### Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Message from the Project Manager – Hilda Achayo</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>YES Project in Figures</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Changing unemployment narrative in West Nile</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Budding entrepreneurs owe their success to YES</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Internship placements creating an experienced</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agribusiness for rural youth</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Village Savings and Loan Associations providing</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accessible capital to youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Success stories</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Pictorial</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Message from the Project Manager – Hilda Achayo**

Uganda’s economy is anchored on agriculture as one of the drivers of the economy. Agriculture contributes approximately 37% of Uganda’s Gross Domestic Product and employs over 70% of Uganda’s labour force. In 2014, SNV Uganda, together with the Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) and the Centre for Governance and Economic Development (CEGED) launched the Youth Employability through Enterprise and Skills Development Project (YES) in the West Nile region of Uganda.

The overall goal of the European Union funded project was primarily to create sustainable economic opportunities to enhance youth employment opportunities in the districts of Arua, Nebbi, Yumbe and Moyo, and ultimately reduce poverty among 5,000 target youth (30% female by 2017).

In three years or project implementation, the project has created employment for 5,717 in and out of school youth through formal and non-formal skills development and vocational training (114% above the project target). The number of youth living on 1.25 USD per day has also reduced from 71.4% at baseline to 32%.

The importance of agriculture to the economic wellbeing of Ugandans cannot be overemphasised. A recent action research undertaken by SNV and its partners showed an increase in the number of youth embracing agriculture. 63% of the targeted youth had taken up agriculture followed by petty trade (48%) and boda boda riding (30%). This makes the agribusiness component of the project the most popular among the youth. While agriculture is the first line of employment for the majority of the youth, it is still predominantly carried out on subsistence level. SNV and its partners CEGED and AFARD have been working to change this trend through agricultural skilling and enterprise development.

Some of the key intervention areas that we have focused on include:

- Promoting investment by local public and private training institutions and enterprises in skills development (apprentice, on the job, external courses) for the youth
- Provision of transferable and entrepreneurship skills training for youth
- Promotion of peer to peer learning through coaching and mentoring of young model farmers who in turn mentor other youth in agriculture

This newsletter gives an insight into the programme from the perspective of the youth that have been supported by the YES project. I would like to thank our partners and the European Union for their contribution towards empowering the youth in West Nile.

---

**Disclaimer**

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of SNV Uganda and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.
Empowering youth in West Nile

YES Project

Closeout Newsletter

September 2017

Youth supported to access employment through formal and non formal skills development and vocational training

1,195

PSEs that assessed the learning of interns and apprentices and provided feedback to BTivet institutions

115

Youth in BTivet institutions trained using YES entrepreneurship and life skills training manual

1,575

Youth supported to access employment through formal and non formal skills development and vocational training

5,717

Average monthly turnover

271,853

Beneficiary youth involved in LA/NSA planning processes

984

Beneficiary youth who got LA/NSA budget support for their projects

66

Youth linked to financial markets

436

Youth linked to insurance markets

256

Youth linked to input dealers

438

Beneficiary youth who got LA/NSA budget support for their projects

66

Youth linked to insurance markets

256

Youth linked to input dealers

438
Empowering youth in West Nile

YES Project Closeout Newsletter

September 2017

The way we work

Changing unemployment narrative in West Nile

Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world. According to the last national population census, there are 19.8 million people below the age of 18 while 6.4 million are between 18 and 30. This means that 75.1% of Uganda’s population is 30 years and below. The majority of these people are either unemployed or underemployed.

This explains why in October 2014, the Netherland Development Organisation (SNV) in Uganda together with its partners Agency for Accelerated regional Development (AFARD) and Centre for Governance and Economic Development (CEGED) launched a three year programme to change the youth unemployment narrative. The European Union funded the project.

The project set up in the West Nile region of Uganda was baptised the Youth Employability through Enterprise and Skills Development. It was mainly to be known by its acronym YES especially in its four district of focus namely: Arua, Moyo, Yumbe, and Nebbi.

In order to succeed, the SNV and its partners developed the skills of the project team and recruited four enterprise officers as well as one skilling personnel. However, a project that aims at reducing the unemployment gap among the youth would need buy in of different stakeholders. In this regard, buy-in meetings were held with all the district officials, which enabled them, get a bird’s view of what YES was all about and importantly manage their expectations. Dr Christopher Dratele, the Moyo District Production and Marketing Officer was one of such officials who participated in the YES project.

YES Project beneficiaries supplied schools with quality foods

“I am impressed by efforts of the YES Project because farming is no longer done for survival. The commercial viability has been realised by farmers and particularly the youth who have been training in better farming practices,” Dr Dratele explained.

The YES Project has taught the youth how to grow commercially rewarding vegetables like cabbages, onions, and tomatoes, which the district production & marketing officer says were previously bought from as far as Mbale in Eastern Uganda and Luweero in the central region.

He noted that vegetables take a shorter time to grow as opposed to traditional crops like cassava and sorghum. Dr Dratele commended the YES Project for also uniting the youth who work in groups of 29 to 35 members, learning from each. “With the youth working in groups, they are able to enjoy the advantages of collective marketing. For example, if they are to sell their produce, they do it in groups which helps them save on transport costs and also enjoy better prices because of collective bargaining,” he observe.

He said the YES Project dispelled the negative attitude most youth had towards agriculture. “They had a negative attitude towards agriculture due to the labour involved and the length of time involved before harvest and money is earned but farming is making economic sense for beneficiaries of the project since they have been able to acquire assets from the sale of their produce,” he observed.

“They have started supplying vegetables to schools in the district such as Metu Secondary School. The school has a population of about 600 students which is a good market for farmers,” he said.

What were the most available opportunities for the youth?

A youth labour market scan was carried out which highlighted the available opportunities regarding youth unemployment and the available opportunities. Many parts of West Nile are endowed with fertile soils. It wasn’t surprising, therefore, that agriculture emerged as a prominent source of employment. Growing of vegetables, beans, and maize were the most appropriate as they take a few months to mature, highly marketable and provide a good return on investment.

A baseline study conducted established the status of beneficiaries at the beginning of the project and refined the system required for effective monitoring.

Sam Amanderu, a beneficiary of the YES Project milling cassava.
The role of BTUET institutions in creating employment

The project targeted Business Technical and Vocational Education Training (BTUET) institutions so that they improve their capacity in delivering market relevant instructions for their students. Of the targeted 20 BTUET institutions, only nine out of 19 that expressed interest in the program offered entrepreneurship and life skills training packages albeit on a consultancy basis. By the third year, 14 institutions were offering entrepreneurship trainings and integrated as part of the regular school calendar.

To ensure that relevant skills are being imparted to the youth during these trainings, the YES project developed Entrepreneurship and Life-Skills Training manual for this institutions. The government is adopting the YES model into the BTUET curriculum to ensure more youth across the country benefit, revealed Hilda Achayo, the YES Project Manager.

Although these BTUET institutions prescribed internship and apprenticeship, they didn’t do much to administer it. Students were not being placed appropriately to gain the right skills and they were not being supervised. “The project designed a set of tools to support internship at the institutional level and worked with the instructors to supervise the students,” Achayo explained. “Pre-internship meetings at the BTUET level enabled the learners to have a clear goal of internship and levelled their expectations. Out of 1000 students targeted for internship in the project life span, 936 participated and gained hands on experience from the Private Sector Enterprises (PSEs), which have made them more marketable in the job world,” she added. A sizeable number of companies formally employed the students that had interned with them.

How did the YES project match the students with the PSEs?

A mapping exercise was carried out to identify the PSEs where students would be seconded for internship and apprenticeship placements. The PSEs considered were those that offered an enabling environment for the students to acquire the necessary skills. At the same time, the capacity of BTUET staff was built so that they offer appropriate mentorship and coaching. The PSE supervisors regularly interacted with the BTUET ones so that they gave each other feedback on how to improve.

Did the youth embrace agriculture as the YES project had envisioned?

A big percentage of the targeted youth have taken agriculture as a business and form of employment. Although changes in the weather sometimes affect these youth, many acknowledge that YES has empowered them with the necessary skills in agronomy. The project trained model farmers across the four districts who in turned passed on the knowledge to fellow group members.

What role did the YES Project play in entrepreneurship and life skills training?

The project trained 1887 youth in entrepreneurship and life skills. The trained youth have been able to grow their businesses and significantly improve their welfare. Such youth include Gift Arivile, who is supplying West Nile with utensils, candle stands and bells for schools among other products.
Arivile’s gifted hands supplying households with utensils

When Gift Arivile completed his Craft One Certificate in Plumbing at the Arua Technical Institute, he was glad he had a qualification to earn him a well-paying job. He was wrong! Every door he knocked on, he was told to look further on. Disappointed, he decided to enrol for another course at Jiako, where he attained basic training in steel fabrication.

Soon after, he started designing and developing aluminium utensils by casting method, a process by which aluminium scrap is melted and turned into a desired shape. He would make saucepans and other steel products, which he would then vend in Yumbe. The YES project identified and picked interest in Arivile’s skills and efforts, and offered to help him further his aspiration.

“They taught me how to make a business plan and took me through entrepreneurship training. The YES Project gave me capital of Shs310,000 worth of scrap,” Arivile recounted. They also taught him customer care, in which he would have to adopt a soft tone to woo clients, offer price discounts and improve on his product display.

“This was my turning point,” Arivile said while making a saucepan. In a day, I can make up to Shs400,000. I am grateful to the YES Project for teaching me how to make a business,” he said. That would enable him supply more districts in West Nile as well as neighbouring South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo.

In the meantime, Arivile has also been able to build himself a house on the same land and installed piped water. All growing cassava on one acre and beans on has savings of Shs1.5m with Alpha Cooperatives and Saving Society. “I also save with my group where I growing cassava on one acre and beans on another three quarters of an acre,” he said. He also has been able to build himself a house on the same land and install piped water. All these developments cost him Shs4.2m. “I am also promised to sign up for such services.

Peek to Peer learning

The YES Project created the advocacy and youth business forum thereby facilitating peer-to-peer learning and provided space for the young people to interact with other stakeholders. The business exhibitions, particularly, marketed youth products and enabling the participants to get business. Gift Winnie, an enterprising crafts maker in Yumbe was a key beneficiary.

Gift Winnie making crafts

Gift Winnie, a trained nurse thought of ways of supplementing her income at Yumbe Hospital where she had been employed. Making handbags naturally came to her. One day, she was vending her crafted handbags when a YES Project official saw her and bought one. Winnie was asked to enrol into the project. She was trained and asked to make a business plan where she won Shs300,000 to capitalise her business.

Winnie started making more crafts and sold more of them making her earn more money than she was getting at the hospital. On average she would make Shs400,000 per month from her crafts. Then she attended a business forum and exhibition in Arua.

“I was all of a sudden selling products worth Shs1.5m a day during the exhibition. I made a lot of contacts from customers and shared ideas with other youth,” she said.

“I wish they are organised more often.”

She not only sold products, she also got consultancy opportunities from other NGOs to train refugees in the camps. West Nile is now home to the biggest refugee camps in the world. The YES Project too contracted her to train others.

She has been able to buy land in Owolonga village outside Yumbe town and built herself an iron-sheet roofed house. “I have also bought land and started building houses for rent on top of starting a community church in the area,” she revealed. At the community church she built with Shs3m, she plans to buy an adjacent piece of land at Shs14.5m to construct the school.

She now employs two people who help her make the products and another three who sell the products in town and other markets. “I want to build a training school to empower more people with the right skills. I taught myself how to make these products but I think not everyone would be able to do that without going through training,” she observed.
Budding entrepreneurs owe their success to YES Project

Entrepreneurship is considered one of the ways through which people can create jobs for themselves and others. By people getting the right skills and support, they can identify opportunities and take advantage of them. The YES Project used this approach to ensure that the youth are trained to create business ideas and develop a business plan. They were also trained in marketing, record keeping, and saving. Entrepreneurship and life skills training were integrated into the curriculum of 28 BTVEI institutions, with 1,575 youth undergoing the course.

“As part of their training, the youth developed and completed business plans, which were submitted in a competition that awarded the winners with cash and other prizes to expand their businesses,” Hilda Achayo, the YES Project Manager explained.

The role of BTVEI institutions in entrepreneurship education cannot be overemphasized. Henry Acadribo, the Youth Skilling Officer at the YES Project explains that the BTVEI system was designed to enhance the capacity of training institutions to offer relevant courses to their students so that they can create opportunities for themselves and others.

Margaret Amira who graduated with a national certificate of agriculture at Nile Farm Institute said that her training with support from the YES Project prepared her for poultry farming.

“I won Shs300,000 after submitting my business plan. My uncle gave me a small room and I started my farm with 23 chicks. Three of them died and I remained with 20,” she said.

Her elder brother, a medical doctor in South Sudan, supported her and she bought another 11 chicks. “I work as a shop attendant in Arua town so I use my salary to feed them,” she said. “My brother has now bought an extra 50 chicks for me because he has realised how passionate and determined I am,” she added.

This comes after a lot of people had discouraged her from starting the business without sufficient capital. “People said you can’t do poultry with Shs300,000. I am going to have the last laugh,” she says. “To all the youth out there, you just need to start. Just start. If I hadn’t started, my uncle wouldn’t have given me a room for free here and my brother wouldn’t have supported me,” she appealed.

However, some of these youths were not necessarily in BTVEI institutions. Some were just people doing business in town and identified to be supported.

Eunice Umwonya is one such youth. The former Radio Pacis presenter who holds a Masters Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy of Makerere University and a Bachelor Degree in Mass Communication of Uganda Christian University had decided to start a salon in Nebbi town to supplement her income. However, she didn’t have a business plan. She didn’t keep records and sometimes she would have to look for money from elsewhere to ensure the salon survives.

“Today, things are different. I know exactly how much the salon makes and I have been able to expand it,” she said while pointing at a tong machine she has since acquired. “I also got a curling machine and we have enough stock of beauty products and hair extensions,” she added.

Her customer care has greatly improved as well. People spend a lot of time in salons. Hair plaiting can take hours or a whole day in some cases. Such customers are bound to become thirsty. Umwonya saw this as an opportunity. She bought a fridge and started selling refreshments thereby increasing the business’ income. “At first we would go and buy the soda from somewhere else and sometimes it wouldn’t be chilled like the customer wants it. I saw this opportunity and invested in it,” says the mother of two.
Hellen Asio, the burgeoning Moyo fashion designer

When Hellen Asio visited her aunt in 2015, she thought it was an opportunity to see and explore Kampala city after which she would return to Moyo. There was more. As she spoke with her cousin Gladys Anzoyo, she realised that she could learn to make bags. Anzoyo was willing to teach her to weave and make bags.

By the time she returned to Moyo, she had got the skills and had made her first two products — a big bag which earned her Shs80,000. “I felt excited that I could earn that much money from making and selling bags. This was a good relief after I had failed to continue in school. I had just finished sitting for Senior Four (S.4) and my parents who are peasant farmers, could not continue paying fees,” Asio recalled. “They had my younger siblings to educate too.”

She started displaying her products on the veranda of a building on Okidi Road in Moyo town. One day, representatives of the YES Project approached her. “They asked me if I was interested in receiving training and becoming a member of the YES Project. I listened to them attentively and I accepted straight away. They taught me how to write a business plan and advised me on how to price my products. We were also told that when pricing or selling to a customer, it was important to speak to them and also offer discounts as a way of attracting them back and making them loyal clients,” Asio further recalled.

The Shs80,000 she earned from making the bags was her first capital. She sent it to her cousin to buy for her materials and made more bags. The bags sold out fast and customers kept coming back and placing orders.

The 26-year-old said that during the training, they were also taught how to save. She immediately enrolled as a member in Arelu Saving Group. This enabled her save Shs1.3m part of which she used to buy a sewing machine at Shs600,000. She also bought a baby-lock machine at Shs450,000. With these two machines, Asio is able to table clothes and school uniforms.

“I save Shs18,000 every week,” she revealed. “In the training, we were taught how to market our products. That way, I managed to get contracted by King Nursery School, Stody Nursery School and Besia Nursery to make sweaters for them,” she added.

Today, Asio doesn’t operate on a veranda anymore. She has her own shop. She has acquired more machines and the YES Project has contracted her to train other youth including those with disability.

“I save much of my earnings because I still need to invest in machines. I also opened another savings account with Moyo Sacco,” she revealed. To supplement her income, Asio has planted three acres of cassava in Pomoju village.

Her advice to fellow youth is to follow in her footsteps. “I know many people have not had a chance to go to university. You can learn or be trained to acquire skills that can enable you live respectably. For even those who graduated but are still waiting to get a job, it is good to acquire skills as you wait,” she advised.
Internship placement creating an experienced workforce

Felix Madrara held a clutch master cylinder firmly as he explained to a trainee how to repair it at Gil Oil Fuel Station in Arua town. He gave detailed explanations. He sounded like the pro that he is.

He must be a master mechanic, if the expression on the face of his trainee is to be trusted. Madrara, of course, wasn’t born a pro. He simply studied Mechanics and Driving at Nile Institute of Management Studies. As part of his course, he had to undergo internship training. “I was placed at Mechatronics Engineering Limited for 11 months where I got hands-on experience,” he said. After his internship placement, Madrara applied and got a job as the Station Service Manager at Gil Oil. “Without the internship, I would have been only grounded in theory,” he says. “Today, I have the practical experience and theoretical framework needed to do the job,” he added.

Acadribo Henry, the Youth Skilling Officer at the YES Project underscored the importance of internship because it helped students get practical skills in the job market since most institutions offer theoretical knowledge. “We negotiated internship placements for students. Many of the students who get placements are either retained or easily find jobs,” he says. “Internship creates an experienced workforce, markets institutions and builds a strong relationship between these institutions and the private sector,” he explained.
At the time when the YES Project began efforts to promote internship, only four out of the 14 partner institutions were venturing in internship. “The private sector had a negative attitude towards interns. For example, salon owners were afraid of taking on interns fearing that they were going to mess up their clients’ hair,” he explained.

The address this situation, the YES Project set up inception meetings with institutions and private companies where these interns would be placed.

The main outcome of the meetings was an agreement to have a mentor at the private company who would give assignments and supervise the student. There would be an instructor from the BTIET institution to check on the student and get progress reports.

“We also developed guiding forms for the internship, with a daily activity log, a reporting and evaluation form and an accountability form. By the third year of the project, 936 students had got internship placement. There is a general feeling that internship is appreciated,” Acadribo further explained.

This emphasis on internships had significant results. “The new national BETVET curriculum is putting internship as a core part of the training. This, without bragging, is a direct result of the YES Project,” Acadribo revealed with a broad smile.

Johnson Ochola, the Head of Education and Training at Adraa Agricultural College, which offers a month’s internship in partnership with the YES Project says that students get to put what they learn into practice. “While here, a student gets many skills including grafting, milking a cow and bee keeping and making honey among others,” he says.

“I learnt how to castrate a bull while I was doing internship at Adraa,” says Jimmy Abiria of Lezu village near the Uganda-Congo border post of Vurra. He is a former student of general agriculture at Yole Polytechnic Institute in Arua. “The skills I got from Adraa have enabled me set up my piggery project. I know how to feed and treat them,” he adds.

The YES Project and the Uganda Private Vocational Institutions Association have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to incorporate entrepreneurship and life skills training. A manual was developed with eight modules.

*Internship placements were difficult for us because we did not have linkages with the private sector. The YES Project enlightened us about the importance of internship. It also went ahead to bridge the gap that existed between the private companies and us,” explains Francis Okweda, the Deputy Principal of Zobele Memorial Vocational Institute, Arua. “It also brought us — 14 training institutions together under one umbrella,” he adds.

**Agribusiness for rural youth**

**Young model farmers spearheading an agribusiness revolution**

Agriculture is the mainstay of Uganda’s economy. The majority of Ugandans live in rural areas with agriculture providing the means of employment. It was only natural customer care. Young model farmers were to lead 29-35 other farmers in a specific location to provide coaching and mentoring in agribusiness.

The young model farmers got kits with which to set up demo plots and provide on-going training while other youth got seeds and some chemical for land ranging from quarter an acre to one acre or depending on the crop enterprise start-up costs. With these inputs, young model farmers continued to provide periodic trainings on good agronomic practices.

Bernard Pino is one such young model farmer in Yurekijoro village in Arua district. He specializes in tomatoes. The West Nile region has not been spared from changes in the climate. To safeguard his crops from harsh weather conditions, Pino was trained and given a bucket drip irrigation kit by the project. The kit included a water pump.

“I train fellow youth on how to irrigate their crops. I created a reservoir where we collect storm water or what we pump from nearby streams. The water is then pumped into the buckets from which it irrigates the crops,” he said. Each line of tomatoes is served by one bucket.

With an easy to assemble kit, the farmers will be able to supply their customers regardless of the weather season. “I am also planting the tomatoes at different stages so that I can constantly supply given the fact that I have an irrigation system now,” he said.

The youth in the sub counties identified a young model farmer who was already practicing agriculture and had basic leadership skills. The selected young model farmers were then trained in farming as a business and good agronomic practices by the project.

The training was carried out in five days with participatory methods, which included practical skills in nursery bed preparation, group discussions, and lectures. Topics covered included roles of the young model farmer; programmed hatching (Local Poultry Management); and good agronomic practices for onions, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, cabbages, carrots etc. They were also trained in developing agribusiness plans; record keeping; marketing; and

The young model farmers got kits with which to set up demo plots and provide on-going training while other youth got seeds and some chemical for land ranging from quarter an acre to one acre or depending on the crop enterprise start-up costs. With these inputs, young model farmers continued to provide periodic trainings on good agronomic practices.

Bernard Pino is one such young model farmer in Yurekijoro village in Arua district. He specializes in tomatoes. The West Nile region has not been spared from changes in the climate. To safeguard his crops from harsh weather conditions, Pino was trained and given a bucket drip irrigation kit by the project. The kit included a water pump.

“I train fellow youth on how to irrigate their crops. I created a reservoir where we collect storm water or what we pump from nearby streams. The water is then pumped into the buckets from which it irrigates the crops,” he said. Each line of tomatoes is served by one bucket.

With an easy to assemble kit, the farmers will be able to supply their customers regardless of the weather season. “I am also planting the tomatoes at different stages so that I can constantly supply given the fact that I have an irrigation system now,” he said.

The youth in the sub counties identified a young model farmer who was already practicing agriculture and had basic leadership skills. The selected young model farmers were then trained in farming as a business and good agronomic practices by the project.

The training was carried out in five days with participatory methods, which included practical skills in nursery bed preparation, group discussions, and lectures. Topics covered included roles of the young model farmer; programmed hatching (Local Poultry Management); and good agronomic practices for onions, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, cabbages, carrots etc. They were also trained in developing agribusiness plans; record keeping; marketing; and

* Internship placements were difficult for us because we did not have linkages with the private sector. The YES Project enlightened us about the importance of internship. It also went ahead to bridge the gap that existed between the private companies and us,” explains Francis Okweda, the Deputy Principal of Zobele Memorial Vocational Institute, Arua. “It also brought us — 14 training institutions together under one umbrella,” he adds.

**Agribusiness for rural youth**

**Young model farmers spearheading an agribusiness revolution**

Agriculture is the mainstay of Uganda’s economy. The majority of Ugandans live in rural areas with agriculture providing the means of employment. It was only natural customer care. Young model farmers were to lead 29-35 other farmers in a specific location to provide coaching and mentoring in agribusiness.

The young model farmers got kits with which to set up demo plots and provide on-going training while other youth got seeds and some chemical for land ranging from quarter an acre to one acre or depending on the crop enterprise start-up costs. With these inputs, young model farmers continued to provide periodic trainings on good agronomic practices.

Bernard Pino is one such young model farmer in Yurekijoro village in Arua district. He specializes in tomatoes. The West Nile region has not been spared from changes in the climate. To safeguard his crops from harsh weather conditions, Pino was trained and given a bucket drip irrigation kit by the project. The kit included a water pump.

“I train fellow youth on how to irrigate their crops. I created a reservoir where we collect storm water or what we pump from nearby streams. The water is then pumped into the buckets from which it irrigates the crops,” he said. Each line of tomatoes is served by one bucket.

With an easy to assemble kit, the farmers will be able to supply their customers regardless of the weather season. “I am also planting the tomatoes at different stages so that I can constantly supply given the fact that I have an irrigation system now,” he said.

The youth in the sub counties identified a young model farmer who was already practicing agriculture and had basic leadership skills. The selected young model farmers were then trained in farming as a business and good agronomic practices by the project.

The training was carried out in five days with participatory methods, which included practical skills in nursery bed preparation, group discussions, and lectures. Topics covered included roles of the young model farmer; programmed hatching (Local Poultry Management); and good agronomic practices for onions, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, cabbages, carrots etc. They were also trained in developing agribusiness plans; record keeping; marketing; and

The young model farmers got kits with which to set up demo plots and provide on-going training while other youth got seeds and some chemical for land ranging from quarter an acre to one acre or depending on the crop enterprise start-up costs. With these inputs, young model farmers continued to provide periodic trainings on good agronomic practices.

Bernard Pino is one such young model farmer in Yurekijoro village in Arua district. He specializes in tomatoes. The West Nile region has not been spared from changes in the climate. To safeguard his crops from harsh weather conditions, Pino was trained and given a bucket drip irrigation kit by the project. The kit included a water pump.

“I train fellow youth on how to irrigate their crops. I created a reservoir where we collect storm water or what we pump from nearby streams. The water is then pumped into the buckets from which it irrigates the crops,” he said. Each line of tomatoes is served by one bucket.

With an easy to assemble kit, the farmers will be able to supply their customers regardless of the weather season. “I am also planting the tomatoes at different stages so that I can constantly supply given the fact that I have an irrigation system now,” he said.

The youth in the sub counties identified a young model farmer who was already practicing agriculture and had basic leadership skills. The selected young model farmers were then trained in farming as a business and good agronomic practices by the project.

The training was carried out in five days with participatory methods, which included practical skills in nursery bed preparation, group discussions, and lectures. Topics covered included roles of the young model farmer; programmed hatching (Local Poultry Management); and good agronomic practices for onions, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, cabbages, carrots etc. They were also trained in developing agribusiness plans; record keeping; marketing; and
Innovation taking Young Model Farmer, Sam Amanderu, places

As a model farmer, Sam Amanderu of Pamuru Village in Moyo, has 35 people under his mentorship. He helps them maintain good farming practices so that they get the most out of their efforts in gardens.

All the 35 mentees were beneficiaries of the training by the YES Project in collaboration with local partners, AFARD and CEGED, to reduce poverty by creating sustainable entrepreneurial opportunities for the youth in West Nile by the end of 2017.

Amanderu, who dropped out of school in Senior Three, appreciates how the project has changed their fortunes for the better. "Before the project, we used to grapple with agriculture because we would do things the rudimentary way; planting crops anyhow and waiting for harvests, which disappointed us a lot," he recalled.

When he was chosen as a model farmer with the YES Project, he realised the need for technical knowledge in farming. "I was taught that a nursery bed is relevant if one is to realise good crops. I learnt how to prepare it," Amanderu explained.

The acre of cabbages he planted after the training fetched him a whooping Shs6.23m. The cabbages were sold in the markets of Eremi, Moyo trading centre, Laropi, and Adjumani town where the refugee influx has created a bigger market for produce.

To save money on transportation costs, Amanderu became innovative. He interested fellow farmers in the collective transportation instead of hiring a truck on his own. They were charged collectively Shs70,000 to Adjumani and Shs45,000 to Moyo.

"I now plan to buy a pick-up truck so that I am not at the mercy of transporters," he revealed.

"When I was harvesting, I called on my brothers to offer labour since they are part of the beneficiaries from the gains of farming," he explained his low cost strategy.

From the sales, Amanderu has been able to buy two cows each at Shs600,000 and a multi-purpose grinding machine for maize, cassava, and sorghum. He bought it at Shs4m and earns him a net profit of approximately Shs200,000 every week by grinding for other farmers.

Amanderu has also set up a demonstration cabbage farm of 1000 crops near the main road. "I am going to plant 25,000 cabbage seedlings this season," he reveals. With a cabbage costing a minimum of Shs1000, Amanderu may end up earning over Shs25m in just three months.

"Next time you visit, I will be in a better house. You will be able to watch your favourite TV programme as I would have installed solar power and a satellite dish. I must live a better life now," he bragged.
The YES Project demystified the myth that poverty is hereditary

There is belief in some parts of West Nile that poverty is hereditary. That if your father didn’t bequeath you a lot of wealth, you will remain poor. A lot of young people in Yumbe were blaming their parents for being poor.

“The YES Project demystified this. They told us you can make money if you want to,” says Alex Onzima who owns an agroforestry and vegetable nursery business on the outskirts of Yumbe town. “YES was not a theoretical project. They are very practical, which has enabled us learn and set up our businesses.”

Oznima’s business showcases urban farming practices that are sustainable and profitable. In a week, Onzima’s Wisdom Farm and Nursery Operation distributes between 100 to 150 seedlings. Ordinary seedlings cost Shs2500 while the grafted ones go for Shs5,000.

With this income, Onzima who dropped out of school in senior six, has been able to buy land at Shs8m on a main road, build an iron roof house and look after his sister’s children. “I have built this house so we can live better. I pay school fees for two children and I now want to expand by buying more land,” he said.

This young farmer started out on a piece of land that belonged to somebody else. “I was mainly operating on somebody’s veranda. The YES Project has not only empowered me with skills, it has contracted me to train other youth. I want to change the mindset of all the youth in this town,” says the 25 year old. “By the way, I also bought myself a bicycle to ease my movements,” he added boastfully.

His story is similar to that of Ronald Obedhing of Divine Cottage Industry in Nebbi town. In October 2015, Obedhing stopped toying with the idea of starting to make soap and dived straight in. He had picked skills from a friend who has since migrated to the United States. He turned his hut into a small ‘factory’ for soap and jelly. He would then vend his products throughout Nebbi town, stopping to explain to people what he is selling.

As the town took note of his products, so did the YES Project and admitted him into the youth entrepreneurship programme. Through the training, he learnt that he could further improve his products by adding shea butter and essential oil to improve the scent.

“I am so grateful to the YES Project for uplifting me from a cottage manufacturer who did not have focus and exposure to one who now has a business sense. When I produce the soap, candles and jellys, I distribute them here in Nebbi and neighbouring districts through agents,” he explains. “Through the start-up capital I received from the YES Project, I was able to buy more and bigger moulds,” he revealed.
Savings and Loans

Village Savings and Loan Associations providing accessible capital to youth

On a cloudy Monday afternoon in Jupudongo near Nebbi, a group of people gathered under a tree. A few women put their harvest down in order to start a meeting. They sat around a metal trunk, the size of a small toolbox. Something very valuable must be kept inside as three of its sides are under lock and key. You can easily tell it is a highly protected and treasured box.

Each of the three padlocks is opened by a different person. Inside the trunk, there are several books each bearing the name and number of the owner. When a number is read out, the owner receives the book.

After each member has received their book, one by one, they hand over money and the book gets stamped. These are not ordinary books. These are books containing one’s savings and loan records. The shares they hold in Jupudongo Kwo Ber Kutic Youth Group are also recorded in these books.

After each member has deposited their weekly savings, those who borrowed make deposits in order to settle their loan obligations while others borrow. This is a group of 35 members. Once you don’t attend a meeting, you are fined.

Dan Ronald Cwinyai is the secretary of the association, which was formulated with support from the YES Project.

“I borrowed Shs100,000 and started a petrol selling business in the village here a year ago,” the 20 year old says. “Today, my business is worth Shs300,000,” he revealed. The proceeds from this income have enabled Cwinyai to return to school. “I want to become a teacher so I have enrolled for a long distance course at Masindi-Kitara College. I use my profit to pay the tuition fees,” he said.

It is not only Cwinyai who has been able to save. In all villages in West Nile where the YES Project has been implemented, young people are saving. Stephen Manano of Boma East near the Uganda-Congo boarder saves Shs2500 every week.

“My group now has Shs1.8m. We can borrow from the group for investment,” Manano said while inspecting a Shs800,000 plot of land he recently acquired. “I am planning to build rental houses,” he revealed.

Before he was introduced to the YES Project, Manano, a diehard Manchester United soccer team fan was growing onions. “I wasn’t making any money really. I learnt new practices and switched to tomatoes,” he said while pointing at a hill in Democratic Republic of Congo where he has another garden.

Hilda Achayo, the YES Project manager says that the youth have been inspired to save so that they can also be able to afford inputs for the next season. “A saving culture will enable them sustain their enterprises. That way, they will be able to buy seeds and other inputs as well as develop themselves,” she said.

Her message is echoed by Agnes Aromborach, a cashier at the Jupudongo group. “I save Shs5,000 every week and I have been able to buy two goats which have since multiplied to five,” she said. “I pay school fees for my child as well,” she added satisfactorily.

Aromborach, who is a cassava farmer, says that the group has been able to save Shs2.7m. “This money helps us to develop and take care of our needs, something we didn’t know about before the YES Project was started here,” she said.

Jupudongo Kwo Ber Kutic Youth Group members during a weekly meeting
Scovia Unzia making her name through fashion design

Scovia Unzia is a budding designer who starts her day peddling away at her sewing machine at her Central One company. At the same time, she supervises two of her assistants. As we approached her business premises, she came over and greeted us with a warm smile and beckoned us to take our seats. She knows how important customers are. She is a designer and her creative touch is on bed-sheets, table clothes, shirts and badges.

She learnt all this at Nakawa Training & Designing School in Kampala in 1997 during her Primary Seven (P.7) study vacation. Due to lack of funds, her parents couldn’t support her through secondary education until much later when she managed to study up to Senior Three (S.3) at Moyo Secondary School.

“I did not have the capital to go into the design business so I first put it on hold. I started offering manual services; digging in people’s gardens to earn some money to raise capital,” she revealed. “I also made mandazi, which I would sell to pupils and locals on the roadside to save money to realise my dream,” she recalled.

“I did this for about a decade but realized that there was always a need that made saving hard. In 2015, I was chosen as a trainee by the YES Project. They taught me how I could run my business better. At the time, I had started sewing table clothes by hand. After a while, I was able to buy my first sewing machine,” the 30-year-old designer explained.

After the training, she learnt to handle her customers better. “By the end of 2015, I had realized the fruits of doing so. I had saved money to enable me buy another sewing machine.”

After the training, she learnt to handle her customers better. “By the end of 2015, I had realized the fruits of doing so. I had saved money to enable me buy another sewing machine. I could afford to employ two assistants who helped me with the growing demand for my products. Being humble and honest before customers is doing magic to my business thanks to the great advice from the YES Project,” she further testified.

She adds that her business is growing because of recommendations from satisfied clients. “I am now referred to as ‘senior designer’ because I make good products and I try to be as creative as possible. I look at designers’ magazines for ideas, which I then localize,” she added.

Unzia, who is a mother of three advises fellow young women to get interested and involved in designing work especially girls who have dropped out of school. “Gone are the days when women waited on their husbands for upkeep, we are now equal providers in the homes and I am glad that I complement my husband’s efforts,” she concluded.
YES Project opened Adriko’s eyes to massive opportunities

There was a time when Godfrey Adriko of Omoo Village in Oleru Parish would wake up when he heard the first time his cock crowed so he could attend to his garden just to ensure he has enough time to cater for his family.

“I used to grow cassava and tomatoes, which provided the food we needed at home,” he explained. His dream and necessities were small and manageable. Grow the food for the family and sell the surplus. This would change when a friend bought a grinding machine for cassava and maize. Adriko started thinking about commercialising his surplus.

“But capital was still my big challenge at the time and did not have the technical farming skills necessary to realise this new dream,” Godfrey recounted. Then he heard of the YES Project and accepted to enrol into its programmes.

Adriko started receiving training, which would later culminate into an exchange visit with successful farmers in Adraa, still in West Nile.

“I used to grow local tomato varieties but the trainers recommended the Rio Grand tomato type. They gave me 30 tins of tomato seeds, each weighing 25 grams. This particular type of tomato is more resistant to pests and tolerant to diseases compared to the local type,” Adriko observed.

He planted tomatoes on one and a half acres and sold 10 boxes, each at Shs120,000, that earned him Shs1.2m. “I have used some of the money I earned to buy goats which I resale at a profit. In a week, I can buy and resale between 10 and 15 goats,” he explained.

Meanwhile, Adriko has not stopped growing cassava. He still grows it for commercial purposes. In the first season after the YES training, his garden fetched him 15 sacks. He sold each at Shs95,000 earning 1.33m.

Without the YES training, Adriko would still be waking up at 3.00am — working hard but remaining in abject poverty. "My eyes were opened by this project and I am really grateful. I hope that they continue imparting these skills to more people for the betterment of our country,” he concludes.
The YES Project photo gallery
Toaha Aduku mixing farming and trading

When his parents could not afford to continue supporting him in school beyond Senior Three, Toaha Aduku turned his efforts to farming. The Shs60,000 school fee per a term at Yumbe Town View College is such a prohibitive figure for peasant farmers.

He started farming. He grew tomatoes but he never made any money out of his efforts. He counted losses and drowned in sadness. Aduku had hit a dead end with his academic journey and now, farming too. When he was picked by the YES Project as one of the youth to benefit from the training, he was eager to learn and pick skills that would help him improve.

"Ever since I got training from the YES Project, I feel I am using my life more fruitfully than before. I now know what to do as a farmer," he said in a tone that could be mistaken for boasting. From the first season, he planted onions on half an acre from which he harvested 20 basins priced at Shs35,000 each. For the second season, he harvested 10 basins.

The second season fetched less harvest because of the dry spell that hit the gardens. But his spirit was not shaken. He is looking forward to the next season.

However, the profits from farming have enabled him set up a shop in Gibo trading centre. The start up capital for the shop was Shs600,000.

Aduku has also enrolled as a member of the Mungufen Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA). With 16 other members, each saves Shs1,000 every week. This money can be borrowed at low interest rates when one needs more capital.

"Also, I have realised the benefit of keeping records because that way I can take stock and know how to calculate the profit I make off my merchandise. This has been possible after the training from the YES Project," the farmer cum trader explained.

Aduku earns between Shs100,000 and Shs150,000 a month from the shop. "I am the shop keeper but I don’t pay myself any salary. This has enabled me to buy two cows and two goats at Shs500,000, a bicycle at Shs100,000, and a mobile phone at Shs80,000," Aduku listed the achievements he had acquired from farming. "I take care of my family too," he added.
YES Project solved insecurity problems in Moyo

It is said that an idle mind is the devil’s workshop, and Moyo District’s Internal Security Officer (DISO), Andrew Kandiho, cannot agree more with the notion. When he was posted to the district in 2013, many youth did not have a source of livelihood. “Many spent their days idling on the streets as they chewed Mairungi and smoked opium. This was risky because they would most-likely end up in law-breaking activities,” he recalled.

At the time, there were also insecurity issues emanating from South Sudan where the war and unrest were evident and there was an inter-border impasse between the world’s newest state and Uganda.

“We formed and caused security meetings between the two countries, on a monthly basis,” he added. In 2015, SNV Uganda came in to start helping youth realise their economic potential through farming initiatives coupled with strategic farming practices and entrepreneurial skills that would mould and mentor them into a better people.

“Soon we realised that the youth that were previously involved in idle activities like playing Matatu and board games could pick hoes and go into farming. There was a good change in mind-set. The YES Project has been well-received,” Kandiho explained. “The theft of people’s goats and foodstuffs has come down since the YES Project was launched,” he observed.

Moyo’s population size stands at approximately 37,000 people. This makes Moyo one of the sparsely populated districts in the country yet is very big in geographical size. “This means there is a lot of land which can be utilised to carry out economic activities like farming,” Kandiho concluded.
SNV Uganda Offices

Country Office
Plot 36, Luthuli Rise, Bugolobi
P.O. Box 8339, Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256 (0) 414 563 200
+256 (0) 312 260 058
Email: Uganda@snv.org
www.snv.org/country/uganda

North East region
Plot 3 Kabalega Road,
Yodev Plaza, Lira
Tel: +256 (0) 758 260 050

Rwenzori region
Plot 2/4 Rwenzori Road,
P.O. Box 78, Fort Portal
Tel: +256 (0) 758 200 778
+256 (0) 392 200 778

West Nile region
Plot 10A, Bwana Volla Road, Arua
Tel: +256 (0) 758 200 781
+256 (0) 476 420 623

South West region
Plot 10, Haji Kasaka Road
Kiyanja Ruharo- Kamukuzi
P.O. Box 1653, Mbarara
Tel: +256 (0) 200 901 225

SMART DEVELOPMENT WORKS