector.

\textbf{Informal Sector Outside Agriculture; Current Status and Gaps}

The pursuit of better livelihoods is concentrated in the informal sector. Persons in informal employment consist of all those in the informal sector; employees in the formal sector; and persons working in private households who are not entitled to basic benefits such as pension/retirement fund, paid leave, medical benefits, deduction of income tax (PAYE) from wages and whose employment agreement is verbal.

The informal sector which has a high rate of job creation and thus where majority of youth find employment, is however largely unorganized.\textsuperscript{24} As with many other Sub-Saharan African countries, the informal sector in Uganda provides the vast majority of employment crowding out jobs in the formal sector. According to the Business Census by UBOS, Uganda has more than 457,000 private businesses (200 percent increment in the last


\textsuperscript{23} AAU, DRT, UNNGOF (2012).

\textsuperscript{24} MGLSD, 2009.
decade), including 278,700 in trade, 63,980 in hotels and restaurants, and 9,140 in agriculture. The Census also reported that the number of jobs in private businesses increased by 136 percent to just over one million in the last ten years; however, many businesses do not survive beyond ten years.²⁵

The informal sector absorbs many of the young, where unemployment is not an option. The major informal sector areas that attract youth are motorcycle taxis, welding, carpentry, agriculture or fishing and hair dressing salons. Other informal jobs youth engage in include construction, market vending and managing roadside restaurants popular for chapatti. Some youth also contribute to doing household chores or family work, like tilling family land or looking after children and ageing or sick relatives, which occupation does not accrue any income to them. The presence of many youths in self-employment indicates the ease of entry into the sector for and to some extent it demonstrates how rigid the formal economy is to absorb job seekers.

Among youth with an income, average gross weekly earnings, regardless of activity is UGX 30,000 (USD 12). Farming yielded a high average weekly income of UGX 43,000 (USD 17.1) but it is important to note that earnings from farming are seasonal and that income is not spread evenly across the year. Transport, in the survey, was found the most rewarding, recording weekly average earnings of UGX 55,000 (USD 22) although the activity is exclusively male.²⁶

There has been no deliberate effort by the government to make the business sector attractive to young people, there are no tax incentives for small businesses to enable them incubate and grow, and there still remains a very high cost of entry into business including a tedious process basic processes like company registration. Over 92% of investors in Uganda currently enjoying tax incentives would have invested their capital even without these incentives.²⁷ This data shows that the government strategic focus on foreign

investors is at the expense of the small businesses that would benefit more from tax incentives to help bolster growth.

What this tells us is there are not enough protections put in place to support the growth of small businesses and because the sector is not closely regulated, conditions in the informal sector are insecure and the incomes are inadequate for majority young people.

**Agricultural Sector; Current Status and Gaps**

Agriculture has been and continues to be the most important sector in Uganda’s economy because it employs the largest proportion, 65.6 percent in 2010\(^\text{28}\) of the population aged 10 years and older\(^\text{29}\). The sector is also the basis for much of the industrial activity in the country since most industries are agro-based. Even though its share in total GDP has been declining, agriculture remains important because it provides the basis for growth in other sectors such as manufacturing and services.

As already stated earlier, more than 70 percent of the youth still depend on agriculture for their livelihood as the sector is expected to provide employment for the bulk of youth in the rural areas of the country. Rural youth receive less education than their urban counterparts and are more likely to work and study simultaneously. They are, however, more likely to receive vocational training, as well as more likely to use those skills, primarily because agricultural training has the highest utilization rates among vocational training courses.\(^\text{30}\)

Despite the fact that agriculture employs the largest percentage of the youth in the rural areas, the sector remains largely subsistence, meaning that nearly all crops of livestock raised are used to maintain the farmer’s family, leaving little, if any surplus for sale. The very high rates for rural-urban migration especially among the youth are largely because of how unattractive the sector is to youth: youth, especially in rural areas find agriculture economically unrewarding and so migrate to urban centers looking for

better opportunities. The reasons for this scenario are varied, including; the lack of production inputs such as capital, tools, credit, seeds and even poor road infrastructure.

There is also inadequate investment in the sector. The agriculture sector remains among the lowest ranked sectors in the national budget. The agriculture sector has not received more than 5 percent share of the national budget since 2009/10. The total budget allocation for the agriculture sector for FY 2012/13 was 3.5% of the total national budget. In the FY 2013/2014, it was slightly lower with just 3.2% of the total national budget.

The fact that the largest employer and redemption of young people does not get more attention in terms of budget allocation is a point of worry in itself.

5.2.4 Youth and Access to Finance

Given that the majority of youth in Uganda are engaged in the informal sector and especially in agriculture, it is important to consider the access to finances for young entrepreneurs who may want to start up or expand businesses in the informal sector.

The Micro finance exchange in 2013 mapped out 3,000 points of service of from commercial banks, credit institutions, microfinance deposit-taking institutions (MDIs) and credit-only Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), as well as SACCOs, with the following distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SACCOS</th>
<th>Commercial Banks</th>
<th>Credit Institutions</th>
<th>MDIs</th>
<th>MFIs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of service points</td>
<td>2171</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Microfinance Information Exchange, 2013

In the capital city of Kampala and major towns, financial institutions and automated teller machines are commonplace. By contrast, financial services are relatively scarce in rural Uganda. Many rural youth live far from the nearest financial services provider, which often is a small, member-owned savings and credit cooperative (SACCO) with limited operations and products. Those who try to save often keep their money at home. Most feel they have no hope of qualifying for a loan. They either do not own property that can be used as collateral, or they find the credit options too limited for their needs.

Thus far, it has predominately been SACCOs expanding outreach beyond the scope of the more developed areas. They are significantly more prevalent than any other type of financial service provider in districts with high rural poverty levels, likely linked to the government’s role in supporting the establishment of new SACCOs, with a target of one SACCO per sub-county.

Currently, youth account for just 6% of total savings at SACCOs and 15% of total outstanding loans. Thus youth hardly have any access to financial capital to support innovation and development of enterprises.

5.3 Current Government Policy Interventions and Programs towards Youth Inclusion

5.3.1 Policy Interventions and Entrepreneurship for Employment Creation

Regarding entrepreneurship for employment creation, the Uganda government is focusing more on promoting self-employment and less on supporting enterprise development. Enterprise development means deliberate government actions to support local businesses or income generating activities that are employment intensive.

Regarding promoting self-employment, Government came up with the idea of youth venture capital funds. The idea of venture capital funding dates back to 2008/9 when the government supported a partnership of the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) and the Food Science and Technology Department of Makerere to support students projects of processing and manufacturing with financing and mentoring. In the 2011/12 budget,
Government allocated UGX 44 billion (USD 17 million) for the Youth Venture Capital Fund (YVCF).

In 2012, Government introduced the “Graduate Venture Capital Fund” amounting to UGX 16 billion (USD 6.4 million) and increased funding to the Youth Venture Capital Fund by another UGX 3.25 billion (USD 1.3 million). The youth were to borrow specified amounts of money to enable them start their own businesses. The youth were to access the funds through accredited commercial banks on condition of meeting some requirements such as; collateral, owning a trading license, the enterprise must have been in operation for a minimum of three years, among others.

However, majority of the youth reside in rural areas and are not literate enough to benefit from such schemes. Because of the difficulties associated with accessing the funds, the money could only be accessed by a very small proportion of the youth estimated at far less than 1 percent of the youth.

Another major challenge has been the fact that the maximum amount of UGX 5 million (USD two thousand) under the program is too small for growth of serious businesses.

Entrepreneurship training is also one of the core strategies under the YVCF. The idea behind providing training is to teach the youth beneficiaries better financial management skills, which can enable them better utilize funds they access in order to achieve the intended objective and ensure accountability. However, only 30 percent of the beneficiaries reported having attended the training, which still indicates a big gap.32 Accessing financial capital without the necessary financial management skills needed to manage and properly invest and understand capital flow affects the way young people run their businesses.

As can be seen, so far this particular program has registered very little success. There has not been an official audit done by government to redress the gaps in the program but what is clear is that a large section of youth have not benefited from it.

5.3.2 Policy intervention and skills development for young people

Curriculum review was perceived as necessary on grounds that the education system was not equipping learners with the knowledge and skills required by the formal sector, which was expected to create jobs. From around 1997, the primary school curriculum was to be reviewed to focus on Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET). However, business and technical education in the primary school curriculum remains largely missing. At secondary school education level, Government in 2007 introduced the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme, again with hardly any serious focus on business and vocational education. Government introduced “Entrepreneurship” as a subject in school (secondary, and tertiary) with hope that the knowledge and skills gained there from would enable the youth to start their own businesses but the course undertaken is very theoretical and not specifically focused on giving students entrepreneurial skills.

Further on curriculum review, more recently in 2012 the Uganda Government introduced Universal Post Ordinary Level Education and Training (UPOLET). UPOLET implementation has not only proved to be very difficult because of lack of readiness, but also remains largely an academic programme with hardly any focus on business and vocational education and training.

Demand for business, technical and vocational education in Uganda is high but the education offered by training institutions is mainly theoretical.33

Tertiary education institutions responded to the criticism that their graduates were lacking knowledge and skills that are demanded on the job market by introducing compulsory “apprenticeship” to form part of the academic award requirements. Nonetheless, apprenticeship seems not to guarantee employment to young university graduates as and when they complete university education.

Furthermore, Universities and other tertiary education institutions introduced academic programmes that were deemed to be in high demand.

on the job market. New and attractive courses were mainly in the areas of business, economics, ICT, and human resource management among others. Government put more emphasis on the teaching of science subject by:

1. Paying teachers of science subjects relatively higher wages;
2. Committing 75 percent of government sponsored students’ positions to students taking sciences;
3. Recruiting science teachers at all levels;
4. Increasing inputs for teaching sciences in secondary schools such as science laboratories, chemicals and equipment.

Recent reforms by government to support the BTVET system have included the enactment of the Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training Act in 2008 and the establishment of the Uganda Vocational Qualifications Framework (UVQF) — a certificate system that implements flexible training/learning modules packaged in the form of assessment and training packages. However, the BTVET system has been criticized for being overly theoretical, limited and inadequate funding for the training institution for example the Kotido Training Institute has no beneficiaries or staff as it has never received funding since it was established in 2003 and therefore it is not operational.

The Skilling Uganda program approach has also not taken root, with the structure of the current BTVET program still following the old system where intake eligibility is tagged to being at least a primary level holder.

5.3.3 Policy Intervention and agricultural development

Because agriculture continues to be the most important sector of Uganda’s economy, the National Agriculture Policy was drafted to guide all agriculture and agriculture related sub-sector policies, policy frameworks and strategies existing or to be formulated in future. In a bid to enhance efficiency in delivery of agricultural goods and services, several statutory bodies were formed under Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries,

(MAAIF). National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS) and Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) are some of the many Government programmes established for community.

Unlike other programs evaluated in this paper, NAADS is not a youth specific programme but it focuses on the priority areas that directly contribute to the goal of increasing agricultural productivity and profitability. NAADS, currently in its second phase of implementation, is a 25 year program of government put in place to increase efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural extension services and currently has four components under which it delivers. These are:

1. Technology development, promotion and farmer access to information,
2. Agri-business development for supporting market access,
3. Institutional development and programme management
4. Planning, monitoring and evaluation.

In analyzing distribution of participation of youth beneficiaries in program activities that included; planning, setting standards for quality of goods, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, establishment of demonstration sites, development of group constitutions, and participation in exchange visits, the highest percentage rate was 55.3% in planning and the lowest 20.3 percent registered in procurement.  

The NAADS programme majorly focuses on crop production (88.7 percent) and livestock production (72.9 percent). Other significant NAADS activities reported include savings and credit (19.5 percent), and agricultural marketing (11.6 percent), among other minor activities.

This indicates that agricultural marketing is not getting the intended emphasis it deserves to be able to create intended market oriented produce.

NUSAF on the other hand has a specific youth component, which is the youth opportunity programme. Launched by the government of Uganda in 2003, NUSAF is part of government’s broader northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme. This has three objectives, which are:

1. To provide youth with specific vocational skills and tool kits to enable them to earn incomes and improve their livelihood,

2. To contribute towards community reconciliation and conflict management,

3. To build capacity of NGO’s, community based organizations and vocational training institutes to respond to the youth.

The Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) under NUSAF was added by the government in 2005 as a principle youth focused programme to target the unemployed/under-employed youth with a specific objective of providing youth with specific vocational skills and toolkits to enable them earn incomes and improve livelihoods. Although YOP is not an agricultural specific programme, the course most trained was agricultural production.

YOP seemed to have strong economic effects for those that lacked initial capital to start businesses as it boosted initial incomes and helped many youth with start up capital.

This though is in light of failures by the government to provide adequate machinery to transform agriculture to a mechanized level. Instances exist where government has provided revolving tractors to sub-counties. These are to be used by different families in the sub counties and by the time they get to the last family, the weeding season is over.

Despite these measures from the government, unemployment remains Uganda's major challenge, suggesting the unemployment problem has more to do with the supply of skilled workforce. The adoption of structural adjustment programmes like liberalization, privatization took the mandate of job creation away from government to the private sector. In the 1980’s and before, government was the biggest employer in the country and therefore had to make deliberate effort to ensure its citizens had jobs.

Today, government would need to look at the supply side of jobs and engage in innovative ways of helping the private sector to create jobs. Government should not leave job creation entirely to the private sector without rendering the requisite support.
5.4 Towards more Youth Inclusion; Key Recommendations

5.4.1 A Regular Manpower Survey

The Uganda labour market is faced with notable mismatch between what the education system offers and the labour market requirements. Information on the labour market both in public and private sectors, including, the large informal sector is severely insufficient. Despite having a number of viable employment creation plans for the youth, the Government has not carried out a survey to establish the needs of the labour market, the status of employment of the labour force particularly youth, the income disparities in the sectors and particularly what sectors offer employment opportunities in the long and short term.

The last general manpower survey in Uganda was done in 1989. In November 2010, the press reported that a manpower survey was to be carried out to enable Ugandan workers compete favorably in the East African region. It is highly unlikely that this exercise has commenced. This could partly explain the reason why many young people are pursuing different courses of study without having relevant information on the exact sector or profession that needs their services. Many of them, therefore, remain unemployed because they have pursued certain professions that are already saturated with workers.

In regard to government programming, a manpower survey would point to gaps in the economy and provide direction to the education curriculum. Currently, young people are under immense pressure after a presidential directive on adoption and preference of sciences was passed. There should be a policy that makes it mandatory for the Government to carry out an annual manpower survey in order to inform its programming and planning processes.

38. National Employment Policy.
5.4.2 A Functional National Youth Policy

For economic inclusion to be realized among the youth, the National Youth Policy should be passed and adopted with a complete work plan for the next five years.

The National Youth policy was provided for in 1995 with a lifespan of ten years after which it would be reviewed every five years. Since its inception it has forever been in draft form to date. The first youth policy was designed from 1997-2000 and adopted. To date we still refer to this document (14 years later) over the subsequent review years, the document designed has remained a draft with all stakeholders quoting the 2001 policy.

The policy advocated for mobilization of resources to promote youth participation and integration in the mainstream national development. This document sought to;

- Create awareness on youth concerns and define a place for youth in society and national development
- To guide, harmonize, complement, enhance and promote distinctive complementary actions and roles of all stakeholders at all levels in youth development to enhance effectiveness of all efforts.

The National Youth Policy is a document that clearly provides strategic direction on any interventions targeting the youth of Uganda. In addition to this any subsequent policy would commit the government to fulfilling its national obligations in development of the youth in relation to the National development plan, the Uganda constitution, Vision 2040 and many other declarations as of that time.

The policy in essence provides a framework for development of a National Action Plan for the youth that spells out the strategic areas for actions, target groups and implementation modalities. It is meant to address development needs of the youth in a comprehensive manner.

Under normal circumstances, the next revision would take into consideration youth demands and needs and work towards addressing them. It is against this policy that development partners, civil society, relevant ministries and the government would design programmes and interventions to the highlighted youth challenges. It is also against this policy that budgeting as well as monitoring and evaluation would be carried out.
In the absence of a revised National Youth Policy, the Government of Uganda cannot provide resources, services and support that will allow youth to fulfill their potential and contribute to Political, Economic, Social and Cultural transformation. This leaves the government’s commitment to support Youth as the bulk of the Ugandan citizenry highly questionable.

5.5 Conclusion

Various surveys have been carried out around the subject of youth unemployment in Uganda with recommendations made on how to address the situation. These interventions include but are not limited to; reviewing curriculum, apprenticeship and internship placement, more investment in the agricultural sector, and 30% youth policy for youth in government programming.

Most interventions made towards employment can only be achieved with the adoption of the national youth policy. In the absence of the policy and the man power survey, there is neither a structure against which youth programmes are designed nor a needs based assessment on required skills in the country. This means that programmes shall be trial based and short term and, labour shall continue to be inappropriate to our market.

The above scenario shall not only worsen the unemployment in the country but also widen the economic inequality amongst youth.
References

International Youth Foundation (IYF) 2011, Youth Map Uganda; Navigating Challenges, Charting Hope.


Amina Osman

Education in Uganda
According to a World Bank report, Uganda, as a country in Sub-Saharan Africa, has in recent decades managed to reach development milestones in its health sector that have ensured the lowest infant mortality rate in its history.

This factor, combined with the high fertility rate of the population means that Uganda is the number one country in the world with the youngest population of persons aged between 15-29 years. Also according to the World Bank, the economic implications of the phenomenon is that this ‘youth bulge’ creates a situation whereby the country’s dependency ratio declines. This means that there is an increase in the number of the working age population in comparison to the non-working age population. It is a key argument that economic development in a context such as this is directly influenced by the number of working persons who are fully employed in productive activities. This also means that the absence of this factor will translate into a lower level of success for the country with regards to development.

As a necessary precursor to gainful employment, the education system has a direct contribution to the economic empowerment of the youth whether through employment through established professions, or by innovation as job creators. This paper discourses on different aspects of the education system in Uganda, and will infer conclusions on how well the system is preparing these youth for employment.

6.1 Introduction

Before Uganda became a British colony and before the coming of the Catholic and Protestant missionaries, there was no formal education system existent. Instead, children were given comprehensive informal education that encompassed several aspects of life and work, behavior and relationships, and history and culture.

Uganda is made up of diverse cultures in all her different regions, and each of these has its own unique traditions and customs that shape their values and lifestyle. Before the coming of formal education, these sets of customs were conveyed to the growing child through a system that may colloquially be called a ‘fireside education’. Since the family unit in Uganda,
like in most African cultures, is extended to include older generations, the
grandparents and other elders were usually the chief custodians of this rich
cultural heritage and they imparted it to the next generation through folk
tales, songs, and other means.

When one does an analysis of Ugandan cultural folk tales and music, it
is impossible to miss the underlying moral values, lessons or other instruc-
tion cleverly integrated within the overall story. This speaks to the universal
human need for a system of progressive learning and it is a common theme
across most peoples whose cultural roots and affiliations are strong.

Catholic and Protestant missionaries arrived in Uganda in the late 18th
Century and by the end of that era, were conducting lessons in their back-
yards on basic literacy, the objective of which was to assist the converts to
Christianity in their private bible study in preparation for baptism. Follow-
ing this systematic plan, the first formal schools were set up at the begin-
nning of the 19th century, and since the Ugandan government, which was a
British Protectorate, did not yet have the means or understanding needed
to fully manage this new system, it was entirely missionary controlled and
initially the core focus of the curriculum was to teach Christianity. However,
at the request of a local Catholic chief who wanted English to be primarily
taught in the schools as a key subject, the curriculum was expanded to ac-
commodate more subjects and some values so as to improve the character
of the recipients. (Ojijo (2012) Mbabazi, Makaaru Arinaitwe, Tumushabe)

In terms of access, the first form of formal education in Uganda could be
considered elitist, with enrollment consisting only of children of chiefs and
those who gave support to the British colonialist once Uganda became a
British protectorate in 1894. Since the education system was newly estab-
lished, it was characterized according to its different purposes, and estab-
lishment of different types of institutions was in response to the immediate
needs of the community. For instance, after the first schools were estab-
lished to teach basic literacy and numeracy, primary schools were then set
up to give an elementary education, although these went up to only current
Primary Four level. For education higher than this level, gender segrega-
tion was enforced and the curriculum re-invented so that the boys were giv-
en more comprehensive knowledge in preparation for college, while girls
were not, on the premise that they were being prepared to become homemakers. In addition, maternity and midwifery schools were set up, as were teachers’ colleges. The colleges taught in English language and were aimed at producing clerks, traders, entrepreneurs and chiefs. (Mutebi, (1996))

Before Uganda got her independence from Britain, several commissions were set up to review the effectiveness of the system at different intervals. These were, in order: The Phelps-Stockes Commission (1924), The Earl de la Warr Commission (1935), The Thomas Education Committee (1940), The de Bunsen Commission (1954), and the Binns Study Group who were sent to East Africa in 1957. These commissions and committees were all set up for different education related purposes, they include education financing, teacher education, quality, girls’ participation in education, and relevance of the education system among others.

In 1962 when Uganda got her independence, came the first attempts the newly born nation made at reforming her education system. The new government, in addressing its development priorities as a young, independent nation, concluded that the curriculum and education system in place at the time did not meet the country’s needs. It was designed not for the objective of “producing skilled Africans for the African economy, but rather, skilled workers for the colonial industries” (Ojijo (2012) Page 6)

Therefore, the government of Prime Minister Milton Obote set up the Professor Edgar Castle’s Education Commission, whose recommendations guided education policy until the Uganda Government White Paper on Education was developed in 1992. (Ojijo, 2012)

In the interim, education reform was by no means a stagnant process, and there was a constant and consistent attempt to improve at least one or more areas of focus at any given time. For instance, in 1989, borne out of a cognizance for the individual needs of Ugandans and how problems inherent in the education system at the time transposed themselves into the social, economic and political dynamic of the nation, a comprehensive report produced as the Education Policy Review Commission Report (EPRC) and titled Education for National Integration and Development became the premise upon which education reform was founded for nearly three decades. According to the authors of the report, Uganda
“needs an education which is techno-scientific to promote not only national integrity and unity but also the acquisition of practical/vocational and managerial skills which will enhance the productive capacities of Ugandans for national development” (EPRC Report, 1989, 14).

In addition to this broad mission statement, the authors also identified seven national goals that, in the opinion of the authors, and as gleaned from the contents of several policy documents, would pave the way for Uganda’s development as an independent nation and state. These seven goals or ideals were documented as follows:

» forging national unity and harmony;
» evolving democratic institutions and practices in society;
» guaranteeing fundamental human rights;
» creating national wealth;
» creating upholding and maintenance of national independence and patriotic feeling;
» promoting moral and ethical values;
» promoting a feeling of humanitarianism and cooperation. (EPRC Report, 1989)

These two key documents that guided education policy development and reform in Uganda; the EPRC report and the Government White Paper on Education which were formulated in 1989 and 1992 respectively, also went further to outline Uganda’s education aims as follows:

1. To promote understanding and appreciation of the value of national unity, patriotism, and cultural heritage, with due consideration of international relations and beneficial inter-dependence;
2. To inculcate moral, ethical, and spiritual values in the individual and to develop self-discipline, integrity, tolerance, and human fellowship;
3. To inculcate a sense of service, duty, and leadership for participation in civic, social, and national affairs through group activities in educational institutions and the community;
4. To promote scientific, technical, and cultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to promote development;
5. To eradicate illiteracy and equip the individual with basic skills and knowledge to exploit the environment for self-development as well as national development, for better health, nutrition, and family life, and the capability for continued learning;

6. To contribute to the building of an integrated, self-sustaining and independent national economy.

(Source: Mbabazi, Arinaitwe, Tumushabe)

These aims translated into subsequent strategies, policies and plans that are until now the guiding principles of education service provision in the different sub-sectors of education. They are reflected in one way or another in, among other documents, the Uganda Vision 2040; the Uganda National Development Plan 2014/15; the Revised Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESIP) 2007-2015; and the Education Ministerial Policy Statement for the Ministry of Education and Sports (2012/13).

How well these goals are integrated into the curricula at different learning levels is another matter that shall be addressed in a subsequent section of this report. However, in terms of the way they are articulated, they are just the right amount of ideals necessary to propel Uganda through the waters of transition, be it political, social, or economic and towards a future of self-sustenance and development.

What is clear, also, is that there is a distinct tone within Uganda’s policies that seeks to address contemporary issues and support her citizens in meeting this world at its level. With regards to the old, traditional system of education, the only role it would have in this current system would be perhaps as a reference when attempting to inculcate moral values and instill discipline.

6.2 The Education System in Uganda and how it is organized

According to ClassBase.com, an education database website, Uganda’s education system is categorized into five broad types with different levels. Primary education is the first type of education, and it has seven levels, from Primary One to Primary Seven, culminating in exams that lead to the award of the Primary Leaving Certificate (PLE). There is also non-compulsory edu-
cation phase geared towards childhood development, and which generally lasts three years but is accessed by mainly children in urban areas.

Early secondary education that lasts from Senior One to Senior Four is the middle type of education. Successful completion of this level leads to the award of the Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE). At this point, learners may explore their options based on their needs or circumstances. For instance, with an objective of joining University immediately after completing secondary school, the learner may continue on to advanced level secondary for two additional years in S.5 and S.6, and sit for exams that shall award them with the Uganda Advanced Certificate in Education (UACE). Students who complete this learning level successfully may then choose tertiary education and proceed to University to do up to five years of education, depending on the type of degree or diploma program they enroll for.

In January 1997, as part of his presidential campaign commitments, President Museveni pledged that the Government would finance the primary education of four children from every family and in subsequent years, this commitment was broadened to allow all Ugandans to access primary education free of charge in government owned schools across the country (February 2006; Inter-Regional Inequality Facility: Policy Brief 10). Secondary education was not free until 2007, when Uganda became the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to introduce free secondary education. (www.theguardian.com/profile/richardmkavuma).

Both Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) have made some considerable impact in increasing enrolment and access to education at these levels, and this is an undeniable fact. Whether or not this translates into quality outputs is another matter entirely, and shall be analyzed as part of this report in due course.

After completion of Senior Four there are other alternative types of education a learner may access, and which in most cases, have a more flexible admission policy, contrary to most secondary schools with regard to A-level admission. One alternative is Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVET). The emphasis on BTVET as a viable education option is emphasized in the 1992 Government White Paper on education which recognizes the need to integrate academic learning and productivity
at all levels of Uganda’s general education. (The Government White Paper on Education 1992)

Today, the institutions that offer BTVET range from private and public vocational institutions, to business, technical and farm schools with a number of para-professional training institutions in specialized fields like nursing, agriculture, dentistry, para-health and tourism, among others. The scope of BTVET therefore, extends across wide professional areas, with training being carried out in foundation skills, technical fields, business related studies, technology and skill transfer in places of work, and training in the para-proessions. (Keating 2000))

Even though social perceptions regarding getting a vocational skills training vis a vis obtaining a university degree tell their own tale, it by no means is reflective of the Uganda government aims and objectives towards supporting this type of education, as reflected in several policy documents including the BTVET policy. The Government White Paper on Education though, provides a balanced view on why BTVET education is perhaps not as successful as formal higher learning, stating that

*the present technical and commercial education and training programmes under Government are oriented towards the satisfaction of limited industrial employment requirements. In particular it is mentioned that these services do not cater for the technological requirements of the rural areas, of persons going for self-employment, who need adequate skills to make proper use of and maintain tools, to undertake productive activities on their own with knowledge of business management methods for running small-scale enterprises. (Wirak, Heen, Moen, and Vusia January 2003)*

Looking at the 1995 Constitution and basing on the aspirations of Ugandans as expressed in that document, the Poverty Eradication and Alleviation Plan (PEAP) was developed following a number of long term studies carried out to identify the poverty situation in the country so as to source priorities that the Government would then address with the overall goal of long term prosperity. The PEAP places particular emphasis on poverty reduction with services like primary education, health, agriculture extension and construction of more feeder roads. Considering that for most Ugandans agriculture is the main source of income, the Government emphasized the
teaching of the skills necessary for farming in its PEAP, and this education now comes solely under the BTVET department of the Ministry of Education.

However, the PEAP is realistic in its recognition of other factors necessary for the desired outputs—like economic growth and structural transformation; improved productivity of individuals; improvement in quality of life of the poor—to be realized. It mentions that factors like availability of cheap electricity/energy are also crucial towards this eventual outcome.

### 6.3 Access and equity issues in education

One of the first attempts that the National Resistance Movement government did towards the revival of Uganda’s pre-civil war institutions was to set up a series of commissions to investigate the prevailing situation in the different areas of government. This is how the Education Policy Review Commission [EPRC] chaired by Professor Senteza Kajubi was set up in 1987. One major recommendation of this commission was that primary education be universalized no later than 2000, and they justified this argument thus:

*Only when every child is enrolled at the right age and does not leave school without completing the full cycle of primary education it would be possible to ensure that all citizens have the basic education needed for living a full life. Also it will help in achieving a transformation of society leading to greater unity among the people, higher moral standards and an accelerated growth of economy.*

A few years after the EPRC report made this recommendation, the Government White Paper on Education was published, and it echoed the tone of the EPRC report, only differing in the time-frame for the suggested reform to take place as 2003, rather than 2000. Regardless, the government began effecting this change soon after the White Paper was published, with teachers being trained and schools receiving scholastic materials in 1993 within the auspices of a project named the Primary Education and Teacher Development Project.

As explained in the introduction section of this report, the history of education in Uganda in both its formal and informal forms demonstrated a clear preference for the education of boys over that of girls. Since Uganda,
like most African countries, is a patriarchal society, it is not surprising that in many parts of the country, and especially in rural areas, this norm may still prevail, if only to an extent. With the advent of UPE and USE, however, it seems that trends have changed and when one does a comparison of the figures from pre-UPE/USE and post-UPE/USE, it is apparent that at least in terms of enrolment, there are some changes.

_In 2001, female school enrolment as a percentage of total enrolment was 49 percent and 44 percent at primary and secondary school levels respectively (Kikampikaho and Kwesiga, 2002)._  

_Female students form 35 percent of those enrolled in tertiary institutions. The adult literacy rate for Uganda females is at 57% while that of males is 78%. (Syngellakis and Arudo:2006)_

According to the above-mentioned report, the researchers explained the reason for these disparities as such:

_As Tripp and Kwesiga (2002) argue, the obstacles to gender parity are embedded in the cultural norms and practices valued by the patriarchal arrangements of our society through which the policy and implementers have been modeled. The government of Uganda recognizes the problem of gender disparities in education and has thus taken positive steps to bridge the gender gap._

These figures are indeed alarming, especially considering that in the overall population, girls outnumber boys. However, with Uganda’s participation and commitment to international level agreements like the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals, and subsequent policies like UPE and USE and the vigorous campaigns that were conducted nationwide to increase the enrolment and retention of girls in school, the figures now tell a totally different story. Some of the these campaigns include the peer to peer campaign that was run by the Jane Goodall Institute Uganda, which sought to raise 85,000USD in order to support 85 girls through 5 years of their secondary schooling. Another USAID funded campaign started in 2006 concluded in November 2011 and named UNITY (Uganda Initiative for TDMS and PIASCY), sought to increase school participation for girls through enhanced collaboration between communities and schools.
According to a comparative UNICEF statistics database published in 2013, the percentage literacy rate among youth between the ages of 15-24 years is 89.6 for boys and 85.5 for girls. And in terms of gross enrolment ratio in primary school within the same time frame, boys were at 92.5% whereas girls were at 95.2%. In terms of secondary level education, the only figures available were for net attendance ratios, and these figures were 16.2% for boys, and 18.7% for girls. (http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/uganda_statistics.html#117)

This gives huge credit to UPE and USE as initiatives that have supported the wider campaign to improve biases against girls’ education in Uganda, but it does not mean by any means that this is the entire story. One major challenge with UPE and USE is that in most schools, parents are still expected to finance the costs of uniforms and scholastic materials for their children and this still proves a challenge for parents in rural communities who are struggling with poverty. This has become the major setback in the implementation of UPE/USE, and is still a key factor in the low enrolment rates and high dropout rates in rural parts of the country. Inter Press Service (IPS) journalist Andrew Green who did an investigative article on one particular rural area in Kamuli district, and conducted a minor case study on one female student in September 2012 reported that:

"Though this East African nation’s government-run schools are theoretically free, in reality parents who cannot afford to pay for uniforms, books and supplies cannot send their child to school. Ugandans who live in rural areas....and who make their living as subsistence farmers, run into consistent difficulties paying for their children's schooling. (And) the outcome is often an interrupted – or cancelled – education. As dropouts, girls say they are stigmatized because people assume they left school because of a sexual relationship. In reality, though, the choice to stay in school is usually not even one they are allowed to make, because parents often see little incentive in ensuring that their daughters finish school. “They look at the girl as a liability, because what the family does is to prepare a girl for a marriage,” said Johnson Ntende, the director of Kamuli Progressive College, a secondary school near the centre of town. “The role of a wife in a home is to cook for children and look after the man. That role does not require academic achievements. (Andrew Green; 2012)"
This is the other side of the UPE/USE success story, and even though in most cases parents want to send their children to school regardless of their gender, they simply cannot afford to do so. This results in girls often being the sacrificial lamb in this bargain and then ironically, because ‘free education’ is a blanket perception, dealing with community stigma that suggests they dropped out for unsavory reasons.

Challenges in access to education are still major for children with disabilities

When one is talking about access and equity issues, it is impossible to really consider these dimensions to education service provision without including education for children with disabilities. At the policy level, it is a constant given that provisions for education of children with disabilities is emphasized in government education policies and as a result of the constant emphasis and awareness, community attitudes in general have become much more accommodating now than they were in the past, and there is constant upward progression in that regard. This is the good news,
and unfortunately, the good news is mainly restricted to urban areas. The bad news is that in most rural areas, negative attitudes and discrimination even at the family level still prevail.

In a case study of a sub-county in Sembabule district which looked at the access challenges children with disabilities face, the author established in her research that even though inclusive education was theoretically practiced in all the schools she visited, negative attitudes still prevailed among teachers and other learners. 95% of the key respondents of the research who included district officials, persons with disabilities and NGO workers, and 90% of parents agreed to this assumption and in addition, because of large class sizes in the rural areas where the pupil teacher ratio goes to 100:1 in many cases, it does not provide an environment where children with disabilities can learn in terms of both facilities and teacher attention. And considering that all respondents in the research study agreed that there was some level of poverty being experienced in children with disability households, it then follows that as in the case with girls, in the economic based decision of which child to send to school and which not to, children with disability shall nearly always draw the short straw. (Najjingo 2009))

It also does not help that within the policy environment, the needs of children with disabilities are not really implemented with regards to education facilities, materials, and teaching methodology. This is perhaps because there is little ownership of these policies by the key stakeholders who are neither involved in their formulation nor given a clear understanding of what is entailed in them once they are developed.

Another research done in 2012 echoes these same sentiments, stating that Uganda-both at the national and the international level-has expressed commitments to uphold and implement legislation that emphasizes the rights of all children regardless of their needs and statuses. However, the research found that most schools screen children during their admission procedure and on the basis of what is physically evident, or what they state on the admission form with regards to disability, the school makes a decision to admit the learner and even when or if they do admit a child with a disability, that decision is subject to revocation if the school deems the disability beyond the scope of their coping mechanism. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Education admission policy cautions against segregation, the reality is that the Ministry cannot enforce this policy considering that
government owned schools do not have provisions in their construction set up for children with disabilities, nor do they deploy teachers trained to specifically deal with special needs groups in the schools.

This was expressed by Negris Onen, the Assistant Commissioner for Inclusive and Non-Formal Education in the Ministry of Education and Sports who stated in an interview with researcher Farouk Nyende that: “the position of the Ministry was that no one should be discriminated against as it contravenes the laws of Uganda which are against discrimination regardless of any grounds.”

However, aware of the gaps in the system, he expressed understanding towards the difficult positions in which the schools find themselves asking rhetorically: “what would be the rationale of admitting a severely visually impaired child when on the teaching staff there isn’t even a single teacher with skills to use Braille?” (Nyende 2012)

6.4 A Learning Perspective

*Kids prosper best with a curriculum that celebrates their various talents, not just a small range of them. The second principal that drives human life flourishing is curiosity. If you can light the spark of curiosity in a child they will learn without any further assistance from you. Children are natural learners. It is a real achievement to put that ability out or to stifle it.* (2013 TEDTalks; Sir Ken Robinson)

For purposes of this research, it is important to do a more critical analysis of the Primary curriculum because it shall provide a background against which conclusions can be reached on subsequent levels of learning. The Uganda curriculum comes under the auspices of the National Curriculum Development Council (NCDC) that develops the curriculum and then in conjunction with Ministry of Education and Sports, ensure its effective implementation in schools.

Nearly all literature discoursing on the early primary curriculum is fraught with challenges, and after analyzing the factors given to explain these circumstances, it is easy to see why. One of the outcomes of the Government White Paper of 1992 was the development of a new curriculum in the primary schools, and this was subsequently put into practice in two
parts; once in 2000 and again in 2002. The main focus of this reform was to include vocational subjects in the curriculum, and also implement a new language policy, recommending the use of local languages in the lower primary grades (1-3). (Vermeulen 2013) Some of the key challenges encountered during the implementation process of this initial reform resulted from inadequate planning, limited availability of text materials, little in-service training of teachers and unresolved issues related to the language of instruction resulting in a review of the primary curriculum in 2004 and the eventual development and implementation of the Thematic Curriculum in 2007. (2008, Wood)

During the curriculum review process in 2004, it was noted by researchers Ward, Penny and Read (2006) that outside of NCDC, there was little ownership of the curriculum by MoES and other key stakeholders and although concerns were expressed over the number of subjects and the cost of the requisite learning materials, not much detailed emphasis was put into the content of the curriculum itself, or on the lack of clear attainment targets and learning outcomes expressed for crucial basic skills like literacy and languages like English, Kiswahili and local languages. And as a result of little or no cost implications of the new curriculum at the political level, there was little teacher support and limited availability of learning materials and teachers’ guides, among others.

Another challenge was that there was no calculation of the implementation costs of the practical and vocational aspects of the newly implemented thematic curriculum, leading to these subjects being often ignored at the school level, or at best, taught in superficial, book-based theory. This already worrying situation was compounded further by the fact that there were details in continuous assessment of these practical subjects at the government level, thus de-motivating schools further and leading to an almost total neglect of these subjects in the process of teachers’ planning.

Finally, because the curriculum launch happened with no real overall plan or budget or department specifically assigned for this task, the result was a delay in the delivery of the curriculum and supporting materials to the schools, with some textbooks and teachers’ guides arriving up to three years late. And with no sufficient orientation and training at the school level, or a budget to revise the Primary Teachers Colleges syllabi to support the
new curriculum, the entire process had its death knell sounded long before it was given a real chance. (2006; Ward, Penny and Read Penny et al.)

In recognition of this, several studies that investigated the quality of education and the success of the curriculum implementation raised concerns about the curriculum, when compared with the reality in the classrooms (Ward, Penny and Read 2006; Penny et al. 2008). Following a report by a special curriculum task force, it was concluded that since the overall performance of learners at primary level had not improved significantly over the time period under consideration, and that in rural areas and outside of the capital Kampala, literacy levels and language were unacceptably low, leading to poor performance across all subjects, there was need for change. (Read and Enyutu 2005)

The report also suggested several reasons for this lack of progress;

» An overloaded curriculum,

» Emphasis on recall at the expense of higher order skills,

» Inadequate teaching skills in numeracy and literacy in the lower grades leading to poor performance and in the long term,

» High drop-out rates as a result of lack of interest on the part of both parents and students.

Therefore, the introduction of a new curriculum in 2007 specifically aimed at increasing the quality of education gave educators- especially at the school level- some hope in the system. However, despite the fact that the thematic curriculum was more competence rather than knowledge based like the previous curriculum, it just could not really compete and overcome the situation in the classrooms, more especially in rural areas. (2013 Vermeulen, R: The quality of public primary education in rural Uganda)

The situation in urban schools is different in terms of effort put into teaching but from a perspective of proper curriculum implementation, it is not really that dissimilar in its overall detrimental effect on learning. Since most urban schools are private institutions set up for commercial purpose, and since it is the trait of businesses to compete for their market, it was and still is very common to see all form of skills based knowledge abandoned in the pursuit of assured results. Results, in terms of academic achievement in this regard refer to the ability of learners to recall the facts that are
contained in the curriculum supporting materials. School time-tables are crammed with hours and hours of study, and learners are, as one researcher put it, “drilled and grilled” with large amounts of information.

Not surprisingly, it is rare to find many primary schools that actually put into practice the co-curricular elements of the school curriculum and encourage sports or the creative arts. Even when it is reflected in the time-table, it is not uncommon for children to wear their sports uniform diligently during ‘P.E days’, and return home with their sportswear spotless because they did not really get any time out on the playing field.

*There are three principles on which human life flourishes and they are contradicted by the culture of education under which most teachers have to labor and most children have to endure. The first is this: that human beings are naturally different and diverse. Education under (US policy) No Child Left Behind is based on not diversity, but conformity. What schools are encouraged to do is find out what children can do across a very narrow spectrum of achievement. Maths and Science are important, but they are not sufficient. A real education has to give equal weight to the arts, humanities and physical education.*

(2013 TEDTalks; Sir Ken Robinson)

The Ugandan education system is not that different from the one creative education expert Sir Ken Robinson refers to in the above quote, and the overall outcome of such a system is that learning is not really achieved, and neither are the higher order critical thinking, reasoning, and analysis skills. And despite the best intentions of the thematic curriculum and the policies that led to its formulation, all of which emphasize the importance and need for a more productive society, the real crisis remains that the elementary education system is not providing the required environment for this to be cultivated and grown.

### 6.5 A Quality Assurance Perspective

Altinyelken (2010) identified several underlying causes of low quality primary education in Uganda schools, for example, lack of qualified teachers especially in rural areas, inadequate lesson planning, overcrowded classrooms, lack of basic materials and high levels of teacher and head-teacher
absenteeism. (2013 Vermeulen, R: The quality of public primary education in rural Uganda)

These are all issues that speak to quality assurance, a responsibility which comes under the Ministry’s Directorate of Education Standards. This department is tasked with school inspections and support, and in consultation with key stakeholders, develop agreed sets of indicators and periodically assess school improvement against those indicators. When one looks through the Guide to External Evaluation booklet prepared by the Directorate for purposes of evaluation, like most other Ministry level documents, it presents uniform standards and reflects norms as practiced by most countries that are somewhat contextually similar to Uganda in their development status. However, the problem in this regard of education service provision and in all others is perhaps best expressed by the research team that did a review on the Political Economy of the Education Sector Policy Reform in Uganda. They state succinctly, in the abstract section of their report that:

*The need for an analysis of why policy implementation in Uganda’s Education System has arguably failed is self evident. Much was promised since colonialism which unleashed a plethora of initiatives and much has undoubtedly been achieved. But many challenges still remain, not least, the growing realization that policy, however well founded, must be translated into outcomes. Rhetoric is no substitute for addressing realities that must accompany meaningful education policy reform in Uganda.*

And therein, in that statement, lies the answer to real, meaningful quality education, when words translate into action; when all stakeholders are equally responsible; when the process is participatory and consultative and engages all, including children, and when policy formulation is not viewed as the end, but as the means towards improvement.

### 6.6 A Training Perspective

There is no system in the world or any school in the country that’s better than its teachers. Teachers are the lifeblood of the success of schools but teaching is a creative profession. Teaching, properly conceived, is not a de-
livery system; you're not there just to pass on received information. Great teachers do that, but what great teachers also do is mentor, stimulate, provoke, engage... (2013 TedTalks.com Sir Ken Robinson)

In order to understand the challenges children are facing in their learning and which lead to subsequent socio-economic issues as a result of an education system that is constantly churning out professionals without the skills necessary to become job creators, it is important to look at the teachers of these children. If, like Sir Ken Robinson says in the above quote, there is no creativity in teaching, then there is no creativity in learning and therefore crucial stages of mental development are overlooked. Considering that teachers went through the same system themselves, and considering that as a profession, it is usually a higher education option of last resort, this attitude is carried over into the classrooms with the end result of very little learning taking place.

From an assessment of the classroom achievement of learners who have completed six years of primary education conducted by the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) and in which Uganda last participated in 2007, it was revealed that 71% and 94% of learners who were assessed did not meet the expected learning benchmarks in literacy and numeracy respectively. And in the annual National Assessment of Progress in Education (NAPE) conducted by Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), the results as recent as 2011 were equally alarming, showing more than half of the learners in P.6 as not being proficient in literacy and numeracy, and in Senior 2, 62% were performing below expected in Mathematics, and in practical subjects like biology, more than 80% were performing below expected. (August 2013 Teachers Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Diagnosis for a shared Vision on Issues and the Designing of a feasible, indigenous and effective Teachers’ Policy, p. 26)

The report reference above also cites several contributing factors to low quality primary education, which in turn affects any subsequent education levels. Among these factors are: inadequate deployment of teachers (despite the fact that there would be enough numbers of teachers to ensure a good pupil: teacher ratio, deployment is not done in a balanced way); challenge in attracting good teachers, especially for science subjects; high levels of teacher absenteeism and attrition; inadequate remuneration and very little professional development opportunities offered to teachers. (August
2013 Teachers Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Diagnosis for a shared Vision on Issues and the Designing of a feasible, indigenous and effective Teachers’ Policy

From a human resource perspective, these factors would raise an alarming red flag because of their potential to de-motivate the work-force. However, from an education service provision perspective, they should shake the political administration to the core because of the implications it has on the future of this generation and consequently, the future of the country. The Uganda Vision 2040 in a section on national aspirations re-emphasizes the same messages expressed as national aims and objectives of education in the EPRC report and the Government White Paper on Education. In its Chapter 5 titled Social Transformation, the strategy states that:

263. The education curriculum, examination and instruction methods will be revised to suit the proposed changes in the education system as well as being responsive to the market demands. Talent identification will be an on-going exercise throughout the education system so that the system is robust enough to capture and nurture excellence and innovation at point. (p. 84 Uganda Vision 2014)

This is a lofty ambition, and again, the political administration, on paper, has shown itself as the chief diagnostic expert on what ails that part of the system, and has prescribed the exact necessary remedy for the situation. Classroom instruction is meant to be driven by learner needs and abilities and not the development of only one apparent skill across all learners at the expense of other inherent skills manifest in individuals. Its assessment is meant to be diagnostic and not for purposes of learner segregation and classification; and education is meant to facilitate learning for the overall purpose of development, and not to lead to the attainment of a qualification that is as valuable as the paper it is printed on. To paraphrase American author Mark Twain, it is important to never let the education system interfere with one’s schooling.

The Vision 2040 document also emphasizes the need to increase efforts to overcome institutional, social and cultural barriers in order to increase girls’ participation in education until completion. For now, though, recognition of how far back the system is with regards to answering to these long-term ambitions is firmly established, and this is a step in the right direction,
but horribly insufficient. As said in an earlier section of this report, the paperwork is in place, and it is not to be ignored that there are some very real inroads made in regards to meeting international level targets like EFA and MDGs. UPE and USE have increased access, and now, more than ever, access to education is assured to the highest degree that it can be considering all factors inhibiting that reality. Uganda is on the right track, and it is necessary for the youth, who are the custodians of this country’s future, to, through intense advocacy and involvement in policy development and implementation, steer this country into the socio-economic giant it was once respected as in Africa.

“In the end, education is about learning. If there is no learning going on, there is no education going on. Now, people can spend an awful lot of time discussing education without ever discussing learning (and yet) the whole point of education is to get people to learn. (And) the role of a teacher is to facilitate learning. That’s it.” (2013 TedTalks.com Sir Ken Robinson)
References


Teachers Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (August 2013): A diagnosis for a shared vision on issues and the designing of a feasible, indigenous and effective teachers’ policy.


Youth and Public Policy in Uganda
Youth Crime and Violence: Victims or Perpetrators?

Penninah Mbabazi Atuhaire
Executive Summary

It is widely considered that a youthful population is the backbone for economic prosperity. Africa is the world’s youngest continent with approximately 70% of the region’s population under the age of 30. Uganda tops the world’s youngest country with over 78% of the population under 30 years. With these statistics, UNECE recognizes that the youth can be drivers of economic growth upon which the future of any society depends. So it would be expected that Africa, Uganda in particular would be awash with returns from economic gains. However, the reality is far different. Most especially with developing countries like Uganda, challenges still persist for the youth, which have primarily hindered social economic progress. Employment opportunities are few, access to higher education is limited, and the health care system is still poor. A young population coupled with these challenges is an indicator for social unrest characterized by economic uncertainties, crime, violence and a prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), among others.

Difficult situations such as poverty, single or no parenthood especially for the youth ends to idleness; drug and alcohol abuse and in more extreme cases provide a fertile recruiting ground for radical ideas (terrorism). This essay analyses the present situation of the youth as ‘victims’ and/or ‘perpetrators’ and how circumstances and systems around them affect their decision-making process with respect to crime and violence. This essay concludes with recommendations for harnessing youth energies, their creativity and resourcefulness. It suggests putting in place effective institutions for preventing youth crime as a deterrent. It also explores ways such as investment in public necessitates and the agriculture sector where the youth would be gainfully employed and turn them into a vehicle of social and economic development.

Acronyms

ATM  Automated Teller Machine
GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies
ILO  International Labor Organisation
NAADS National Agricultural Advisory Services
NUSAIF Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
NYP National Youth Policy
STD  Sexually Transmitted Disease
UDHS Uganda Demographic Health Survey
UN  United Nations
UNICEF United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNIANYD United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development
UNOC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UPF Uganda Police Force
UYDEL Uganda Youth Development Link
WBG World Bank Group
WHO World Health Organisation

7.1 Introduction

Over 40 per cent of today’s global population is under the age of 25 and this number is projected to grow further in the next 2 decades (UNIANYD, 2013). Interest in population trends and in particular “Youth Bulges” as they relate to conflict and violence has grown as has the way in which the population ‘problem’ been defined. ‘Youth Bulge’ is a common phenomenon in many developing countries and it is often due to a stage of development where a country achieves success in reducing infant mortality rates but yet maintain high fertility rates. The end result is a large share of young adults

in comparison to the rest of the other age groups. Frequent redefining of the population problem, significant data constraints, and study design issues have all contributed to a poor understanding of the relationship between population and violence. In addition, there is a continued lack of awareness of the reasons that countries with large youth bulge may be more prone to violence and in what specific contexts risk might be heightened.

The youth are the country’s most valuable asset and an integral component of the development process. Investing in them is not only a social obligation but it is also rewarding in the economic sense⁴. Uganda has a youthful population of whom about 62% are unemployed and as such unable to afford basic needs like food, shelter, clothing and medical care (Action Aid, 2013: 27). As the biblical saying, ‘An idle mind is a devil’s workshop’, the high crime rate in the country is partly attributed to unemployed youth who engage in crime as a last resort for survival.⁵

Uganda has the world’s youngest population with over 78 percent of this population below the age of 30 (UNFPA, 2013: 25-26). According to the World Bank Group (2007:27-28), young people are key to reducing extreme poverty and achieving shared economic prosperity. With such a large pool of youth to choose from, one would suspect that this would lead to increased economic output leading to wealth creation to cope with future life demands. On the contrary, the country has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNFPA, 2013: 11).

Many of the youth with Uganda being no exception, face considerable barriers to entering productive livelihoods (WBG, 2007:46) such as unemployment⁶, education⁷, poverty⁸, HIV prevalence⁹, consequences of today’s

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conflicts which leads to internally displaced and stateless people\textsuperscript{10}. Being brought up in this kind of environment where opportunities are limited, it is not uncommon to find young adults resorting to alternative ways of approaching problems. Such as substance abuse\textsuperscript{11}, gangs and violence (Children International, 2013), to mention but a few.

**Background**

There have always been divergent opinions on the youth age bracket. The National Youth Policy (2001) defines youth as all young persons; female and male aged 12 to 30 years. The UN defines the youth as persons between 15 – 24 years while the Common Wealth Youth Programme defines the age bracket from 15 to 29 years (NYP, 2001:9). The legislative definition of the youth given by the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda indicates the age bracket of 18 – 30 years and for the purposes of this essay, this will be the legal definition (NYP, 2001:9).

Today’s generation of young people is the largest in history\textsuperscript{12}. With over 3 billion people, there are 1.7 billion young people between the ages 10 to 24 (Children International, 2013). Almost 90% of all young people live in developing countries. Young people are a valuable asset to their countries and investing in them brings tremendous social and economic benefits. They also face challenges – including violence and crime, unemployment and HIV/AIDS – that undermine their rights and create significant social and economic costs to society. The Head of the European Union Kristian Schmidt warned that high youth unemployment if not addressed effectively is a fertile ground for instability\textsuperscript{13}. It is crucial that we engage the decision-makers of tomorrow in the development decisions of today.


\textsuperscript{11} A participatory handbook for Youth Drug Prevention (2002).


The longman web dictionary defines a ‘Perpetrator’ as someone who does something morally wrong or illegal\(^\text{14}\). While a ‘Victim’ is someone who has been attacked, robbed or murdered\(^\text{15}\). Between the ages 18 – 30 (‘Youth’), NYP (2001:9) defines this as period of great emotional, physical and psychological changes that require societal support for a safe passage from adolescent to full adulthood. The World Bank (2007:27) supports this definition by saying it’s a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood when young people, through a process of intense physiological, psychological, social and economic change, gradually come to be recognized and to recognize themselves as adults. These definitions do not look at youth as a homogenous group with clear-cut age bracket but rather as a process of change or a period of time where an individual’s potential, vigor, adventurism, experimentation with increased risks and vulnerabilities show themselves in a socially meaningful pattern.\(^\text{16}\)

So if these societal instruments are lacking, then the youth are bound to be victims of a system that is not of their making. WHO (2011) argue that preventing youth violence requires a comprehensive approach that also addresses social determinants of violence, such as income inequality, rapid demographic and social change and low levels of social protection. In other words the youth who can be the perpetrators of crimes are very much victims.

7.2 Uganda’s Youth, Crime and Violence

According to the UHRC Report (2012), it is estimated that the Uganda prison population has swollen to just under 35,000. 63% of these in-mates are youth (NYP, 2001:8). This would be approximately 22,050. Uganda’s population is estimated at 34.5 million (UNFPA, 2013:70), 6.5 million of these are in the age group 18 – 30. Mathematically speaking, this locks out approximately 0.3% of the productive age group that could contribute positively


\(^{16}\) National Youth Policy (2001).
to national development. Male youth feature more prominently in crime figures than female counterparts. The underlying factors in all these crimes are:

» Internal conflicts
» Unemployment
» Lack of guidance and counseling
» Redundancy
» Poverty

Crime is costly in many different ways. This manifests in the forms of either, financial loss from acquisitive crime and criminal damage, the administrative costs of the criminal justice system, the opportunity costs to the economy in terms of lost productivity, or perhaps, the impact on the lives on victims offenders and the quality of community life. Due to erosion in our culture and social support system, the country now witnesses a lot of cases of delinquencies, street youth, sex workers, drug addicts, orphans and other disadvantaged youth are left to cater for themselves and sometimes their younger ones\(^7\). This chapter focuses on this vulnerable category of people (18 – 30 years) who are exposed to a culture of violence as a way of surviving through the challenging environment of life’s demands.

Although Uganda is making strides economically, it faces significant challenges in meeting its young people’s needs today and their challenges tomorrow. The youth are demanding more and better job opportunities, a good education, peaceful and equitable societies (UNIANYD, 2013:3). Uganda still a donor dependent country and grappling with the challenges of unemployment, corruption, poor infrastructure and high inflationary rates cannot provide adequate and appropriate social services, rendering the marginalized groups like the youth vulnerable to lives of crime (UNFPA, 2013).

This essay argues that the circumstances our youth find themselves in, very much dictates the direction and lifestyle they later adopt in life. For example if the youth do not have the employment opportunities to occupy them, or the startup capital to be future entrepreneurs, or the education to

\(^{17}\) The National Youth Policy (2001).
lead more fulfilling lives, it’s very likely that they will not make meaningful contributions to society. The absence of these support structure means that unscrupulous people benefit from this idle labor by drawing the youth into crime and engaging in violent actions. The next subsections not only provide a crime summary report but also categorize youth crimes when the support networks or institutions to model our youth into responsible citizens are lacking.

7.2.1 Crime Summary

Statistics and data collection on youth crime in Uganda is still low. The Annual Crime and Traffic Road Safety Reports from Uganda police (2011, 2013) are not detailed enough to breakdown existing data into age groups. With respect to age group the data is limited to Adults and Juvenile. Where an Adult is described as a person aged 18 years and above (Constitution of Uganda) and a Juvenile is a person below 18 years of age (Children statue 1997).

The figures provided can only be indicative of what percentages could be inferred for Youth Crime. According to the Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Report (2013), the number of reports and complaints that were made to the police were 251,409 out of which 99,959 cases were criminal in nature. The number of homicide cases reported and investigated was 2,326. In the same period a total of 6,522 Child related cases were children/juveniles. An increase of approximately 39% compared to the 3,984 in 2012. Juveniles as victims of crime were 19,301. See the table 1 below.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Crimes</th>
<th>No. of Juveniles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Child Neglect</td>
<td>11,519</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the same period a total of 2,240 Juveniles were involved in crime compared to 1,851 in 2012. See Table 2 for a break down.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Crimes</th>
<th>No. of Juveniles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Defilement</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thefts</td>
<td>424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Assaults</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Breakings</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Robberies</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.2.2 Understanding Youth and Crime Categories

In urban areas more especially Kampala, joblessness and the desire for material possessions and high standards of living means that crime is becoming a priority concern (Action Aid 2012:50). These young people are often
idle and frustrated which drives some of them into drug abuse, petty thefts, crimes, prostitution, sports betting to mention but a few. From the statistics we have shown in Tables 1 and 2 young people are themselves both victims and perpetrators of crime and this is due to a range of various underlying factors that drive them into committing crimes. It is then crucial that youth crime prevention programs focus on finding innovative ways of addressing this duality.

This segment looks at those factors that give rise to youth criminality, including the socio-economic and political conditions that increase the potential for a young person to choose crime. These conditions may be referred to as predictors of youth crime, or risk factors for youth criminality.

According to the Annual Crime and Traffic Road Safety Report (2013:31-37) victims of crime was estimated at 273 for every 100,000 people which was a decrease by 11.7% during the year 2012. The majority of the crimes by number of reported cases were common assaults (14,161), followed by defilement (9,598), obtaining by false pretences (8,113), threatening violence (7,604), theft of mobile phone (4,409), thefts of cash (4,388), criminal trespass (4,289), burglaries (3,846), child neglect (3,541) and domestic violence (3,426). In the same period violent/homicide crimes such as murder by shooting, aggravated domestic violence, mob actions among others were 2,326 compared to 1,910 in the year 2012. There were 8 cases of terrorism investigated in 2013.

Those who commit crimes at a much early age are more likely to become habitual offenders with long term criminal motives and careers. In a study conducted by Hawkins et al (2000), a juvenile offense at ages 6-11 is the strongest predictor of subsequent violent or serious delinquency and substance abuse. For the 12-14 age group, a juvenile offense is the second most powerful predictor of future violence. In the same study more than 17% of youth committed a violent act by age 18 and 80% of them were expected to do so based on significant predictors seen at age 10. The selected summary of statistics from the study shown below shows why the figures provided are a good indicator of how juveniles will turn out by age 18.

1. Low commitment to schooling, low educational aspiration at ages 14 and 16 predicted a significant increase for involvement in violence at age 18;
2. Gang membership at age 14 more than tripled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18;
3. Behavioral problems at school when subjects were age 10 significantly predicted involvement in violence at age 18.

Research also shows that young people who perpetrate offending and violent behavior will often have been the victims of abuse or neglect (Fitch 2009:4). In the same breath for victims and perpetrators alike, crimes such as bullying, drug use, lying, hostility, unprotected sex, gang groups etc. should be used as important indicators for indentifying at-risk youth who may be targeted for early crime prevention programmers.

**Poverty and unemployment initiated crimes**

Poverty and crime have a very intimate relationship that has been described by experts from all fields such as sociologists and economists. The UN and the World Bank have both singled out poverty as one of the major obstacles to any country’s development. This means that any government trying to deal with poverty often will also have to face the issue of crime as they try to develop the country’s economy and society.\(^{20}\) Other studies have labored to describe poverty as ‘the inability of individuals, households or entire communities to command sufficient resources to satisfy a socially acceptable minimum standard of living.’\(^{21}\) The understanding of this definition is rooted in the failure of people to afford the most basic needs and necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education, employment and clean water.

The lack of these resources dominate the lives of the many young people in Uganda and this has had far reaching implications by limiting their ability to be in charge of their own aspirations in life and development thus


It is said that being raised in poverty contributes to a greater likelihood of involvement in crime and violence.

posing a danger to the country’s development. Overall, 12 percent of all youth in the country are chronically poor. It is also noted that young people aged 12-17 years are more likely to be chronically poor than those in the 18-30 years age category. This is expected because the potential to engage in gainful activities is higher among the latter than in the former age group. Similarly, this category is predominantly dependent on others for their livelihoods and as a result, parents or guardians dictate their welfare status. It is said that being raised in poverty contributes to a greater likelihood of involvement in crime and violence.

In 2010-2011, UYDEL carried out a study that assessed risk taking behaviors among young people in Nateete, Lubaga Division. The objective of the study was to understand what exactly drives young people into crime or risky behaviors. A total population of 167 slum youth consisting of 24 young boys and 143 young girls was interviewed. It was found out that children who grew up in families with less socio-economic status were likely to become victims of poor parenting upbringing styles, they lack education and poverty is always present among such families which exposes them to becoming perpetrators of crimes. One young person had this to say:

“After the death of my parents, my young father (not biological) took me up and was the one supporting my education. He was not married

23. It is not surprising that many illiterate parents think that their children can also earn a living without going to school.
by this time. When he married, his wife could not allow me to stay with them as she said they needed some privacy but the actual reason was, she did not want her husband to pay for my school fees. I was taken to stay with my auntie. My auntie didn’t have the potential to accommodate me and so, she decided to take me back to the village in Masaka. While at Masaka, I got a friend who convinced me to come with her to Kampala such that we could get something to do. When we came, we arrived in Nateete and she straight away introduced me to the commercial sex business. I also joined the business and the money we got from this business; we decided to rent a room in Nateete. Each of us contributed to the rent which was 50,000 shillings per month. By this time, I was still young. I was only 14 but I used to go with men I should not have gone with who were too mature for me.”

On the other hand, the 18-30 age groups represent the bulk of those searching for employment opportunities as well as new entrants to the job market. The 2012 statistics from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development revealed that around 400,000 youth are annually released into the job market to compete for about 9,000 available jobs. This is a challenge to the much older youth. It is said that societies with rapidly growing young population end up with rampant unemployment and large pools of disaffected youths who are prone to recruitment in violence (Action aid, 2012:16). The same report goes on to state that the young people are poor because they depend on their parents or guardians who are themselves unemployed or intermittently employed (Action aid, 2012:37). This essentially means that the youth are dependent on poor households (they estimated 8.5 million Ugandans in absolute poverty) for their livelihoods and well being; creating a situation of intergenerational and persistent poverty (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2009).

Because of such circumstances that surround young people when growing up, some young people tend to choose youth gangs as second or substitutes to families in order to satisfy their economic and social needs as a result of poverty and unemployment. Some young people enter the criminal

world at a very young age and end up becoming victims and perpetrators of crime.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{Politically instigated crimes}

Studies have suggested that “Youth Bulges” are associated with an increased risk of political violence (Henrik, 2011:1). Henrik goes on to conclude that to avoid instability and violence in particular, the focus should be on improving economic opportunities for young people, particularly by providing employment or educational opportunities for youth in periods of economic decline.

Now let’s study the explanations that led to the Arab Spring uprising of 2011 that saw a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests that led to riots, civil wars with rulers forced from power in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. According to the GIGA report (2012) which compiles data from various sources, it attributes the uprising to factors such as demographic development of the Arab World where the population tripled from 128 million to 359 million inhabitants from 1970 to 2010 (Hegasy 2011:41), an estimated 41% of people living under the poverty line (UNDP 2009), high unemployment rates for the population between the ages 15 and 24 (ILO 2004), the lack of prospects, rising costs of living and anger over corrupt and repressive rulers compelling this generation to rise up against authoritarian regimes (GIGA, 2012:5-6) and lastly “Youth bulges” have become a popular explanation for current political instability in the Arab world for recruitment to international terrorist networks (Henrik, 2011:2).

Uganda is no stranger to these situations. The bloodthirsty dictatorship of Idi Amin from 1971 that was overthrown by Tanzanian Troops in 1979 was followed by Apolo Milton Obote in 1980\textsuperscript{27}. This didn’t bring peace and stability but rather a failed regime that couldn’t control the military and

\textsuperscript{26} Atwongire Syson. (2011). Causes of increasing rate of urban unemployment among the youth; the case study of Lubaga Division in Kampala District in Central Uganda. Between the ages of 14-35 years.

characterized by murder and the use of state structures the 1980 elections. This gave bantu-speaking rebels a mandate to resort to violence. The bantu-speaking rebels took power in 1986 and had effervescent leaders, many in their twenties and thirties brimming with ideas (Badru D. Mulumba, 2011:2-3). You notice a consistency here that the Youth are once again being used to achieve political objects.

20 years on just like the former post independence rulers, come the socio-economic problems. Clashes with government forces over political, land issues, rising food and fuel prices are frequent and have caused a lot of damage both in property and in more extreme cases loss of life (Uganda Police, 2011). For example, in 2009 a total of 13 people died because of disputes between the government and members of the Buganda kingdom over land rights. In 2011 opposition leader Rtd Colonel Dr. Kizza Besigye with large youth following led a “walk to work” demonstration against rising prices of fuel where two(2) people were killed and more than 100 wounded when they clashed with government soldiers (Uganda Police, 2011).

Drug instigated crimes

In 2013, 1,380 cases were reported (UPF, 2013). A total of heroin seized was 32.3kgs, cocaine 67.7kgs, cannabis 1,834 (UPF, 2013). Uganda is not in itself a production hub for the kind of drugs that the youth find themselves engaged in. However, it has become a drug hub because of its strategic location along a major narcotics transit route between Middle Eastern, Asia and West Africa heroin markets (UPF, 2013). Access has become much easier as huge amounts of drugs continue to transit via Uganda using young people as agents of this crime (UPF, 2013). Statistics have shown that illicit drug is much more prevalent amongst young people than adults (UNODC, 2012:4). They are tricked and convinced to traffic drugs to other countries and once drugs get into intended countries of destination, the drug barons, through their existing networks, recruit innocent young Ugandans to act as couriers.


Many of these have been arrested in different countries. The Uganda’s airline connection between markets has accelerated this trend.

Cannabis (marijuana) is one of the most common drugs grown throughout Uganda and drug mostly used by the street and school youth and it is rarely policed. This has allowed for larger amounts of cannabis to flourish in remote areas where most people take it as a cash crop and others have gone to the extent of renting out their land to grow it. For example, in Busia most people hire their land to Kenyans to grow cannabis because they cannot plant it in Kenya which has tougher laws on such drugs.

On average, over 50 people are convicted monthly for cannabis use and other types of drugs such as opium, cocaine and heroin. However very few people are jailed for consumption of such drugs compared to those who deal in it. This is because they usually plead guilty in courts and are able to pay the fine of less than 1 million Uganda shillings equivalent to $390 yet they deal in drugs worth millions of dollars. Young people have turned the use of illegal drugs into such a sophisticated business. According to one respondent who has since left the trade, cannabis is grown in the forests, in banana plantations and in the middle of bushes and growers watches their plantations intently against intruders. The dealers usually carry back-packs and stealthily distribute the cannabis at various distribution points throughout the city.

30. According to Police records, (May 2014) over 70 Ugandans are currently facing the death sentence across 15 major cities in China over drug trafficking. For instance, Moses Abigaba is held in China for drug trafficking. “He was given a package to deliver to a contact in China. Unfortunately, he was arrested at the airport after the airport authorities discovered he was actually carrying drugs. He is now awaiting his death sentence.”

31. Heroin tends to be consumed by urban and street youth, cocaine use is prevalent among high income groups, Somalie refugees and town youth use khat, street children inhale petrol. See, Uganda Harm Reduction Network-UHRN; http://ugandaharmreduction.wordpress.com/2013/09/ visited on 15th April 2014.

32. Police records show that in 2012, 720 cases were reported to police, 780 people were arrested and 312 people convicted. Reported cases of cannabis cultivation were 6 and 48 acres of cannabis plants were destroyed, 6 people were arrested and 3 people were convicted for cannabis farming.

33. Cannabis hotspots in Kampala include: MakerereKivulu, Nakasero I village, Old taxi park, Parts of Kiseka market, Kisenyi, Arua park, Nsambya Railway Quarters, Kalerwe, Kawempe playground, MakerereKikoni, Bwaise and Katanga.
In such situations and in a state where police has such an ill-equipped Drug Investigation Unit\textsuperscript{34}, the production and cultivation of such drugs and their illegal exports is increasing and there are fears that it could even get worse in the coming years. The Anti-Narcotics and Drug Bill which criminalizes the use of such drugs is still before the 9th Parliament.

**Alcohol related crimes**

The consumption of alcohol is part of the social and cultural milieu in Uganda. Often it is used in celebration of marriages, circumcision ceremonies and even death. However, alcohol is widely abused by both young men and women in Uganda. In a recent article of the New Vision, it was stated that 45\% of the youths have confessed to taking drugs and alcohol according to data collected by UYDEL (Nambatya S. et al 2010-2011). Irresponsible consumption of alcohol creates a chain of other related physical, mental and social problems that become damaging to both those who take and those in the immediate environment and society as a whole. For example it can cause alcohol dependence, hepatic cirrhosis, cancer and injuries resulting from intoxication.

According to the World Health Statistic 2013 report\textsuperscript{35}, alcohol consumption among adults aged above 15, the Ugandan consumer consumes 16.4 litres of pure alcohol per person per year. Which is the highest in Africa. Compare that with a developed country like Japan where the average consumer consumes 7.8 litres per person per year and the country’s GDP at over $46K (2012) compared to Uganda which is at $547 (2012)\textsuperscript{36}. From these statistics Uganda consumes more than they are capable of producing. It would not be unusual to state that the majority perpetrators of violence drink before committing an assault and may be alcohol dependant. Alcohol abuse leads to higher levels of offending and high risk behaviours (Fitch, 2009:19; HM Government 2007). Fitch (2009) goes on to state that boys who

\textsuperscript{34}. Police rely on low-technological methods such as the use of sniffer dogs and monitoring what they regard as risky fights, especially for those coming from such countries like Pakistan, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Afghanistan. They are put on monitoring radar or at times carry out random searches on passengers and planes suspected to be carrying drugs.

\textsuperscript{35}. World Health Organisation, “World Health Statistics 2013”.

take drugs are five times as likely to commit criminal offences and the use of drugs is the strongest predictor of serious and/or persistent offending (Fitch, 2009:20; Flod-Page et al, 2000)

Recent developments have indicated that there is an increasing trend in alcohol consumption among the youth. The production in the formal sector breweries is estimated at 37% while the domestically produced spirits account for 63%, which is largely unregulated and unrecorded. Locally produced alcohol beverages include beers with alcohol content which ranges from 10-20 volumes, spirits whose alcohol content ranges from 30-70 volume, and adulterated alcohol containing other toxic impurities. The smuggling of alcohol into the country is also at its peak and it is sold to both youths and underage children who apparently are the number one target of the alcohol industry. And now we also have cases of adulterated alcohol on the market. The cost makes it affordable for the vulnerable youth and unscrupulous vendors sell it to unsuspecting buyers. In 2010, contaminated Waragi (Gin) killed 30 people in Kabale district and left many others hospitalized and blind.

The pattern of alcohol consumption among the youth shows signs of cultural influence. Most tribes such as the Iteso from the North (Ajono is the local brew) and the Bakiga (Omuramba is the local brew) from the southwest have a culture of brewing alcohol in homes thus exposing the youth to alcohol at an early age. As young people reach adolescence, alcohol consumption increases due to peer pressure. The study revealed that young people prefer strong local spirits which are easily accessible in miniature sachets at very low prices. Young people also engage in binge drinking during public events and parties, at most of which local companies sell alcohol at discounted rates.

Information regarding alcohol and drug use among juveniles and adult institutions is still scanty. But what is known is that drugs are more easily available in deprived urban areas due to the presence of adult criminal

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structure and these have an impact on the level offending by young people in these communities (Fitch 2009:19; Utting et al., 2006).

Cyber crime

Cyber-crime can be best understood by first appreciating the meaning of cyber space and the global world. Margaret Chon of Seattle University School of Law explains Cyberspace to mean, ‘the information spaces created by the technology of digital networked computer system, most of which ultimately connect with the mother of all networks, the internet.’

Cyber space is increasingly becoming a hub for all sorts of crimes in the global world of which young people are more likely to fall victims of this new wave of complicated crimes. Cyber criminals are intelligent people who can do whatever it takes to understand the psychology of their victims by age, sex, and occupational groups. In setting their strategies, they manipulate the minds and massage the egos of the most vulnerable groups of young adults who are easy impress.  

The natures of these crimes are sometimes sophisticated for an ordinary person to comprehend because most of them happen on computers and Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cash machines. Potential cyber criminals take advantage of the papers discarded in trash bins mainly within the ATM cash points which are later collected and taken in bundles to experienced hackers for possible exploitation of personal information.

In Uganda, cyber crimes mainly focus on mobile money and ATMs. Recent studies revealed that obtaining money by false pretence is so far the highest economic crime in Uganda followed by issuing false cheques and counterfeits. In 2013, Over UGX 207million equivalent to $82,000 was transferred without the authority of the telecommunication service providers between August and November 2012 and a total of 700 victims lost over UGX 1.2billion equivalent to $473,000 by use of scheming devices from ATM

locations in Kampala and other areas. Cyber-crimes reported in 2013 were 45 resulting into a loss of about 18.1 billion shillings (UPF, 2013) which is approximately 0.02% of the total crimes reported in the same period.

Such a high increase in cyber-crimes is blamed on the sudden increase in the number of conmen commonly known as ‘bafere’ who take advantage of the existing weak laws. Ugandan laws on cyber-crime are of a hybrid nature with a mixture of old legislation that is hardly in conformity with the current trends, and newly enacted legislation that is still testing the waters. Our Penal Code Act, Cap. 120, Laws of Uganda (2000 Ed.) which is the principle legislation on criminal activities, commenced on 15th of June 1950. Although the Act has undergone a few amendments, it is not in conformity with most issues affecting practices of cyber crime. 42

Financial fraud

The statistics from the Annual Crime and Traffic/Road Safety Report 2013 (UPF, 2013:38) provides information from two fronts. Corruption (Public Sector Fraud) and Economic Crimes (Private Sector Fraud).

With respect to corruption, a total of 413 cases were reported in 2013 compared to 214 in 2012, a 48% increase. Young adults who have been victims of corruption tend to distrust political institutions and even to distrust other people (Action Aid, 2012:51). The report goes on to state that this affects the credibility of government programs and consequently erodes civic participation due to increasing distrust among citizens.

Table 3
Public Sector Corruption Cases investigated in 2013 [Sourced: UPF, 2013:38]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Cases investigated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Abuse of office</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. Anthony Conrad K. Kakooza (2005), ‘Cybercrime socio-econ legal perspective in Uganda.’
In the year 2013 (UPF, 2013:38), a total of 9,998 cases of economic crimes were investigated, compared to 11,006 cases investigated in 2012 giving a decrease of 10%.

Table 4
Breakdown of Economic Crimes [Sourced: UPF, 2013:39]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No.</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Cases investigated</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Obtaining by False Pretences</td>
<td>8250</td>
<td>8113</td>
<td>-137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Issuing False Cheques</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>-275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Counterfeiting</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>-262</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Forgery and uttering of False documents</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>-64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Embezzlement</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>-89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Abuse of Office</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Causing Financial Loss</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cyber crime</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bank &amp; other Corporate Frauds</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,006</td>
<td>9998</td>
<td>-1,008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There has also been an increase in financial fraud cases involving credit cards, personal cheques, and counterfeiting. Skimming, which is a practice to capture personal identification information from ATM terminals, has increased in the region recently. This scam has been primarily orchestrated by Eastern Europeans in other East African Community nations but could spread to Uganda. In 2013, 4 Bulgarians attempted to defraud Stanbic Bank using fake ATM’s (UPF, 2013:39). They were found with 38 ATM cards, a list of 45 ATM pin numbers, a charger and their improvised ATM. Additionally, counterfeit U.S. currency is appearing in Uganda at a growing rate. Another area where people have lost millions of dollars to unscrupulous traders that promise very high returns within a few months of investing. It could be “Ponzi” like schemes known as Nigina or Circle, unregulated foreign exchange trading, pyramid schemes, Telex Free schemes etc. Money has been borrowed from the banks, friends and others have sold their properties like land, houses to invest in online forex business. To date the figures have not been compiled, but what is known is that hundreds of Ugandans in excess of 3000 are stranded at Police stations trying to get back their money they lost.

Uganda does not have a large organized crime element. Organized crime appears more frequently in the form of small, organized, criminal activity, such as that of individuals involved in home invasions, rather than in large-scale racketeering. Human trafficking syndicates operate in Uganda, providing fraudulent identification for intending illegal immigrants to the European Union, but the volume is likely small. Uganda signed legislation against money laundering in October 2013, but it will likely take several months or more before the necessary bureaucratic structures are in place to implement the law.43

7.2.3 Statistics and data collection

Although it is relatively easy to obtain information about the victims of crimes in places such as hospitals and police records, experience shows that it is increasingly difficult to get information on the views and motives

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of perpetrators because such scenarios are not well documented. This is because most offenders find it difficult to openly talk about the crimes they have committed as they feel this might increase on their chances of being arrested. This makes it even more difficult to get information about young criminals especially on what actually motivates them into crime.44

A comparative analysis of figures from various police/security entities operating throughout Uganda reflects a continued trend in which incidents of crimes are inaccurately or under-reported. The under-reporting is due in large part to insufficient police presence and response capabilities and a public perception of police investigative abilities. Due to this deficiency, many communities simply do not have the means to report crimes, though most experts agree that crime is generally low in rural areas. In addition, when crimes are reported, they are not adequately documented in a standardized reporting format. (OSAC, 2014)45.

7.3 The Role of Government in Youth Crime Prevention

Uganda lacks an explicit, coherent and comprehensive National Youth Policy (NYP). Hence the reasons why systems have not been in place to address the challenges faced by the youth. According to a recent study,46 the two major factors that will determine Africa’s future economic growth prospects are: growth in the working age share of the population and institutional quality. Where the latter includes factors like strong rule of law, efficient bureaucracies, government stability, lack of corruption and a stable business environment.

7.3.1 Government organs responsible for fighting crime

Central government

Government has a crucial role to play in preventing crime and victimization among young people, and providing them with choices that reduce the likelihood that they will choose criminal activities. Cities are traditionally responsible for functions like health, housing and urban planning, and have close contact with education, social welfare, and other services.

Access to education, supportive and consistent parenting and meaningful community and social involvement will increase a young person’s resilience to crime. One of the primary challenges facing government and the criminal justice system is to provide an adequate alternative –beyond law enforcement and prison-based options- for young people who are likely to commit crime. The central government can play a vital role in creating an environment that increases a young person’s resilience to choosing crime as an option.

Both the social and environmental situation and the local context in which crimes are committed need to be considered when planning crime reduction strategies. For government, a reduction in crime should form part of assessing whether overall community development has been successful. Targeting young people and building their specific needs into programmes is key to achieving this.

Government can play an increasingly significant role in boosting the quality of life of all citizens by investing time, effort and resources in improving life chances of young people.

Results of crime prevention programmes, particularly youth-based programmes are often long term and not immediately evident to the public. It is therefore vital that local governments are able to justify the value of such programmes and ensure wide support from the community. There is also a need for increased community awareness of the effectiveness of prevention rather than punishment and the role that government can play in prevention.

Having a National Crime Prevention Strategy would make it even clearer that government has a primary role in working together with other agencies
to improve the quality of life and the safety of all citizens and most especially its youth.47

**Local government**

Solutions to the needs of children are best met at the local level. City governments are well situated to respond to a range of children’s needs and have a responsibility to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are not overshadowed by the desires of the wealthier members of communities.

### 7.3.2 Law enforcement and crime prevention

International standards recognize that preventing crime is one of the essential and effective ways of reducing crime in a long term. Much as strict law enforcement together with tough criminal justice and sentencing systems exist, they have to a greater extent failed to effectively reduce crime and instead have led to higher figures of imprisonment that has turned out to be a great cost to governments.48

Other studies show that a person’s decision to get involved into an act of crime is usually based on other wide range of complex and intersecting social, economic, personal, and environmental factors that are in most cases beyond the control of young people (Farrington, 1996). For the young people, there is a very thin line between being a victim and a perpetrator of a given crime and at the most unfortunate event, they are both. Many young criminals have often been exposed to such high levels of victimization where the majority of them live under the most severe and harsh social and environmental conditions. That to a larger extent explains why they get involved in a given category of crime.

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47. ‘South African government’s approach to crime prevention is contained in two primary policy documents: the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) and the 1998 White Paper on Safety and Security. However, it is the operational plans of the South African Police Services (SAPS) and the availability of funds from the national treasury which have made the most impact on the development of government crime prevention programmes.’ See, Janine Rauch, ‘changing steps: crime prevention policy in South Africa’.

7.4 Conclusion and Recommendations

Young people have problems that are damaging their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development. The essay has shown that the environments they are exposed to plays a major factor in whether they end up as victims or perpetrators of crime. The literature has shown that many are living without adequate livelihood and security; including lack of economic resources for proper survival, protection and development and poverty are key factors which tend to render young people more prone to exploitation, abuse and neglect.

Seeing as the “Youth” represent a significant portion of the Ugandan population, the economic performance of the country will depend largely on how this valuable under-utilized resource is harnessed through support structures.

For starters more data should be made available by investing in research projects that focus on youth crime. Underreporting of crimes also means that planning and putting in place institutions to combat youth crime becomes difficult. Which in essence means that the system has failed the youth and consequently have to fend for themselves. It is therefore these social, economic, personal and environmental causes of crime that need to be clearly identified and tackled if youth crime is to be successfully reduced. A clear analysis of these social and environmental causes while seeking creative ways to address them should be at the heart of any youth crime prevention initiatives and also key to government’s intervention.

Owing to time limitations, this essay has not been exhaustive. Access to information has also been difficult with low response rates from those who would otherwise have been considered for detailed interviews.

Recommendations

1. Championing policies and programs to enhance opportunities and encourage smaller families (going with the old English saying “Too much of anything is bad”);
2. Strengthening institutions and implementation of viable existing policies that focus on education, creation of jobs and skills;
3. Early intervention in minor offences and behaviors that would translate into hardcore crime. Such as directing young offenders towards compulsory rehabilitation, counseling and psychosocial support.

4. Providing universal necessities, like proper road network, linking the remotest part of Uganda to the urban centres, would go a long way in stimulating farming as farmers would be sure of transporting their goods. Although the Government is trying in this area, a lot more still needs to be done, and can be done. Many rural parts of the country are unreachable, some with broken bridges or impassable feeder roads particularly during the rainy season.

5. Securing stable markets for agricultural produce would also be a good incentive to attract lots of youth to the agricultural sector. Therefore, accessible agricultural projects and empowerment programmes, targeting mainly the youth, should be another priority area. These can involve free trainings, seminars to inform and sensitize masses and the youth on better agricultural practices, plus offering them soft loans to purchase seeds, seedlings and other agro inputs such as fertilizers. Although the government is already undertaking some of this work through NUSAF and NAADS. It’s the effectiveness of these projects that needs to be addressed. So much that we have had the Ugandan President calling for the sacking of all NAADS district coordinators for their failure to transform rural communities from poverty. The schemes are riddled with corruption, inefficiency and generally not fit for purpose.

6. One strategic area of investment that would create many jobs for the growing number of frustrated and jobless Ugandans, and also provide a more conducive and enabling growth trajectory for the economy is massive expansion and modernization of public infrastructure, particularly in the energy and transportation sectors.
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Youth and Public Policy in Uganda
Youth Development and Health in Uganda

Youth Involvement in Health as a Development Issue in Uganda

Christine Munduru
8.1 Introduction and Background Information

This paper discusses youth participation and involvement in health development in Uganda and argues that youth have been looked at as recipients of health services but not as active participants in health development in Uganda. The development model being used is the problem-based which focuses on deficiency rather than strengths and this is reflected in the policies and youth health programming in Uganda. The culture and religion has influenced the choice of the development model. According to majority of cultures in Uganda, women, children and youth are considered vulnerable and voiceless people who cannot actively participate in development issues. This has been clearly reflected in the youth policy where youth have been grouped as vulnerable people. Sex and sexuality cannot be discussed openly with young people and this has contributed to young people not accessing sexual and reproductive health information. Based on this model, the participation and involvement of youth in health development is therefore limited.

8.1.1 Ugandan youth characteristics

The definition of youth has varied widely depending on the context in which it is used and the term youth and young people are used interchangeably in most documents. For the purpose of this paper which looked at youth with health focus, the definition in the Uganda Adolescent Health Policy which is also consistent with the UN/WHO/UNFPA definitions was adopted. The policy defines youth as people within the age 15-24, young people as the age between 10-24 and adolescents as those within 10-19 years of age.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the most youthful region in the world and 28 percent of her population ranges from 12-24 years of age (International Youth Foundation (IYF), 2011) and the youth are considered her most abundant asset (World Development report, 2007). It follows that Uganda with the highest population growth rate has the world’s youngest population and about 80 percent of the Ugandan population is below the age of 30(IYF, 2011) and about half are below the age of 24 (MoFPED, 2011).

The youth in Uganda are characterized by poor socio-economic status. Literacy rates among youth (15-24) is 87 percent, unemployment is 80 per-
cent and 70 percent live on less than $2 a day (IYF, 2011). By age 19 over 70% of adolescents girls are sexually active; almost half of the women become pregnant before age 18, by the time they are 20 two thirds have had a child; by age 18, 56% of woman are married; Adolescent pregnancy rate though dropped from 43% to 25%, is still the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa (UDHS, 2011); 33.3% of maternal deaths are adolescents and adolescent contraceptive prevalence is 7.2% while national is 15%.

8.1.2 Definitions and Principles of Youth Development

Definition of youth development

Youth Health is the range of approaches to preventing, detecting or treating young people's health and well being (WHO 2001). According to Hamilton et al (2004), the term youth development is used in three different ways, referring to a natural process of development, principles, and practices. All the three are important and logically related.

1. Youth development as a natural process means the growing capacity of a young person to understand and act on the environment.

2. Youth development as a set of Principles developed in the 1990s is a philosophy or approach that emphasizes active support for the growing capacity of young people by individuals, organizations, and institutions, especially at the community level. The approach is rooted in a commitment to enabling all young people to thrive. This statement combines two principles “all youth”, principle of universality or inclusiveness and “thriving”, a positive orientation, building on strengths. Youth development is being used to counterbalance the emphasis that have always been laid on problem prevention and treatment that have categorized youth according to their deficits and designed programs to try to remedy them. Youth development approaches embeds prevention and treatment but does not put emphasis on it.

3. Youth development as a set of Practices describes a range of practices in programs, organizations, and initiatives. In this sense, it refers to the application of the principles defined in number two above to a planned set of practices, or activities that foster the natural developmental process defined in one above in young people.
Hamilton et al. (2004) continued to argue that youth development entails the creation of a range of contexts or settings, including people and activities that promote youth development which is more than helping one young person at a time. They described development as a process not a goal and therefore concluded that promoting youth development is an enduring, overarching purpose, not a goal to be achieved. According to them, development goals and methods, ends and means, and process and product are intertwined and the cyclic nature of development makes it difficult to separate goals from methods for achieving the goals. Recognizing this, they referred goals only as a helpful framework to guide action since they are an important aspect of program planning.

The human qualities that development aims to promote, referred to as “five Cs are; competence, character, connections, confidence and contributions or caring and/or compassion (Pitman et al., 2002). The authors argue that these five Cs which summarize the goals of youth development must always be at the back of any person, program, organization or initiative that is thinking of youth development.

Key principles in youth development

*All youth must thrive (positive orientation).* This principle focuses on strengths rather than deficits and counterbalances the traditional problem-based focus where youth have been looked at as a risky group and thus programming is aimed at treating or preventing the problem. Dryfoos (1990) demonstrated in her study how resources were being wasted in problem-based development model. She pointed that teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, delinquency and school failure are problem behaviors that are closely linked in terms of the problems and solutions and could be handled together. But they were being handled as different programs with different sources of funding, research and researchers and research literature. This argument is supported by the Jessor and Jessor (1977) who concluded that risky sexual behavior, drug abuse, delinquency, school failure and other problems are best conceived as part of problem behavior syndrome that often have common roots and should best be treated as a whole.

*Building on strengths* is similar to positive orientation. It argues that when youth are selected based on their risk or vulnerability as is being done in all the youth health related programs in Uganda, selection may not
only confirm their identity as troubled but may also unintentionally reinforce the undesirable behavior because the whole group is stigmatized and yet have been lumped together. The principle therefore emphasizes focus on strengths rather than weaknesses.

The principle of *Universality* looks at youth as a whole. Youth at one time or another may be affected by any of the problems; teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, early sex, HIV/AIDS or STIs, thus the need for a holistic approach that is stigma free. However, this principle acknowledges that youth do not have the same need and their development can be either enhanced or impeded by the opportunities available to them in their families, schools, and communities. It is therefore important to address any of the immediate problems of the youth but such is not sufficient as such youth still need other opportunities as well.

The principle of *services, supports and opportunities* focuses on ensuring availability of services like health care, education, housing and protection; supports like mentorship; and opportunities to learn, explore play, expression to all youth irrespective of their gender, sex, race, ethnicity or religion so that they can be voluntarily taken up.

The principle of active participation focuses on ensuring youth develop through active engagement with their environment so that they can make choices, shape the environment and direct their own development (Bronfenbrenner 1979, pg 21). This principle considers youth as participants rather than recipients and also responsible actors (Hamilton *et al.*, 2004).

According to National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002 pg 90-91), positive developmental settings should have the following features; physical and developmental safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skills building and integration of family, school and community efforts.

Based on the principles and practices of youth development, this paper provided insight into the youth health development model in Uganda.
8.1.3 Methodology, Aim and Objectives of the Paper

Methodology

A document review of health policies/strategies and their implementation was carried out. Influence of the socio-cultural beliefs and practices on youth health was done through literature review and emerging issues were arrived at based on the information reviewed.

The aim of this paper was to review the health related policies/strategies and their implementation and the influence of socio-cultural practices on youth participation and involvement in health development in Uganda.

Objectives

1. To review the health related policies/strategies and their implementation in the context of youth and health development in Uganda
2. To discuss the influence of socio-cultural practices and beliefs on youth health in Uganda
3. To come up with emerging issues on youth and health development in Uganda

8.2 Health Related Policies and Youth Involvement in Health as Development in Uganda

8.2.1 Vision 2040

The Uganda Vision 2040 was developed to provide development paths and strategies to operationalize Uganda’s Vision statement “A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years”. The aim is to transform Uganda from a predominantly peasant and low income country to a competitive upper middle income country.

The key aspirations in the vision 2040 related to youth health include; Aspiration for a future in which men, women, youth, children, and persons with disabilities are empowered to participate as equal partners in development; a healthy, literate and well informed society; desire to have access to affordable quality health and education services; to live in clean and well
planned settlements with access to all social amenities and to be a society free of hunger with strong social safety nets.

The vision is cognizant of the fact that the country has one of the youngest populations in the world that is dominated by unproductive age groups. This has been looked at as an opportunity in terms of increasing its competitiveness if focused on very well (Vision 2040). The largely youthful population with high fertility rate has been identified as a development challenge. This population presents an unfavorable demographic profile made up largely of dependants who may be too young to work yet they consume the bulk of public services; or are poorly skilled and educated (vision 2040) mainly due to inadequate education and health care.

Solutions identified to address this problem include; emphasizing skill ing of the youth with globally competitive skills to attract Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs); continuous review and change of the architecture of Government service delivery system to enable Government act as a unit and deliver public services that are responsive to the needs of the people and cognizant of the global dynamics; creating a more sustainable age structure by reducing the high fertility rate through increased access to quality reproductive health services; keeping all children of school going age in school with more emphasis on the girl child and building an efficient health services delivery system; a paradigm shift from facility-based to a household based health delivery system to empower households and communities to take greater control of their health by promoting healthy practices and lifestyles; improve the nutrition status of the population especially for young children and women of reproductive age; adopting a universal health insurance health system because Uganda’s current health service delivery system is expensive, inefficient and not sufficiently responsive to the health needs of the different categories of the population.

Though the vision document does not have specific focus on youth most especially in health component, some of the general solutions identified are consistent with some of the principles of positive youth development which is rooted in enabling all youth to thrive (Hamilton et al., 2004). There is need to ensure youth are specifically targeted because they are the biggest challenge to development in Uganda.
8.2.2 National Development Plan

The National Development Plan (NDP) with the theme; “Growth, Employment and Social Economic Transformation for Prosperity” was developed to operationalize the Vision 2040. The NDP is expected to significantly result into; improved employment levels, higher per capita income, improved labor force distribution, improved human development and gender equality indicators and the country’s competitiveness position (NDP page 4).

The plan identified the young population and the high fertility rate as a huge challenge. It goes ahead to say that the population will remain youthful for the next fifteen years. Unless serious measures are taken to convert this young population into population dividend, it will present huge challenges for future growth and structural transformation (NDP, pg 42). Despite these identified challenges, the youth have not received any attention in this plan in terms of health. Where youth have been mentioned is from problem-based angle and the interventions are to fix the problem which is not development orientation. This plan was meant to operationalize the Vision 2040 but has been silent on youth health issues, therefore some of the good interventions identified in the Visions will remain on paper.

8.2.3 National Health Policy

The vision of the second Uganda National Health policy (NHP), 2010 is to have healthy and productive population that contributes to socio-economic growth. It aims at attaining a good standard of health for all people in Uganda in order to promote healthy and productive lives. The plan focuses on health promotion, disease prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of diseases with specific priorities on the effective delivery of the Uganda National Minimum Health Care Package (UNMHC), more efficient use of available health resources, strengthening public and private partnerships for health and strengthening of health systems. This plan does not have a specific focus on youth despite the fact that youth are the majority and contribute significantly to the mortality and morbidity in the country.
8.2.4 National Youth Policy

The youth policy is cognizant of the large number, the strategic importance and immense potential of the Ugandan youth for development of the country but notes that this potential has not been tapped for socio-economic development due to their inadequate involvement and their poor socio-economic status and marginalization. The aim of the youth policy is to prioritize public actions through comprehensive and multi-sectoral responses in order to integrate the youth and work with them in national development (Youth Policy, 2004).

The policy has good general principles which include; respect for cultural, religious and ethical values, equity and accessibility, gender inclusiveness, good governance and national unity, youth participation and empowerment. However, it has only a small component on health which is problem-focused and looked at youth as recipients of health services but not as health development partners. Implementation of these good principles has remained a big challenge to date. Youth are still disempowered and cannot actively participate in the design, planning and implementation of health policies/strategies and programs and this has contributed to their invisibility in all policy documents.

8.2.5 Adolescent Health Policy

The goal of this policy is to mainstream adolescent health concerns in the national development process in order to improve the quality of life and standard of living of young people in Uganda. It is an integral part of the National Development process and reinforces the commitment of the Government to integrate young people in the development process.

The key objectives of the policy include;

» To provide policy makers and other key actors in the social and development fields, reference guidelines for addressing adolescent health concerns.

» To create an enabling legal and social-cultural environment that promotes provision of better health and information services for young people.
» To protect and promote the rights of adolescents to health, education, information and health care.

» To promote the involvement of adolescents in conceptualization, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of adolescent health programs.

» To provide legal and social protections of young people especially the girl child against harmful traditional practices and all forms of abuse including sexual abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence.

» To train providers and reorient the health system at all levels to better focus and meet the special needs of adolescents.

The policy has important objectives but only targets a small group of the youth between 10-19 years based on the definition. It also lacks youth development focus and looks at adolescents as problem group who need solutions to fix the problem. For example, the priority beneficiaries for programming have been identified adolescents with; violent behavior, substance abuse problems, HIV/AIDS, mental disabilities among others. The disadvantages of such problem-based development model have been well demonstrated by J. Dryfoos (1990) and supported by Jessor and Jessor (1977). Additionally, implementation of these good objectives is still a challenge. Some of the programs like Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education face a lot of challenges. Young people do not receive effective sexual and reproductive health services. For example, youth friendly services are only being provided in 5% of public health facilities (MoH, 2011); sixty three percent of youth are not happy of services received at health center (Straight talk foundation 2013) and low contraceptive prevalence of 14% among young people age 15-19(UBOS and Macro Internal Inc 2011). Young people do not receive accurate sexual and reproductive health information. For example, 54% of young people think a girl cannot get pregnant the first time she has sex (straight talk 2013). Related laws and policies are not being implemented, for example 49% of girls are married before the age of 18 yet the laws do not allow marriage at young age (UNFPA). Teenage pregnancy rates in Uganda are still one of the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa.
8.2.6 Health Sector Strategic and Investment Plan (HSSIP)

The Health Sector Strategic and Investment Plan guides the health sector investments by all health sector actors (Public and Private) towards attainment of medium term sector goals. The goal is to attain a good standard of health for all people in Uganda in order to promote a healthy and productive life.

It has very important rights-based principles which includes; Equity and non-discrimination, participation, accountability, right to health elements of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality but the plan does not focus on youth in terms of priorities, strategies and interventions. It targets the general population with specific emphasis on mothers and children and specific diseases.

8.3 Socio-Cultural and Religious Beliefs & Practices and Youth Health in Uganda

Culture and religion have been known to shape the behavior of people including health and Ugandans are not an exception (Tuyizere, 2007 pg 45). Uganda is a patriarchal society where men are the dominant figures. Women, children and youth are considered vulnerable, voiceless and socio-economically disempowered and cannot make decisions about their health. In most Ugandan policies/laws, women, children and youth are considered vulnerable groups (UBOS, 2002, MoFPED, 2013).

In Uganda, sex is an adult privilege. Boyfriend-girl friend relationships are unacceptable. Sexual relationships in youth happen secretly to avoid repercussions. This secrecy creates vulnerability by limiting access to support networks, health services, and information regarding sexual health (Tuyizere 2007pg 52, UNIADS 2010). It is considered immoral to talk about sex to the youth and sex is sacred, only consumed in marriage (Tuyizere, 2007, pg 162). Youth who engage in sex before marriage are social outcasts and are stigmatized, sometimes chased out of homes especially the female youth. Girls are judged more negatively than boys with regard to sexual conduct. Girls should remain in control of their sexuality; while boys are allowed to try their luck without being judged so harshly (UNAIDS 2010). For the
Bakiga of Rukungiri, girls who got pregnant before marriage were thrown into River Kisizi falls. Girls would be wrapped in banana leaves and led to their death by their own brothers and yet the boys who made them pregnant were spared (Tuyizere 2007 page 52). Such beliefs and practices have influenced health policies, programs and interventions. A classic example is abortion which is the third cause of maternal deaths mostly among young girls but is a highly contentious issue to approach because of religious and cultural perceptions. Sexual and reproductive health services and health workers in Uganda are adult-centric based on the assumption that youth should not be having sex (UNAIDS, 2010). Health workers have in many occasions denied sexual and reproductive health services for youth on this account.

Socialization of children and youth according culture and religion in Uganda is a challenge to youth health. For example girls are socialized to be humble, soft, and obedient, remain silent, not to look a man in the eye, avoid responding to men, and kneel down before men (Tuyizere 2007, pg 120). It is disrespectful for young people to argue with, disobey or question their elders. Such respect restricts the ability of young people to make independent decisions about their lives and futures. Additionally, it discourages them from talking about their sexual experiences and seeking advice which limits their capacity to seek community health services (UNAIDS 2010). As part of the preparation to womanhood, girls are socialized to sexually please men. Women must sexually satisfy their husbands or else she is divorced or the men visit prostitutes (Tuyizere pg 155). Boys are encouraged to participate and be active in activities to display their manly traits, be fearless and aggressive. They are encouraged to have many sexual partners while girls are taught to stick to only one sexually partner (Tuyizere 2007, pg 55). This kind of socialization has disempowered the female youth who cannot negotiate for sex and take informed decisions about her sexual and reproductive health life. At the same time, it has given much power to the male youth to manipulate the female youth for his selfish sexual desires. This disproportionate power dynamics that is entrenched in culture has contributed to the sexual coercion and or violence, high teenage pregnancy rates and exposure to sexually transmitted infections among the youth which the country is now struggling with (Bankole et al., 2007, UBOS 2006).
Harmful cultural beliefs and practices about sexuality in Uganda has influenced and affected youth health. In Eastern Uganda especially Kapchorwa, cultural circumcision for both boys and girls is obligatory and it introduces youth to adulthood. Female Genital Mutilation is meant to instill faithfulness in women. Failure to circumcise or mutilate will result into the youth not attending clan meetings, girls will not fetch water, collect food from granary and clean the kraal because they are not considered full women (Tuyizere, 2007 pg 60). Because of such punishments, the youth have no choice but to oblige to the demands of their culture though they are aware of the consequences. Studies done in Eastern Ugandan revealed that many circumcised girls have remained crippled, others bled to death during delivery. The scar causes painful intercourse and loss of libido in women. The unsatisfied husbands resort to promiscuity or polygamy which causes a lot of problems in the families including domestic violence and sexual transmitted infections(Tuyizere 2007). Female Genital Mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) has been indicated to have grave consequences during childbirth. Studies show that deliveries to women who have undergone FGM/C are significantly more likely to be complicated by caesarean section, postpartum hemorrhage, and episiotomy, extended maternal hospital stay, resuscitation of the infant, and inpatient perinatal death, than deliveries to women who have not had FGM (Grimes et al., 2006). Death rates are also higher for infants born to mothers who have undergone this harmful practice (WHO, 2006). For both women and their babies, the dangers during childbirth increase significantly according to the severity of the mutilation suffered (UNICEF 2008). FGM/C is a reflection of gender inequality and discrimination, a form of violence against girls but is still being practiced.

Bride price which is culturally entrenched has made parents to force the youth into early marriage. Dowry or bride wealth is key to marriage in Ugandan communities because it is regarded as source of security and marriage stability and a demonstration of the value attached to wives by their husbands and relatives (Tuyizere, 2007 pg 337). Though the minimum legal age for marriage in Uganda is 18 years(J. Wong 1997), teenage is a very common practice because it is supported and encouraged by parents who have continued to marry off their children at early age.

In Uganda, 15% of girls are married by age 15 and 49% are married by age 18 while for their male counterparts of 25-49 years, only 9% are married
by age 18 (UDHS 2011). State of Population report (2013) interprets all teenage marriages of 18 years below as forced, void and illegal and argues that use of the language early marriage instead of forced marriage only sanitizes an immoral, coerced and illegal act. Female adolescents in Uganda face
cultural, religious and social pressures from their families to marry and begin child-bearing early because, traditionally it is encouraged by socio-economic, religious and cultural norms (Sekiwunga, 2009; MoH, 2001).

In addition, dowry has made the young girls become slaves. Their husbands take complete control of their reproductive health lives (pg 337). They are expected to give birth to as many children as possible, no use of family planning and the men demand sex as and when they feel irrespective of the health conditions of these young girls. In Kisoro, Kabale, Rukungiri, Arua and Ankole, parents and brothers consider young girls who have become of age as assets and put pressure on them to marry early so that the brothers can use the wealth to pay dowry for their wives (pg 337). In these communities, mothers encourage their daughters to marry early and girls who refuse early marriage are harassed to a point they are forced to marry anybody. Some of the families arrange a forced marriage secretly for their daughters. For the Bafumbira, Kakiga, Banyankore and Lugbara, the bride is sometimes ambushed and abducted and or beaten by the bridegroom and then bride price is arranged (tuyizere 338).

Bride price is a source of pain, misery, hard work, misfortune and death for the young families. In some of the cases, the parents and relatives of the man take complete control of the young family and manage it to cause misery in the young woman for whom dowry has been paid and this misery translates into domestic violence or divorce. For the Bakiga and Bafumbira, the father-in-law demands to have sex with the daughter-in-law to ensure the dowry paid is not in vain. This is sexual violence which contributes to transmission of sexually transmitted infections especially HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B.(Tuyizere,pg 340).

Access to family planning services has been limited by cultural and religious beliefs. For example the Catholic Church strongly advocates against use of family planning services and most churches are against giving sexual and reproductive health information to young people. Because Uganda is a religious country, this has been embraced by the Ugandan society. The youth cannot openly access services of family planning including accessing the right information. Yet they actively engage in sex and thus end up in unwanted pregnancies, some of which for the fear of their parents and stigma proceed to carry out unsafe abortion leading to abortion complications and death.
However, culture and religion have also contributed greatly to youth health in Uganda. In terms of education, most of the good government schools are faith-based and have contributed greatly to education of youth. Many problem behavior youth have undergone rehabilitation and got second chances from churches. Culture and religion are also the first places where youth learn good morals in addition to the family. The fear of God instilled in children makes them avoid early sex and other harmful behaviors that lead to engage in sex like drug abuse and alcohol consumption. Research has shown that major religious belief systems contain prohibitions against problem behaviors such as promiscuity, substance abuse, violence and stealing (Donahue, 1995). It is argued that youth who internalize these values are less likely to engage in risk behaviors even when circumstances motivate them to do so. Churches tend to provide friendlier places and services for youth development. Researchers have argued that most health programs and interventions have negated the opportunities of adopting cultural approaches for tackling crisis like HIV. Use of culturally sensitive and appropriate strategies is thought to be important in health interventions (Cross Cultural Foundation Uganda 2008).

8.4 Modernization, Life Style Changes and Youth Health in Uganda

Modernization is a model of a progressive transition from a 'pre-modern' or 'traditional' to a 'modern' society which is characterized by trade and industry. In all its purpose and intent, modernization is good because it brings new opportunities and better chances. However, good things always come with their own challenges. The benefits of modernization are well known and will not be the focus of this discussion. This section focuses on discussing life style changes as result of modernization and its impact on health policies and youth health in Uganda.

Though Uganda is still predominantly a peasant country, a lot has changed in terms of agricultural practices, feeding and diets and general life styles. Farming is now being focused on high yielding crops and animals which are disease, weed and drought resistant. Birds and animals are being fed on artificial feeds and most times confined in un-natural environ-
ments. Such practices necessitate use of high techniques ranging from high breeds to genetically modified crops and organisms, increased use of chemicals and drugs which have a lot of health implications for humans. The Ugandan middle class are living unhealthy life styles of feeding mostly on fast foods commonly known as “junk food”, driving most of the time, staying longer in traffic while inhaling the dangerous carbon monoxide from cars which are in mechanically dangerous conditions, sitting in office the whole day without exercise. The children who start feeding on “junk food” from their mothers womb are driven to school every day and the schools have no play grounds for physical exercise and the children sit in class from 5am-10pm in the famous private primary schools in and around Kampala which tension becomes worse as they go to secondary. Alcohol in Uganda is available and accessible by anybody, anywhere, anytime. It is heavily advertised on all media without restriction and youth are the most used in the alcohol adverts indicating that it is good for youth. Uganda leads in Africa in alcohol consumption and majority of these are youth.

With such a background disease patterns have become complex in Uganda, communicable diseases are competing with non-communicable disease at a time when Uganda should be facing challenges of mostly communicable diseases. The patterns of population and diseases can best be explained by understanding demographic and epidemiological transitions.

8.4.1 Demographic Transition

Demographic transition is the process by which a shift occurs in population and is characterized by a shift from high fertility and high mortality to low fertility and low mortality (Dyson, 2010). This is a fundamental component of development and occurs often but not always in tandem with economic growth (Caldwell, 2006). Demographic transition started in 19th Century for developed countries and 20th Century for less developed countries (UN 2012).

Demographic transition has three key features;

1. **Fertility decline**, mortality decline and population ageing. 1. Fertility decline; pre-transition societies are characterized by high fertility – in excess of 5 or 6 children per woman, on average – and, through the tran-
transition, fertility declines toward 2.1 children per women or even lower (UN 2012).

2. **Mortality decline;** pre-transition societies are marked by high mortality rates among all age groups, but as the transition progresses, mortality rates fall, first among children and gradually among adults as well.

3. **Population ageing** is the third feature where both fertility and mortality are falling. Early in the transition, there are large cohorts of births coupled with low probabilities of survival to old age meaning that a larger proportion of the population is concentrated in young age groups compared to older age groups. As the transition progresses, birth cohorts shrink relative to the size of their parents’ generation and longevity increases such that survival to old age also increases, the proportion of children in the population begins to decline while the proportion of older population grows. Decline in mortality rates among young people coupled with the ageing population results into more deaths happening at older ages as the population progresses through the demographic transition (UN 2012)

Based on this explanation, Uganda is still in pre-transition because the fertility rate is still very high at 6.2 and mortality among all age groups is still high though children and women are still top on the list. Birth cohorts are still large and the majority of the population is still young.

### 8.4.2 Epidemiological Transition

The shift in cause of death from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases called epidemiological transition occurs together with demographic transition (Omran 1971).

In connection to Omran’s model; World Health Organization (WHO) has three broad categories of causes of diseases (WHO 2008);

- **Group I:** Encompasses communicable diseases as well as maternal, perinatal and nutritional conditions
- **Group II:** Includes Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)
- **Group III:** Comprises causes of death resulting from external sources, namely injuries, both intentional and unintentional.
According to Omran’s epidemiologic transition model, there are three successive stages of the epidemiological transition

1. The Age of Pestilence and Famine. This is the early stage of the transition where mortality is high among both children and adults as the result of frequent epidemics and periods of famine that produce a large burden of Group I health conditions. The average life expectancy at this stage at birth is low and variable, between 20 and 40 years.

2. The Age of Receding Pandemics. This is the midstage at which mortality declines progressively due to improvements in nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, public health and medical technologies, such as vaccines, the incidence of Group I conditions declines – especially among children giving way to an increasing predominance of non-communicable diseases. Average life expectancy increases at birth from 30 to about 50 years. The population growth is sustained and begins to describe an exponential curve.

3. The Age of Degenerative and Man-Made Diseases. At this late stage of the transition, Group II Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), which Omran called “degenerative and man-made diseases”, are the main drivers of mortality patterns. Because mortality among children had rapidly fallen in midst age, most people in late-transition survive to adulthood, where they are more vulnerable to the NCDs as many of these diseases develop as a result of accumulated exposures to risk factors over the lifetime. At this stage, life expectancy at birth exceeds 50 years (UN 2012, WHO Bul, 2001).

Based on the above explanations, in Africa, the region of the world with the lowest life expectancy at birth of 55 years, the majority of deaths in 2008 (61.0 per cent) were due to Group I health conditions, while the NCDs in Group II and the injuries in Group III accounted for 32.0 per cent and 7.0 per cent of deaths respectively. The high concentration of deaths from Group I conditions in Africa indicates that the region is still in the early stages of the epidemiologic transition.

While the whole of Africa enjoys the luxury of being in early stage of epidemiological transition, Uganda’s situation is abit complex given her demography and disease patterns where mortality and fertility rates are still high and yet communicable and non-communicable diseases are compet-
ing in prevalence as well as group III conditions—mainly due to road traffic accidents caused mainly by bodabodas though cars also contribute a great percentage. This is a huge health challenge for Uganda at large and for the youthful population in particular. The youth have the double tragedy of dying from both communicable and non-communicable diseases at the same time as well as group III health conditions.

Youth sexual life styles and group I conditions

Sexual behavior and high risk sex; Ugandan youth engage in sex early. Report by Youth map shows that by age of 18, over 62 percent of young women and about half of young men (47.9%) have had their sexual debut. In addition to engaging in sex, young people have high risk sex behaviors defined as extra-marital sex, non-marital sex, non-consensual sex, commercial sex, transactional sex, intergenerational sex and sex for survival (UDHS 2006). According to the demographic health survey (2006), twenty six percent of young women and 74 percent of young men had engaged in high risk sex. The report showed that sexually active women of ages 15-19 were more likely to report having multiple concurrent partners than women of any other age. However, young men (22.7%) were more likely to have multiple sexual partners than young women (4%) (UBOS, 2007).

Transactional sex in Uganda; The Demographic Health Survey (2006), reports that about 10 percent of young women and men gave or received money, gifts or favors in exchange for sex. However other studies have shown higher prevalence (Samara 2010). For example a study of rural Ugandan adolescents found that 90 percent of girls’ three most recent relationships included some form of economic support (Youth map 2011). Another study among secondary school students in rural Masaka found that sex was highly transactional both within peer and non-peer relationships (Nyanzi et al., 2001). In this study gifts and favors were associated with almost all relationships but the provision of money was used as an indication of sexual interest. One interesting finding was that sexual relationships without any transaction were viewed negatively by both male and female youth. Young women felt if they gave sex for free, they would be viewed as “loose” while both male and female youth felt that willingness to engage in sex without any transaction could indicate that one has HIV (Nyanzi et al., 2001).
Sexual coercion and violence; More than half (56%) of young women reported to have experienced physical violence and quarter reported that their first sexual experience was forced (UBOS, 2007). Another study in rural Uganda showed that 14 percent of sexually active young girls had their first sexual intercourse forced, and sexual coercion was higher when sex was initiated at an earlier age. Those whose first sexual encounter was coerced were more likely to have coercion in the subsequent encounters. Such sexual violence has definite negative health outcomes like STIs, HIV/AIDS, early pregnancy and other infections like cervical cancer and Hepatitis B (Koenig et al., 2004).

Contraceptive use; Contraceptive use among Youth in Uganda is very low. Only 11 percent of sexually active women currently use modern contraceptives though 53 percent reported to have ever used one and 35 percent of currently married youth have unmet need for family planning. Consistent condom use is only 36 percent among adolescents (Bankole et al., 2007) and condom use during high risk sex is 38 percent among young women and 48 percent among young men (UNAIDS 2009).

HIV/AIDS; Young people in Uganda bear a large share of the country’s HIV/AIDS burden with young females having the heaviest burden (Neema et al., 2004). HIV prevalence is 3.7 percent among young people aged 15–24 (MoH & ICF 2011). Reports by UNAIDS (2010) indicate prevalence among females and males ages 20-24 to be 4.8 percent and 2.3 percent respectively (UNAIDS 2009). The report shows very high Knowledge about HIV/AIDS among the youth but lower awareness about prevention methods (Khan and Mishra, 2008).

Marriage life; Early marriage is illegal in Uganda but many young women still marry at young age. By age 18, 46 percent of young women age 15-24 are married compared to only 7 percent of young men and 25 percent of young women age 15-19 have begun bearing children (UBOS 2007). Twenty percent of all births in the country come from these young women and majority (13%) of which are to unmarried girls (Magadi et al., 2007). It is a known fact that young mothers suffer more negative health outcomes due to early child bearing compared to their older counterparts. They have increased risks of complications like prolonged labor, still birth, postpartum hemorrhage, maternal stress and maternal mortality (UBOS, 2007). Generally adolescents are less likely to seek antenatal care, immunization and delivery
services due to stigma and fear (Reynolds et al., 2006, Magadi et al., 2007, UBOS 2007, Atuymbe et al., 2009). Reports associate the poor health seeking behaviors among young women with unplanned pregnancies (Magadi et al., 2007) which contributes to the high burden of abortion-related morbidity and mortality experienced by youth in Uganda. Research suggests that half of the abortion-related mortality in Uganda is from young women (Nalwada et al., 2010). However, due to its illegal status in Uganda; abortion-related data is difficult to get. Available data is got from close friends. A nationally representative survey of adolescents ages 12-19 showed that over 26 percent of females and 22 percent of males had a close friend who tried to end pregnancy (Neema et al., 2006). Another survey for in and out of school adolescents in Kabarole district revealed that over 56 percent of respondents reported having a friend who had abortion (Ndyanabangi et al., 2004).

*Alcohol and drug use;* Ugandans are the highest per capita consumers of alcohol in Africa (WHO, 2011). The report indicates that Ugandans who do drink tend to consume substantial amounts of alcohol (WHO, 2011). Young people in Uganda seem to follow a similar pattern of alcohol consumption to that of the general population. According to the study carried out in Mbarara University in Uganda, almost half of the students had consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months, and a quarter of them had engaged in heavy episodic drinking (Stafstrom et al., 2013). Research done by Center for Health and Human Rights Development (2014) among University students showed a prevalence of alcohol consumption of 40 percent and 49 percent among females and males respectively. An International Study noted that in Uganda, 6 percent (1936) of the females and 2 percent (595) of the males sampled between the ages of 12 and 24 reported that they or their partners had been drinking the last time they had sexual intercourse (WHO, 2005). Alcohol is known to contribute to risky sexual behavior (multiple sexual partners or unprotected sex) and spread of STIs including HIV/AIDS (Cook et al., 2005) including HIV (Kalichman et al., 2007). In addition, alcohol is a known risk factor for cancers.
Youth Health and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) — Group II Health Conditions

The four main non-communicable diseases identified by World Health Organization are; heart disease/hypertension, chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes, and most cancers and the primary risk factors to all of them include; tobacco use, immoderate alcohol use, physical inactivity, and unhealthy diet. These patterns are typically initiated during adolescence or young adulthood, and set the stage for unhealthy behaviors and diseases later in life. Up to date there is no national data on prevalence of NCDs in Uganda. Available data is mostly population based done by different entities.

According to WHO country profiles report (2014), current smoking in Uganda is 10 percent (2011), total alcohol per capita consumption, in litres of pure alcohol is 9.8(2010 ), raised blood pressure 34.2 percent (2008 ) and obesity prevalence by 2008 was 4.3 percent.

The Uganda National Housing survey (2009/2010) reported that 9 percent of the population has a history of NCDs and 5 percent prevalence of hypertension and heart disease. The prevalence of smoking was 13 percent among males and 5 percent among females. The prevalence of NCDs among HIV clients accessing ART at Mild may Uganda increased by 5 percent over one year period (Kawuma et al., 2012)

**Heart disease/hypertension;** Rheumatic heart disease (RHD) is the most common cause of heart failure and a major cause of atrial fibrillation and stroke in Uganda. A study done among school children in Uganda showed a prevalence of 2 percent RHD among school children (Beaton et al., 2012). Study done by Mondo et al., (2013) on NCD risk factors in Kasese district in rural Uganda using STEPs methodology showed a hypertension prevalence of 21 percent (22% men and 21% women) and 7.2 percent for diabetes. About ten percent smoked cigarettes daily and 24 percent had ever smoked.

**Cancers;** Cancers are on the increase due to associated risk factors like smoking, obesity, physical inactivity and reproductive behaviors (Boyle et al., 2008, UN 2008). A study by Wabinga et al., (2014) showed an overall increase in risk of cancer in both sexes. This study was based on cancer registry reports for Kyadondo County (Kampala city and rural hinterland) for the 20 year period (1991-2010). This study illustrates the effects of changing life style in urban Africa and effects of HIV/AIDS epidemic. The study shows
marked increase in incidence rates particularly for major cancers such as breast and prostate of 3.7 percent and 5.2 percent annually, respectively. Cancer of the cervix, the most frequent cancer of women, showed an increase of 1.8 percent per year over the period. According to the Kampala cancer registry, cervical cancer accounts for 40 percent of all cancers and it is the leading gynecological cause of death among women in Uganda (MoH, cancer strategy 2010). It should be noted that cervical cancer is a viral, sexually transmitted disease got early in life but it starts to manifest later in life. Therefore early sexual life of young people in Uganda could be associated with this increase in prevalence.

*Chronic respiratory disease;* Increase in chronic respiratory disease is associated with smoking and indoor pollution. A study done in rural Masindi showed that majority of 16 percent of chronic obstructive diseases were women mainly due to indoor pollution from the smoke during cooking (Van et al., 2013).

**Youth Health and Group III Conditions — Injuries with focus on Road Traffic Accidents**

According to WHO report, road traffic accidents are the second cause of death among young people age 5-14 and are first cause for those age 15-29 years (WHO, 2009). Uganda is one of the African countries with the highest rate of road accidents, (WHO fact sheet 2013).

The Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013 indicates that Uganda had 2,954 deaths in 2010 as a result of road accidents; Nigeria had 4,065 while South Africa registered the highest number at 13,768 by 2009. While Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania have relatively low (for the region) road fatality rates, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda combine big populations with very high fatality rates, resulting in large numbers of deaths (WHO 2013).

The use of boda boda motorcycles in Uganda has contributed a lot to this situation. Bodaboda motorcycles are one of the most popular form of transportation in Uganda’s urban centers. Road traffic crashes (RTCs) have increased since the introduction of boda bodas in Kampala in 2001 (Kigera et al., 2010). Bodabodas are the leading cause of accident scene fatalities in Kampala (Uganda Police 2002). Youth of ages 20-29 are the most affected by boda boda road traffic crashes because it is a source of livelihood for them (Injury control surveillance report, 2000-2003). The same report reveals 5 to
20 boda boda accident cases everyday in Mulago hospital alone and this translates to 7,280 cases a year. A study by Kigera et al., (2010) reported that boda bodas were responsible for about 75 percent of all trauma caused in road traffic collisions which is one of the highest in the region. According to this study, the total cost of managing all inpatients due to bodaboda injuries within the three months of the study was UGX 224,815,195 equivalent to about $80,291 at the current exchange rate of $1 to Ugshs 2800. This translates to UGX 899,260,780 per year, equivalent to $321,164 annually. This data was only from 62 percent of the files anticipated. If data was from 100 percent files, then the figures would have been much bigger.

Looking at this background, modernization and life styles have huge health impact on the population and it is more disturbing for the youth who are the majority and thus most affected. Unless Uganda comes up with seriously enforceable laws and policies and proven prevention strategies, the situation of youth health in this country will become unmanageable especially with the limited resources available. While the country has been focusing only on communicable diseases, NCDs and injuries, especially road traffic accidents are increasingly overtaking communicable diseases. The country needs to wake up and take serious measures before it is too late.

8.4.3 Impact of Modernization and Life Styles on Public Health Policies in Uganda

Uganda is a country known for making good policies and laws which don’t get implemented or enforced. While the country has very good and clear policies, strategies, guidelines or even laws for addressing the situation of communicable diseases, NCDs and injuries have not got the attention they deserve.

For example WHO recommends a nine step national systems response to NCDs but Uganda has only fulfilled one step as seen in the table 1;
Table 1
Status of Uganda’s NCD National Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>National Systems Response</th>
<th>Status (Yes/No)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Has an operational NCD unit/branch or department within the Ministry of Health, or equivalent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Has an operational multi-sectoral national policy, strategy or action plan that integrates several NCDs and shared risk factors</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Has an operational policy, strategy or action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Has an operational policy, strategy or action plan to reduce physical inactivity and/or promote physical activity</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Has an operational policy, strategy or action plan to reduce the burden of tobacco use</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Has an operational policy, strategy or action plan to reduce unhealthy diet and/or promote healthy diets</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Has evidence-based national guidelines/protocols/standards for the management of major NCDs through a primary care approach</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Has an NCD surveillance and monitoring system in place to enable reporting against the nine global NCD targets</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Has a national, population-based cancer registry</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WHO NCD country profiles 2014

There are a number of laws or policies/strategies to address road traffic accidents but poor implementation has been a big challenge (table 2). Boda boda industry has thrived on such laxity. “It has not been easy to arrest errant boda boda riders because there is no proper regulatory framework.” Says Mathias Okwir, the community liaisons officer, Kampala Metropolitan traffic; “Political interference has also not helped the matters. Sometime back, we started a massive operation on errant boda bodas, but some powerful politicians with a stake in the boda boda business accused us of harassing the offenders. We stopped.” He continued (New Vision June 6th 2013). Such
is the situation with implementation of laws on road safety in Uganda. So when offenders are caught most times they prefer to give some small money to the police officers, though un-official most times they take it. If the “big fish” do not want the laws to be implemented, what option do the police officers have? In my observation, the police normally do not ask for this money but when people are caught on the wrong and the police get their book to record the offense for official punishment, people start negotiating to pay some money to bail themselves from the official fines. For the upcountry routes for example, it is routine for buses just to throw some money out of the window for the traffic police when they are on high speed. The police pick the money and leave them to pass. Corruption therefore, starts from top and trickles down to the smallest person. For the “big fish” they think interfering with police work is not corruption and they blame the police for taking the bribes.

Table 2
Status of Road Safety Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SN</th>
<th>Key Indicator</th>
<th>Status yes/no or not recorded [-]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Institutional Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funded in national budget</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National road safety strategy</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funding to implemented strategy</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fatality reduction targets set</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fatality reduction target</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Safer Road Users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Enforcement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penalty/demerit point system in place</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Speed limits</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National drink-drive law</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National motorcycle law</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National seat belt law</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National child restraint law</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National law on mobile phones while driving</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WHO fact sheet on road safety 2013

It is therefore clear that the lack of or poor implementation of public health laws, policies, strategies and guidelines in regard to the health situations arising as a result of modernization and life styles in Uganda has had a negative impact on youth health. Despite the pathetic health situations, health care is not free for Ugandans. Free health care is a political statement without preparing the ground for it and most times, the free services are not available and majority of Ugandans spend from their pockets. Out of pocket spending has been 65 percent since 2010 to date (World Bank, 2014).

With the increase in population, health facility population ratio is so pathetic and this gives a clear indication of the bed capacity at facility level as shown in the table 3;
Table 3
Health facility: population ratio in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of facility</th>
<th>Indicator Health facility population ratio</th>
<th>Situation in 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National referral Hospital</td>
<td>1:10,000,000</td>
<td>1: 30,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional referral hospital</td>
<td>1:3,000,000</td>
<td>1: 2,307,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General hospital</td>
<td>1:500,000</td>
<td>1:263,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health center IV</td>
<td>1:100,000</td>
<td>1:187,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health center III</td>
<td>1:20,000</td>
<td>1:84,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health center II</td>
<td>1:5000</td>
<td>1:14,940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Health statistical abstract 2010

This facility population ratio gives an idea of bed capacity at the facilities. Much as the regional referral hospitals and general hospitals seem to have less population than the standard, the actual bed capacity in these facilities is very poor due to lack of infrastructure development.

8.5 Key Emerging Issues

1. The key development policies/strategies lack focus on youth development. The growing young population is consistently identified as a challenge to development in all Ugandan policy documents but priorities and interventions identified target the general problem. They are mentioned to consume the bulk of health services. Yet the policy objectives and strategies in National Development Plan and The National Health policy do not target youth. Advocates for youth development argue that youth development should be clearly reflected in all the policies and should focus on opportunities, capabilities and second chances (World Bank Report 2007). According to them, supply side challenges that face
youth development are lack of opportunities to access services and work experiences; demand side are behaviors that may reflect lack of information, resources or experienced decision making and that all can be addressed by right policies (World Bank Report, 2007) which Uganda is either lacking or is poorly implementing.

2. Uganda still uses the problem-based youth development model. Though youth have not been specifically targeted in the policies, by implication, what is meant for the general population applies to youth. Health components of the policies have looked at the population as diseased and have identified solutions to fix or treat the problem and this general principle applies to youth as well. Therefore youth have been looked at as recipients of health services but not as development partners in health. Problem-based development model has been known to waste resources, confirm youth identity as troubled people and unintentionally reinforce the undesirable behavior (Hamilton et al., 2004). The youth development approach is rooted in commitment to enable all youth to thrive, Uganda lacks this commitment. This problem-based development model will only keep Uganda in the vicious circle of problems.

3. Investments in youth are done in later age, which according to development advocates do not yield good impact. One of the principles of investment models recognized in economics argues that a solid foundation for human capital is acquired before adolescence and this has not been reflected in the development policies. Because Uganda’s development model is problem-based, they have only tended to focus their health interventions to populations and age groups that have most health problems. They have interventions for children under five who are mostly affected by infectious diseases, nothing for age from 7-9 and later target adolescence who are already developing/developed behavior problems. It is mostly “fire fighting” in health but not development. There is no holistic approach to youth health development.

One of the important youth development framework used by World Bank splits youth lens into three mutually supportive lenses that focus on policies and magnify their impact (World Bank Report 2007). The first lens focuses on the gaps in opportunities for building human capital and on policies that help young people acquire, improve, and deploy their skills. The second lens focuses on the capabilities of young people as
they choose among the opportunities available to them and on policies that dispense the information and incentives to help them make good decisions. The third lens focuses on remedying undesirable outcomes and on policies offering *second chances* that put young people back on the path to build their human capital for the future. Therefore, policies must be well coordinated to have maximum impact. Uganda seems to be using only the third lens because most health strategies focus only on addressing childhood illnesses and then adolescent behavior problems like teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS and STIs. In Uganda, communicable diseases are competing with non-communicable diseases and Uganda has no strategies is not investing in the youth to prevent these diseases. It has emerged clearly that investments before adolescence yield great impact and missed opportunities to invest in and prepare this generation will be extremely costly to reverse both for young people and for society.

4. Modernization and life style changes have a huge health implication on youth but the country is not paying attention to the situation in terms of policies, laws, strategies standards and guidelines. The country has reached the stage of increased NCDs and injuries prematurely and this huge challenge to deal with but the country is not making any efforts towards this.

Therefore, unless Uganda changes the youth development approach, youth health will remain a big challenge and the youth bulge will remain a demographic challenge instead of a dividend.

8.6 Conclusion and Recommendations

8.6.1 Conclusions

The key development policies/strategies of Uganda have identified the young population and the high fertility rate as a development challenge but the policies/strategies have not targeted investments in youth health as a key intervention that can result into demographic dividend The youth being the majority, have visibly been left out of the policies/strategies and instead focused on targeting the general population.
Uganda has not clearly defined the youth development model to use and most of the policies/strategies have remained problem-based which is merely “fire fighting” not investments for development. Unless Uganda changes this problem-based development model, she will not reap from the opportunities of having young population.

Culture and religion is a double aged sword. It has both negatives and positives. Unless strategically managed, the negatives will outweigh the positives and negatively influence youth as discussed. The country needs to design and implement strategies that can take advantage of the good aspects of culture and religion and technically find ways of discouraging the negative aspects. These need to be clearly youth focused and defined in the policies and strategies.

Modernization and changing life styles of Ugandans have huge health implications most especially for the youth. Uganda can best be placed at pre-transition stage of the demographic and epidemiological transitions given the fertility and mortality trends. Non-Communicable Diseases are on the increase at a time when infectious disease prevalence is still very high. All these mostly affect the youth. Unfortunately the country lacks or has poor implementation of public health laws, policies, strategies and guidelines to deal with the changes. Unless the country develops and enforces proper public health laws, policies/strategies/guidelines to mitigate the negative impacts of modernization and changing life styles, the country is heading for a health disaster

8.6.2 Recommendations

» This paper recommends that ministry of health should ensure that all health related policies and strategies be developed using the youth development lens in order to realize the demographic dividend out of the youth bulge.

» Government should clearly define and implement mechanisms to take advantage of positive elements of culture and religion and those to discourage the wrong elements in the framework of youth development.
» Ugandan government should adopt, popularize and implement positive youth development model and move away from the problem-based youth development model.

» Youth leaders and youth advocates should learn and understand youth development principles and advocate for its integration into all laws, policies, strategies and programs.

» The country needs to develop and enforce laws, policies/strategies/guidelines to mitigate the negative impacts of modernization and lifestyle changes and create awareness on the increasing NCDs with focus on the demographic and epidemiological changes and their impact on youth health.

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