



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP | LEARNINGS | 2024

**SNV**

Catalysing change: Initial qualitative findings on the SNV youth employment regional programme funded by Mastercard Foundation.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Initial Qualitative Findings Report investigates the long-term individual, familial, and community-level impact of the SNV Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) regional programme that commenced almost a decade ago in Mozambique, Rwanda, and Tanzania in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. The regional programme aimed to improve the livelihoods of young un- and underemployed people by providing practical skills training and linking them to opportunities in local agri-food and energy sector businesses.

The research draws initial conclusions on the program's impact by collecting and analysing stories and experiences from past project participants – a few examples are presented on page 16. The research finds that the programme's primary impact was supporting the diversification of livelihood activities over time. Interviewed young people have credited the business skills they developed as being critical to their initial success in agri-food and energy roles, as well as their confidence and ability to engage in other business activities. Most participants highlighted the impact their success has had on their families, resulting in improved housing, education, and nutrition opportunities, as well as the community-level impact, via greater engagement in public roles and decision-making. Some young people were less successful - with personal, business, and policy challenges- that required greater resilience to find a viable livelihood mix.

Our analysis validates the appropriateness of the programme's focus on rural, out-of-school un-employed and under-employed youth in contexts with a large informal market. The approach allowed entrepreneurial young people to engage with market opportunities locally, and to access the requisite mix of skills and support needed to succeed in their ventures. The programme resulted in an increased and diversified income for most young people, thus providing them with financial security and resilience.

Key findings of the research highlight 1) the importance of livelihood diversification, 2) the transferability of business skills, 3) the necessity of self-financing (via savings groups, business reinvestment, and mobilising community resources) and 4) the scalability potential of market-led approaches to youth employment and enterprise development. Improved employment outcomes can be achieved via increased emphasis on promising sectors, targeted support for youth-led businesses with higher employment potential, and approaches that integrate longer-term support.

It is recommended that this report be read alongside the [external end-term evaluation report](#), as it provides deeper insights into the SNV-Mastercard Foundation regional programme, including lessons learned, approach and recommendations.

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## INTRODUCTION

Youth employment and entrepreneurship projects make significant contributions to young people's transitions to work. As organisations and governments continue to develop initiatives to support young people, more information is needed about the intervention types and factors that result in long-term success and resilient livelihoods.

Evidence is limited. Some qualitative research shows continued professional growth for certain groups of young people<sup>2</sup>, whereas quantitative research shows that gains from vocational training and business start-up grants may dissipate over time.<sup>3</sup>

SNV adds qualitative insights using an analysis of youth stories to assess the livelihood pathways of young people over the longer term, via an analysis of former participant stories from communities in the first SNV youth employment and entrepreneurship regional programme.

Through conducting extensive focus group discussions in 10 project districts across the 3 project countries, 34 stories of impact have been selected and presented on page 16 of this report.

### SNV's strategy to youth employment and enterprise development:

SNV's Push, Match, Pull (PMP) methodology has evolved over time. Based on lessons learned and market dynamics, a new component, Enable, has been added, which focuses on the policy / enabling environment; resulting in the current Push, Match, Pull, Enable (PMPE) Framework Approach. The portfolio has also been renamed to Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (YEE)<sup>1</sup> with the PMPE applied as a Framework Approach within the YEE portfolio of projects.

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<sup>1</sup> To achieve scale and lasting results, SNV is increasingly emphasising an enterprise development pathway for youth led businesses with medium to high growth potential. This work focuses on incubating and accelerating these businesses by linking them to sustainable markets, providing tailored business development support services, deepening partnerships with other eco-system actors including Enterprise Support Organizations (ESOs), TVETs and the private sector. This work ensures that youth led businesses can grow and create opportunities for others while also kick-starting markets in the agri-food, energy, and water sectors. On this basis, the Product is renamed YEE (Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship) building on the Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) footprint, an approach that has been implemented in several SNV operating countries in the past 9 years. The YEE Product demonstrates links across SNV sectors as well as to the SNV core themes.

<sup>2</sup> Lefebvre, E. E., Nikoi, A., Bamattre, R., Jaafar, A., Morris, E., Chapman, D., & DeJaeghere, J. (2018). Getting ahead and getting by: Exploring outcomes of youth livelihoods programs.

<sup>3</sup> Blattman, et al (2020). The long-term impacts of grants on poverty: Nine-year evidence from Uganda's Youth Opportunities Program. American Economic Review: Insights, 2(3), 287-304.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW:

Between 2013-2016, SNV executed its first regional programme, Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) using a market system development PMP approach: Pull – company engagement, Match - connecting skilled youth to market opportunities, Push - skills and leadership development and agency. It was implemented in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation in Rwanda, Tanzania and Mozambique.

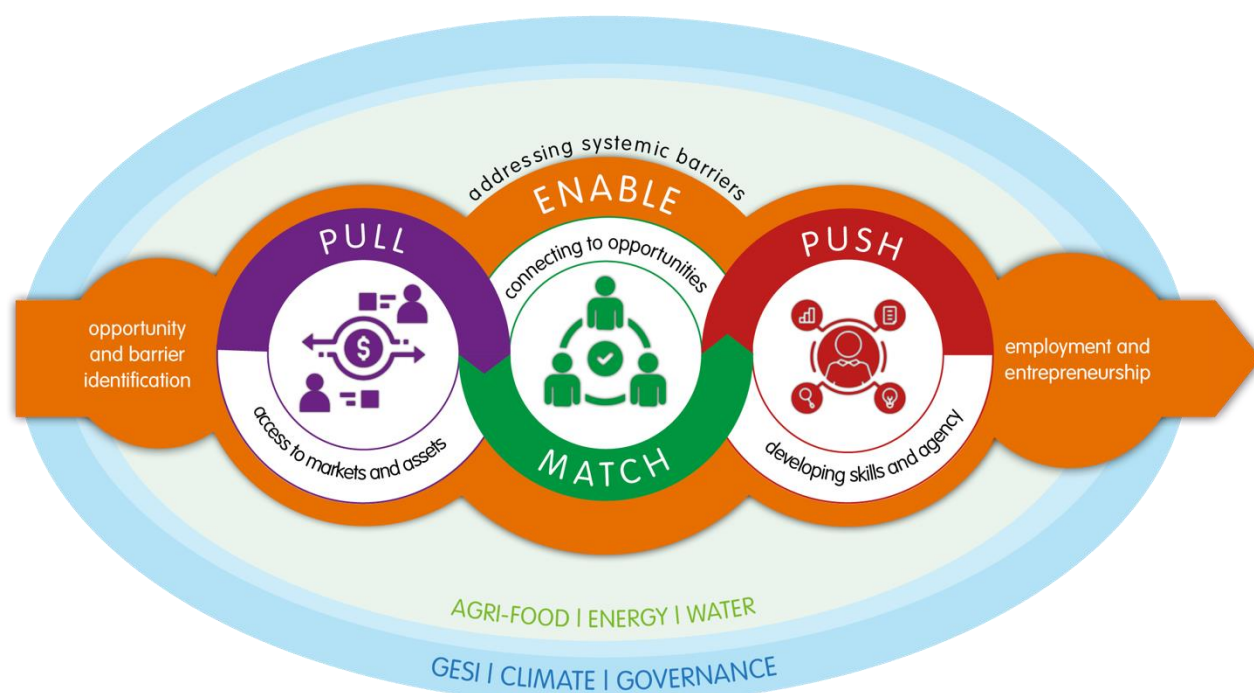


Figure 1: SNVs cross sector approach to youth employment and enterprise development.

The regional programme improved the livelihoods of 27,050 rural, under-, and unemployed young people, 40% of whom are female, mainly in rural regions with high levels of poverty and youth disadvantage<sup>4</sup>. It provided skills training, coaching, mentoring and access to finance that met youth aspirations and facilitated links with market demands in the agri-food and energy sectors.<sup>5</sup>

The formative experiences drawn, and lessons learned from this initial regional programme have contributed to SNV redefining and scaling the YEE-PMPE approach over the years. Now it is implemented in more than 10 African countries. In these countries, the YEE-PMPE framework trajectories are either mainstreamed in large programmes like [2SCALE](#), or implemented in targeted projects such as [GrEEn](#) in Ghana or [RAYEE](#) in Ethiopia. To date, SNV's portfolio of Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (YEE) projects have reached over 230,000 young people and has supported the creation of close to 180,000 jobs.

<sup>4</sup> [An independent end-term project evaluation](#) showed that the PMP approach used during the OYE regional programme was effective in creating meaningful employment for the target group.

<sup>5</sup> SNV in Mozambique focused on the agri-food sector. SNV in Rwanda focused on the energy sector, SNV in Tanzania focused on supporting young people in both sectors.

## RESEARCH APPROACH

SNV teams in Mozambique, Rwanda, and Tanzania were each asked to identify young people who had participated in their OYE projects.<sup>6</sup> Former project participants were identified in targeted local communities. These young people were invited for group interviews using a mix of convenience and snowball sampling. The group and individual interviews that followed focused on the successes and challenges the participants faced after project completion.<sup>7</sup>

Groups of former project participants were identified in targeted local communities via convenience and snowball sampling. Group and individual interviews then focused on the successes and challenges the participants faced after project completion. As a result, 34 youth stories were identified based on key informant and focus group interviews, in 10 project districts in the three countries; we have highlighted a few stories of impact on page 16. These stories were analysed using content analysis that matched keywords to the research questions. The analysis was then used to determine the frequency of change. On this basis, conclusions were drawn about the programme's impact, strengths, challenges, scalability, and sustainability potential.<sup>8</sup>

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What were the employment and entrepreneurship trajectories of the un-employed and under-employed young women and men?
2. How did the project contribute to their personal lives, community and transitions to adulthood?
3. Do young people create quality jobs for themselves or others?
4. What are the long-term impacts of life skills, technical vocational training and coaching and mentoring on employment and/or business success?
5. What is the impact of access to finance and resources on young people's professional success?
6. What are the institution and system level influence and impacts of these projects?

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<sup>6</sup> The OYE Tanzania received funding from SDC and Danida to expand and extend the project. Some young people interviewed were part of these more recent project extensions.

<sup>7</sup> SNV Tanzania and Rwanda collected both individual and group stories, whereas Mozambique only provided the results of focus group interviews.

<sup>8</sup> Data was collected by local consultants and project staff on current youth employment projects. The resulting stories were analysed, and the final report developed by consultants at Learning Ventures.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Youth employment and entrepreneurship trajectories

The programme was most effective at creating stable and fulfilling self-employment opportunities for 80% of the young people interviewed. For many, it formed a stepping stone towards a more diversified and balanced income. More than 60% of young people moved from seasonal pursuits to other entrepreneurial activities outside of the agri-food or energy sectors.

*As I have been involved in agricultural activities, I used the income raised from my agricultural business and the skills I gained to open my own business. Agriculture is important in helping raise capital, but this enterprise is rain-fed and not much trusted. So, I decided to open a retail shop so that I could lower the risk of failure that could happen in the agricultural production business". (- Tanzania-M)*



Figure 2: Victor from Hembeti (Tanzania) on his cucumber farm

Income diversification and risk mitigation were the most common rationales for starting new and different businesses. This was more pertinent for young women (90%) who face more barriers to starting, sustaining, or growing agricultural businesses. They often used their initial income to fund other service businesses that they felt passionate about, such as food away from home or hair care services. Agri-food enterprises were often a pathway to fund other fulfilling work.

For young people active in the energy sector, their success was often based on their technical skills and ability to be supported when entering new solar, cookstoves, and biogas markets. In Rwanda, solar and cookstove activities proved more sustainable than ones in the biogas sector. Changes in government support for biogas production led to reduced demand for biogas. Participants adapted, with one successful Rwandan female entrepreneur still succeeding in building approximately 250 biogas systems, while another group of masons used their acquired skills to venture into low-carbon cookstoves.

In Mozambique, youth agricultural co-operatives that were started by the project had trouble sustaining over the long term. While young people reported being able to use the skills they acquired, only a single cooperative in the region was reported to be still functioning.

## Personal, community level impact and life transition

Young people were proud of their financial gains. They were equally proud of the impact these had on the lives of their family members and their communities. Family-level impact was attributed to increased income in over two-thirds of the cases. Resilient and successful young people were able to build family homes, get married earlier, invest in other new income-generating activities, and contribute to family expenses like school fees and health payments.



*"Without the OYE project, I wouldn't have been who I am today, but now I have my stable source of income, I manage my family, and continue with farming." (Tanzania-F)*

Young women also reported changes in the family dynamics. For younger women, they were often able to obtain permission to enter the project. For married women, they were able to engage their spouses in business operations as they grew.

*"The knowledge and skills that I gained from the programme were among the assets that I used to start my own farming activity, together with the help of my husband." (Tanzania-F)*

Some women used their skills to support themselves and their children upon the dissolution of marriages or relationships.

As for community-level impact, it was often attributed to project activities and learning. The increased participation of young people in community decision-making processes was a key programme result that contributed to creating long-term local change.

*"At the community level, I feel that we youth living in the village positively influenced some changes. We did so through active participation in village meetings where we challenged the leaders. We think because of the challenges we brought to the village [leadership], the village government initiated the process to build a modern village government office building and a dispensary." (Tanzania-M)*

## Decent work / fulfilling jobs and the creation of quality jobs:

Decent work is productive, delivers a fair income, and provides other employment benefits. It can also mean that the jobs are fulfilling and rewarding for young people. An analysis of the stories finds that most young people were thriving and getting ahead in



their lives. Most who were successful in agriculture achieved success through engaging in horticultural production, as this activity has high returns and short periods to harvest.

*"I switched my focus to horticulture because the crops take less time to mature, hence generating regular income. For instance, cabbage takes 3 months, watermelon takes 2 months, and cucumber 45 days. The difference in income is huge compared to paddy and maize. In 3 months, I invested TZS 400,000 in one-third of an acre of cabbage, and got TZS 1.4 million. This compares to paddy where I needed 7 months and an acre to get TZS 300,000 at best, or sometimes a negative return." (Tanzania-M)*

While some participants were successful in starting businesses outside of SNV sectors as part of the programme, most who were active in other sectors did so by leveraging their initial agri-food or energy businesses to fund other business activities. Over 80% of the stories reference income-generating activities that young people started to supplement their initial income and reduce their risk exposure.

*"With my initial project income, I bought two farm plots (1 acre and another half-acre). I planted sugar cane on the first and maize on the second. In addition, my wife works in our own salon and I transport passengers with our motorcycle to increase our family income." (Tanzania-M)*

While most of the interviewed participants were successful, several have had to overcome challenges with their businesses along the way. This includes failed diversification attempts or challenges with specific crops or markets (like biogas in Rwanda). These young people demonstrated resilience and persistence to eventually find a mix of livelihood activities that can support them.

Another key question is whether young people created jobs for others. One-quarter of the young people interviewed have been able to employ others in either formal or wage labour. This has led to changes in self-perception.

*"Previously, I was not looked at as a useful person but due to the project intervention, I am now an employer!" (Rwanda-M)*

Wage labour was seasonal in most cases. Full-time work occurred when young entrepreneurs had or developed higher skill levels that could be translated into productive enterprises, such as masonry for energy or previous vocational training. Interestingly, the pathway to gain access to these skilled jobs often came via cooperatives and other formalised group enterprises. Some successful entrepreneurs split from these groups to start their own businesses, using the cooperatives to gain experience and market understanding.



*Figure 3: Opportunities in the energy sector allowed young people to start and build their own businesses.*

## Skills development and support

In terms of the long-term impacts of mentoring, skills training and technical and vocational training, business skills were seen as the most crucial by participants, with more than 90% of young people mentioning them.

*"The skills that I gained from OYE have enabled me to run my business properly. I can do business calculations without hesitation, and I am able to identify the opportunities in my area in relation to the market demand. How I communicate with my customers using proper business language has also attracted more customers."* (Tanzania- Male).

More importantly, these skills were transferable across different livelihood areas and allowed young people to start various businesses where they saw opportunities.

Both life and technical skills were mentioned by two-thirds of the interviewed participants. Life skills competencies translated into changed mindsets, increased confidence, and the ability to make better decisions according to youth participants. In Mozambique, life skills training was the most remembered project component. Other young entrepreneurs attributed the changes in their self-confidence as a part of the programme's contribution. Part of this skills development was social, with peer-to-peer learning and group enterprises supporting personal development.

*"Training began from basic life skills to business development and entrepreneurial skills training. My favourite part of the training was its contribution to my business development and learning from one another in groups."* (Tanzania-F)

Another key area of focus was technical skills. For those young budding entrepreneurs specialising in energy, emphasis was placed on the skills required to build, maintain, and market energy equipment. For those pursuing a career in agri-food, the skills highlighted most were horticultural production skills. This came from young agri-preneurs learning to grow crops together or via training on farms, with some young people becoming community champions and experts in certain topics.

*"Currently, other farmers in the village are reaching out to me to learn on how they could improve their farming activities to get more yield. They ask me about the types of seeds I plant, and the good agronomic practices I use. They elected me as a sub-village committee member."* (Tanzania-M)



Figure 4: Thobias from Doma (Tanzania)

Local service providers were key resources for young people to gain continued support. In some contexts, these partners were able to provide sustained support, often via youth savings groups. Other providers were not incentivised to continue to support young people after training and livelihood development, as highlighted by focus groups in Mozambique.

## Access to finance and resources

Young people's transitions have highlighted the primary role that self-financing, and reinvestment have on youth business development. Over 90% of young people used their own resources to grow their ventures. A lack of capital did hold back others, who

were not able to start businesses as a result. This was particularly an issue in poultry farming that is characterised by high feed and upfront investment costs in Tanzania. Several participants mentioned starting in poultry production only to change sectors due to the high cost of feed.

Lack of access to finance impacted most participants. The choice of livelihood activities was often dependent on the ability to leverage sparse local resources or assets (e.g. land) to start a business. Skilled, market ready and resilient young people may need to be more resourceful, leveraging personal and community resources, to overcome the structural challenges of lack of access to finance, and other systemic barriers.

Just over a third of the interviewed young people reported that formal or informal financial products were crucial to their livelihood development. For informal finance options, savings groups were often regarded as important to obtain initial capital to start their ventures. Formal finance was mainly used after building on initial successes and as businesses grew.

### Community, institutional, and market influences

Young people mentioned both the opportunities and challenges of working with peers in groups or collective enterprises. The stories had a few mentions of broader community, institutional, and market influences on participants' success. For Rwanda, an energy policy that initially supported biogas production resulted in business growth in two stories. Subsequent policy changes had negative impacts on the broader biogas space after the programme's completion. Entrepreneurs seemed to adapt their business models accordingly. There were no mentions of markets or government institutions in the stories on agri-food entrepreneurs. Young people in Mozambique wanted more continued support from their local service providers, which had ended with the project's closure, to better engage with the market.

A lack of external influence may reflect the emphasis on individual stories in this research. The early SNV-Mastercard Foundation programme focused on youth skills development and transitions to either wage employment or enterprise development. Developing an enabling market and policy environment was incorporated into the programme and overall portfolio later, which could be another factor.

## PRELIMINARY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research in this report supports reflection and improvement for youth employment projects and programmes; and while not all youth participants can become successful entrepreneurs, the research provides substantiation that SNV's approach is a viable method to support young people to create jobs for themselves and others, or find work – a key finding also in the [independent end-term project evaluation](#). It also demonstrates that these livelihood changes can be sustained over time.

Young people's stories do provide insights into programme improvement opportunities as well. The following recommendations detailing how projects could adapt to be more effective in supporting under- and unemployed young people are based on these initial results.

### **1. Self-employment or entrepreneurship is a viable pathway to support under- and unemployed young people to find work, particularly in contexts with high degrees of informality.**

While high priority has been placed on supporting under- and unemployed young people to find jobs in the formal sector, youth employment projects and programmes can benefit from focusing on improving the quality and profitability of work in the informal sector. While donors and stakeholders may prioritise formal sector work or exportable commodities, this often does not align with markets that young people can access. It is recommended that projects focus on realistic local market opportunities that can facilitate entry for out-of-school youth via skills development, access to finance, and market systems development.

### **2. Long-term youth employment outcomes are improved when they support diversified livelihoods.**

Long-term follow-up demonstrates that livelihood diversification is a key mechanism for young people to escape poverty. Over two-thirds of young people diversified their incomes and re-invested resources into other business opportunities. This is the result of the seasonality of horticultural crops as well as the need to spread risk across numerous income streams. Greater project emphasis should be placed on increasing the quality of initial earning opportunities and providing soft and business skills that are transferable to other business ventures. This substantiates the findings of the external evaluation which found that young people should be supported to 'progressively build [their] life if [they] reinvest part of what [they] have earned.'<sup>9</sup>

### **3. Resilience and resourcefulness may be a critical factor in participant success or failure.**

Not all young people were successful. Many that were, had to overcome challenges in the businesses after the end of the programme. Skills and support may be the necessary foundation for youth employment projects, but supporting young people to develop the problem-solving and critical thinking competencies that result in resilience may be more critical. It is recommended that future projects continue to invest in soft skills training

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<sup>9</sup> eMJee Consult Final evaluation of the SNV Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) project in Tanzania, Rwanda, and Mozambique. 2018

that supports young people to sustainably build leadership skills and agency, understanding themselves and their potential.

**4. Young people create jobs for themselves in the informal sector, but a different strategy may be needed for creating broader employment gains.**

Only a select few former participants were able to create formal work for other youth, or to find work in the formal sector themselves. There is a significant investment in supporting formal work with limited returns. It is recommended that if creating or finding jobs is a priority for projects, then additional programming focus on potential high-growth youth businesses - via incubation and acceleration - or on high-growth sectors that have known employment demand/multipliers (such as market systems-based horticultural interventions).

**5. Young people benefit, but family and community-level benefits may be as important to participants.**

Young people were equally motivated by familial and community impacts as their own livelihood gains. For young women in particular, their entrepreneurial identity led to increased independence and contributions to their family's finances. Impacts can be attributed to both project learning, particularly at the community level around youth participation and engagement, as well as income gains at the individual and family level. It is recommended that youth voices be supported, in both Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) activities, as well as in broader advocacy initiatives at the community level.

**6. Skills development should focus on creating the life and technical skills to get youth started and providing transferable business skills to help them grow.**

Life skills and technical skills were often mentioned as important, as they help young people find the right motivation to start a venture. Business management skills were almost always mentioned as a key to long-term success. It is recommended that business skills be made more robust and be prioritised for both their immediate applications in project activities as well as their long-term impact on business diversification.

**7. Self-financing needs to be supported by financial literacy, savings groups and a blend of other income-generating activities.**

Young people were most often successful when they were able to leverage their own resources to grow and diversify their businesses. This includes their own savings, profits from entrepreneurial ventures, as well as resources garnered from savings groups. Lack of access likely resulted in some young people not being able to initially start their preferred businesses. It is recommended that all projects have a financing strategy that supports the use of young people's own resources, leverages project activities and partnerships, and that builds the necessary financial literacy for access to formal finance in the future.

**8. Focus on local business, market, and government partnerships for long-term support to achieve scale and sustainability.**

Supporting young people to access information, markets, products, or services is critical to business growth, success, and sustainability. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on facilitating local partnerships for scale and linking market-ready youth to relevant

existing market structures, as shorter-term delivery-oriented partnerships are unable to provide sustained support. Similarly, local market access can be supported via local government engagement as resources, information, and opportunities may be distributed via this channel. Facilitating supportive infrastructure for young people in and after the programme implementation is a critical strategy for scaling its impact and sustaining livelihood gains. It is recommended that greater emphasis is placed on youth participation. Giving youth a voice can help to ensure that young people, and young women in particular, gain more equitable access, contributing to addressing challenges and local initiatives.

### **9. Focus on long-term support, data collection and learning, and providing follow-up mechanisms for young people to work together.**

Projects and programmes might provide young people with their first step in the business world. They can also be viewed as growing business owners. There is a lack of consistent data collection and follow-up with participants. It is recommended that future projects should keep track of young entrepreneurs and build alumni networks that allow young people to grow their businesses and take advantage of future opportunities together, either with SNV or with other youth-focused projects or organisations. Investments in longer-term learning, impact assessments and longitudinal studies can also be considered as key components at the programme design phase.

## CONCLUSIONS

SNV's youth employment and entrepreneurship approach can be seen to have a sustained impact amongst selected participants based on these initial findings. While based on this small qualitative sample, our analysis provides an indication that the PMPE approach within YEE has multiplier effects and scalability potential, and can lead to long-term sustained livelihood improvements for young entrepreneurs.

Interviewees indicate that long-term livelihood gains translate into improved individual, familial, and community outcomes. This is primarily the result of the increase in skills and financial and market access, supported by business partnerships and improved local support for young people.

These findings also identify areas to strengthen in the SNV YEE-PMPE framework approach, to increase its long-term impact. More sustained programme impacts may be achieved by increasing emphasis on business skills, approaches to self-financing, and livelihood diversification.

To scale impact for young people, SNV should consider greater emphasis on partnerships and on market system development approaches in specific sub-sectors - particularly in both horticulture and green energy - to facilitate more comprehensive, long-term support for young people.



*Figure 5: Levina from Kauzeni attending to a client in her salon.*

## STORIES OF IMPACT

### “Horticulture pays back”

Victor, Mvomero District, Morogoro- Tanzania

Prior to the OYE project, Victor lived with a wife and one kid, cultivating paddy and maize with his parents.



The training provided by the OYE project on entrepreneurship and business planning increased his business knowledge and helped him shift to more profitable horticultural crops. He is currently involved in cultivating and selling cucumber, watermelon, leafy vegetables, cabbages, and green pepper throughout the year, and uses water from his shallow well during the dry season.

*"I switched to horticulture because the crops take less time to mature, hence generating regular income. For instance, cabbage takes 3 months, watermelon takes 2 months, and cucumber takes 45 days. The difference in income is huge compared to paddy and maize. In 3 months, I invested TZS 400,000 and got TZS 1.4 million from cultivating cabbage. This compares to 7 months for paddy to get TZS 300,000 at best, or sometimes a negative return."*

Victor says he is a better businessperson as a result: *"My involvement in the project activities helped me produce horticulture crops profitably, network with different stakeholders including buyers and government officers, and raise my income level so that I could build my own house."*

To increase his income, Victor started marketing activities and diversified business operations. *"I am currently hiring a truck to ferry the produce to the Morogoro central market twice a week, and I earn more than TZS 400,000 per trip. My wife is also engaged in the dried fish business that earns her money to cater for our daily home needs"*.

Victor believes that the OYE project was vital to his success. He has been able to acquire land, broaden his network to find new clients, and, most importantly, find a reliable source of income from horticulture.



## “Horticulture Supports Business Start Up”

Levina, Kauzeni – Morogoro.

After finishing her secondary education, Levina started working to generate independent income by selling ladies' underwear. She faced challenges in setting prices and marketing and was dependant on her parent's allowance each month to finance her business.



*"When I heard about the OYE project, I had already faced several trials and errors in the business. I was hoping to learn the basics of managing a business, especially on marketing and attracting customers. The training on basic life skills, business development, and entrepreneurial skills was my favourite. Learning was supported by working together in groups, and it contributed to my business development and growth."*

Levina specialised in modern horticulture farming activities, and she remains in business today. *"After the training, we started farming as a group and I was also employed as a food vendor. I have used my savings, income, and business planning skills to open my own hairdressing salon. I have acquired good customer service skills and digital marketing strategies that helped me market my business on Facebook and WhatsApp"*.

Levina has temporarily employed one youth that assists her with her hairdressing activities, especially during the holiday seasons, and is now has been appointed to a position in local government.

*"The OYE project provided me with skills that are critical to the success of my business, giving me financial freedom and independence., I am now able to generate sufficient money everyday day at a hairdressing saloon."*

### **“The door to success”**

Amina, Kiroka, Morogoro - rural Tanzania.

Amina holds a certificate in nursery school teaching and was working at a small nursery school until it closed and she struggled to find another job. Amina never thought about being an entrepreneur until the OYE project was introduced to youth in her village.

*“When I heard about the OYE project, I felt like the door to success was reopened.”*

After participating in the training, Amina acquired horticulture and business development skills. She learned how to identify opportunities and turn challenges into prospects, and also learned all about budgeting and record-keeping.



*“The training was a great opportunity for me. I decided to start accumulating my transport stipend as I searched for a business opportunity in my community. Finally, after learning that people walked a long distance to get breakfast and lunch while at their work, I decided to start a small restaurant.”*

Now separated from her spouse, Amina manages all her daily expenses, supports her son, pays house rent and other bills, and supports her mother. She has also begun horticulture farming and paddy rice farming activities using the profits she makes, as a way to diversify her income sources.

*“If it was not for the OYE project, I would have gone back home after breaking up with my spouse. I would have become dependent on my parents. Now, I am able to stand on my own feet and gained energy to work even harder because I know my son needs my support as a single mother.”*

Amina spends most of her time in her restaurant, where she now gives back by providing opportunities to other young people by hiring them to do farming activities. She is considered a role model to many young female youths in her community, and parents refer their daughters to her so that they can learn from her and fulfil their potential as well.

## “Solar success”

Mutuyimana Deodatus, Musanze – Rwanda.

Mutuyimana is a young man living in Rwanda’s Musanze district. He joined OYE in 2016 and received technical training on the installation of solar power systems. He was later hired as staff by Ignite Power Rwanda, which helped him earn independent income.

After the training, Mutuyimana underwent a remarkable transformation and became a well-versed businessman. He leveraged savings from his income to obtain capital from a savings and lending group. With this, he invested in the production and sale of local drinks.

Today, Mutuyimana can afford school fees for his children, pay for medical insurance, and provide for his family’s daily needs. He successfully constructed a home worth 3.5 million Rwf (USD \$3,500), purchased three plots of land for farming for a cost of 9,000,000 Rwf (USD \$9,000), and acquired two cows.

He happily stated: *“I now have enough milk to feed my family”*. Mutuyimana expresses gratitude to the project for supporting him in fulfilling his aspirations, considering it to have been a great gift. He sincerely appreciates the support and opportunities he has received, and is looking forward to further growing and achieving his full potential.

## “Biogas entrepreneurship: leading by example”

Eugenie, Musanze District - Rwanda.

Eugenie, a young woman from Rwanda’s Musanze district, received training on biogas digester construction through the OYE project. After completing the training, she began working as a mason to construct biogas systems.

Utilising the entrepreneurial skills gained from the OYE project, she established her own company and started bidding for major biogas construction contracts. Through her company, she has provided employment opportunities for various young masons who had also received training from the OYE project.

As an entrepreneur, Eugenie successfully secured several biogas construction contracts in Musanze and Burera. In total, she managed to build approximately 250 biogas systems. Her company also offered other services, such as household training on the use of biogas and bio-fertiliser production.

In addition, Eugenie assists members of the community to access loans from financial institutions (SACCO) for biogas construction. “Prior to the project, most community members had limited awareness and experience in working with financial institutions”, states Eugenie. She supported community mobilisation efforts that yielded significant results, encouraging community members to open bank accounts in different financial institutions (SACCOs), and motivating them to apply for loans to construct biogas systems.

Furthermore, Eugenie was able to provide employment opportunities for various young workers, including masons and suppliers of different equipment.

## “Biogas Supports Diversified Success”

Pierre Celestin, Rwanda

Before participating in the OYE project, Pierre Celestin had just completed secondary school. He had done casual jobs for small construction works, but he was interested in the technical skills of the biogas field, provided by the OYE project. As part of the project’s training programme, he was equipped with the necessary know-how for biogas digester construction but also learned business management skills, marketing, entrepreneurship, record keeping, and financial literacy.

He stated: *“I was trained on how to spend money wisely and appropriately. We also learned how to work together, to form associations and cooperatives, because when each one brings a little, then you end up being a strong group”.*

After completing his training, the government implemented awareness-raising activities on the benefits of biogas systems and providing performance agreements. Pierre constructed a biogas system for himself, and even used it as a demonstration model to help convince the community members of biodigester benefits.

Pierre’s endeavours also allowed him to produce fertilisers to use on his family’s farm. With the wages that he earned; he opened a small shop. It grew and generated extra income, which was sufficient to support his family, buy a plot of land, and build a house.

SNV is a mission-driven global development partner working in more than 20 countries across Africa and Asia. Building on 60 years of experience and grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we work on the core themes of gender equality and social inclusion, climate adaptation and mitigation, and strong institutions and effective governance. Together with our team of over 1,600 people, our mission is to strengthen capacities and catalyse partnerships that transform the agri-food, energy, and water systems, which enable sustainable and more equitable lives for all.

SNV places youth employment and entrepreneurship at the core of its work. SNV's market-led youth employment and entrepreneurship (YEE) portfolio is implemented in more than 10 countries in Africa.

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