

# YOUTH PROJECT ASSESSMENT STUDY

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this publication is to present the background study carried out for the design of a Youth Development Centre in Makindye Division, Kampala, Uganda. The objective of the project is to: *To empower youth to achieve their full potential and contribute to the sustainable development of their community.*

The project grew out of a partnership between the Youth Group of Bukasa Parish, that contacted Fontes Foundation Uganda in 2010 for assistance with youth problematic in the area. In early 2011, funding was secured to carry out a background study and start some activities. However, there is still a funding gap for the activities to be implemented the first year.

The data for the assessment study was collected through a problem identification workshop with the youth group, document review and 40 semi-structured interviews with employers, small businesses, education institutions and youth centres in Kampala.

Through the problem identification workshop the youth primarily identified 6 main problems that they have as constraints to being successful in their future, these are: Unemployment, lack of education, lack of start-up capital for businesses, lack of practical skills, lack of creativity and the HIV/AIDS problematic.

As for the interviews held with businesses and stakeholders, the following points can be summarised: There seem to be jobs and employment opportunities, however many are not paying well. To start with, it is necessary to point out that the education system as a whole does not provide the youth with adequate skills (academic or practical) to be productive in working life. The main lacking subjects were identified as business and entrepreneurship skills, basic accounting, project management, leadership skills, market knowledge, how to access credit as well as problem solving and applying theoretical learning in a practical way. Also, the focus on education and skills training is exaggerated, because many businesses are willing to train motivated youth on the job. However, basic English and literacy seem to be the minimum criteria. Employers expressed many complaints about the youth. Because modern youth is selective about jobs, they do not want to start slowly and grow but prefer to start on the top without long term visions. They are not motivated, have no work ethics and are not interested to learn or take pride in their profession. Everything seems to revolve around money. Many young people are obliged to choose directions they do not like, and are therefore not motivated or productive. An important issue is the lack of career guidance both at home and in

school. The youth need encouragement and confidence. Capital is a serious problem if they want to start a business, but there is also a lack of business management skills and little understanding of the market. It is also important to attract the interest of youth by offering activities like sports or computer skills training because many vocational centres fail because the students do not turn up or they will drop out after a few days.

There are a number of existing institutions that offer mentorship, vocational training and other activities for youth in Kampala, and Fontes Foundation visited many of them in order to draw on experiences.

## INTRODUCTION

This project has its background in partnership between Fontes Foundation Uganda and Tukole Youth Group that started in 2010. The youth group leadership contacted Fontes Foundation Uganda because the office was at that time located in their home area, and asked for support. Youth leaders pointed out the numerous problems the youth is facing in Makindye Division in general and Bukasa Parish in particular, such as drug abuse, alcoholism, prostitution, early pregnancies and unemployment. They also talked about the absence of any youth programmes by the government or other organisations to improve the situation. They proposed to start vocational skills training such as welding and tailoring to help the youth, an idea they got from a neighbouring youth club in Kabalagala. Fontes Foundation Uganda encouraged the youth group to get formally registered at the Division, and assisted in writing a constitution. At the same time, Fontes Foundation Uganda started looking for funding to start up an initiative to support and empower the youth. In March 2011 this funding was partly secured from Balder Foundation in Norway.

The youth problematic, however, is extremely complex and has a number of social, economic, cultural and historic causes. According to the Ugandan Government, around 500,000<sup>1</sup> Youth graduate from higher education centres per year, but only about 80,000 get jobs<sup>2</sup>. This does not include all the Youth that never make it to higher education institutions, due to high school fees in secondary school and university. A number of skills training initiatives have failed. In some cases the youth are not able to use their practical skills after finishing the education and simply sell off the start up tools they received<sup>3</sup>. A study in Masindi<sup>4</sup> revealed that most skills training centres offer training that is too theoretical due to lack of resources for materials and tools. Consequently, the youth does not feel skilled enough or comfortable going into self-employment after a completed course for example in tailoring. Another major challenge for moving from training to employment is the lack of business and entrepreneurship skills integrated in the training programmes, and the lack of access to start-up credit for youth.

Despite the complexity of the problem, there is no doubt about the importance of youth empowerment in Uganda. This study was carried out at a particularly critical

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<sup>1</sup> New Vision, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2011

<sup>2</sup> Independent

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief

<sup>4</sup> Astrid Uganda Foundation and Uganda Red Cross Society

time, after riots had rocked Kampala weekly through the Walk-to-work campaigns organised by the opposition in reaction to high food and fuel prices. Local and international media widely covered the events, and also pointed out that most rioters were unemployed youth seeking any distraction from their idle lives. The danger of having unemployed and discontented youth with no hope or vision for the future around the city has suddenly been brought to the attention of government officials, local leaders, NGOs and donors alike. The Government of Uganda has made employment for Youth one of its priorities in the new term that started recently, and the Government aims to create 20,000 jobs next year through a job-creating fund<sup>5</sup>. However, this will not be enough because Uganda has one of the most youthful populations in the world with 50% of the population below the age of 14<sup>6</sup>. This makes an exacerbation of this problem inevitable in future, and calls for immediate action.

The assessment study was carried out through research in Kampala, Uganda, between the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May and 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2011. The main objectives were:

- To identify the main problems perceived by the youth in the target area
- To identify the main challenges faced by employers and businesses
- To visit existing youth programmes, education institutions and skills training centres in order to draw on their experiences
- To involve stakeholders on district, division and local levels in the process and get their views

## METHODOLOGY

The information presented in this section was collected in May 2011 using the following methodologies:

1. Problem identification workshop (with youth and some guardians)
2. Semi-structured interviews (with employers and other stakeholders)

In total, about 70 youth from Bukasa and Wabigalo youth groups participated in the workshop. After this, 40 interviews were carried out with employers, businesses, stakeholders and education institutions. In total, 5 retail shops, 3 salons, 7 bars/restaurants/nightclubs, 1 hotel, 1 pharmacy, 1 gas station, 1 telecom, 1 welder, 1 stone quarry and 2 construction companies were visited. Especially for retail shops, salons and bars/restaurants, establishments of very different size and service level were chosen. In addition, 10 education institutions from primary up to university level were surveyed, as well as interviews carried out with representatives from Kampala District, Makindye Division, the local Police and local councils. The list of companies and institutions as well as the interview guides can be found in the appendix.

## PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The youth workshop lasted about 3 hours and was attended by about 70 people from Bukasa youth group, Wabigalo youth group, other residents of the area, the Councillor elect LC5 for the area and the Youth Chairperson Makindye Division. The

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<sup>5</sup> '20,000 jobs for youth to be created', New Vision, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011

<sup>6</sup> CIA World Factbook, [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)

workshop was held in Luganda. Fontes Foundation Uganda first outlined the objective of the project: to empower the youth for sustainable development. After this, the youth were asked to identify common problems and the reasons for them. A number of economic, social, educational, health, political and security problems were named by the participants. Then, the problems were put into categories and prioritised, until we had come up with the following 6 main problems:

1. Unemployment
2. Lack of education
3. Lack of start-up capital for businesses
4. Lack of practical skills
5. Lack of creativity
6. HIV/AIDS

Other problems mentioned but that were not prioritised were lack of public latrines, expensive water, lack of access to health services, malaria, orphans and poverty. The participants were now divided into 6 groups where they worked on one problem each. They were supposed to list what they had already done to solve the problem, what they could do themselves to solve the problem and what external parties such as government or Fontes Foundation could do. Below, each problem is discussed more in detail based on the presentations given by the groups after the group work exercise.



*Samson (Bukasa Youth Group Leader) at the workshop held in Makindye Division*

## UNEMPLOYMENT

The main problem seemed to be unemployment. This was one of the first problems mentioned, and it kept coming back during discussions. Many of the other problems like lack of education or lack of practical skills are causes of unemployment. Other reasons for unemployment mentioned were lack of business skills, lack of access to credit and lack of willingness to work. Initially, the 6<sup>th</sup> main problem was lack of willingness to work, but it was replaced by HIV/AIDS after loud protests from the participants. While discussing unemployment, many youths also started a debate about whether to go back to the village to practice farming is an option or not. It seemed like some had made the experience but that they had returned to Kampala because the prices of the goods they were planting fell and or because of other

challenges. Opinions seemed to be divided in the group about this topic, where the more educated ones advocated for urban farming and asking parents for small loans to start businesses, whereas others dismissed that these were viable possibilities, especially the orphans. This showed that quite a large proportion of the youth have lost hope in the future, they have given up and are not motivated to seize opportunities. They also lack the confidence in themselves to take on opportunities because of poor education and lack of any skill.

### LACK OF EDUCATION

During the problem identification exercise, we tried to survey the levels of education of our target group. This was not easy, because people felt embarrassed talking about their education levels. Eventually we learned that about 8% had never been to school at all, 14% had started primary school but never finished, 29% had started O-level but never finished, 29% had started A-level but never finished, 7% had started university but never finished and 10% had finished university but had no jobs. This shows that the group is extremely diverse, with about two thirds reaching as far as secondary school but never graduating. The main reason for dropping out cited was lack of school fees. Others added that the quality of the education is poor, and that better supervision and quality control is necessary. Parents should be sensitised to send their children to school and to convince the youth to stay in school. In addition, the youth mentioned that schools do not teach what is necessary for getting a job, such as computer skills.

### LACK OF CAPITAL

Lack of capital was cited as a central problem for youth to start their own businesses. Some that know practical skills fail to start a business because they do not have the capital to buy tools and material. However, the youth also identified the need to learn more about how to access loans and how to make sure a business is successful so that the loan can be paid back.

### LACK OF PRACTICAL SKILLS

One of the reasons for unemployment was the lack of practical skills. Especially the boys expressed the will to learn skills such as mechanics or welding. They said there is a lack of vocational schools and many schools do not have the equipment to really get practical experience. Some also mentioned the need to have exchanges with people from other countries so that superior skills can be learnt.

### LACK OF CREATIVITY

This concept was difficult to grasp for many but it still came up again and again during the discussions. The youth mostly blamed the lack of creativity on the lack of education or skills training. However, they also mentioned HIV/AIDS, malnutrition and other diseases such as malaria, because a sick person cannot be creative. Others mentioned the poor living environment; Lack of access to proper sanitation facilities as well as garbage in public spaces also affect well-being and creativity. Some said it is due to lack of exposure; There are many business ideas but the youth are not aware of them. Thus, exchanges with people from other areas and countries are welcome. Another reason mentioned was alcoholism.

### HIV/AIDS

The youth seems to be very aware of this disease. Some clinics distribute ARVs and offer counselling, but the youth group in Bukasa pointed out that there is no health centre in the entire parish. In addition, the lack of a distribution centre for free condoms was identified. The youth said that people do not want to go to shops and buy condoms because they do not have the money, or because they do not want to be seen buying them. They also said that counselling is not available, and in order to be effective, counselling should be done house to house and it should involve telling people how to eat properly when they are on ARVs. In addition, there should be programmes for HIV positive people where they can learn skills and still earn a living.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the problem identification exercise and the discussions that followed, these main conclusions can be highlighted:

1. The youth group is extremely diverse in terms of education, but it seems important for them that the programme can offer something for all of them. Especially the less educated were worried they were going to be left out
2. There was a clear demand for practical skills, especially amongst boys
3. Lack of credit was an important issue, however there seemed to be a lack of knowledge about existing credit and microfinance institutions, and a lack of knowledge about how to get and manage a loan
4. The group seemed divided on the question about willingness to work: some said openly that there is a lack of creativity and that the youth is not fully exploiting their possibilities. Others said they are unemployed due to lack of opportunities and lack of education, and that there is nothing they can do about it.

## EMPLOYERS

The employers surveyed ranged from 100 employees to self-employed. They included mostly bars, restaurants, hotels, salons and retail shops, because these are frequent in the area. However, construction companies and a stone quarry were also surveyed.

Most employers get their employees on enquiry, meaning that people come to the business, ask for work and leave their CVs. Only few advertise jobs. All employers said that employees must be able to read and write and speak English. This is especially important for employees dealing with customers, but even gardeners and cleaners were expected to have these minimum skills. Otherwise, most businesses were not particular about the education degrees. Waiters and salon workers, even welders were not expected to come with secondary or tertiary education or any experience, and many are trained at the work place from scratch. The only employers that were particular about qualifications were schools (for teachers), construction companies (for engineers and supervisors) and pharmacies/telecoms where diplomas, bachelor degrees and master degrees are required. Restaurants and bars had employees with very diverse backgrounds of education, some with only a few years of secondary school and some with degrees in completely different fields

such as teaching. Some restaurants were particular about the education levels of their chefs because they are critical for the business, but since the demand for good chefs is high and hiring educated chefs is expensive, some also opt to train them themselves.

Most businesses had an extremely low turn-over, with employees staying as long as 10 years. This was especially true for businesses that seem to choose their employees carefully. However, almost all bars, restaurants and nightclubs had extremely high turn-over, with people staying on average 2 months and often only for a few days. This is a problem for the businesses because they spend time training new employees all the time.

Asking for salary ranges was a sensitive matter and not all respondents were willing to reply. However, some general trends could be found: people working in local restaurants in the slums or as assistant shop attendants can expect from 30,000 to 40,000<sup>7</sup> per month. Larger shops and supermarkets are able to pay between 60,000 and 100,000 per month. Waiters earn between 100,000 and 200,000 per month, however many are given food at work and transport allowances, and they can take home tips between 5000 and 50,000 per day depending on the business and its clientele. Waiters paid on a daily basis are given 6000 per day. Most restaurants let the waiters keep the tip they earn in order to incentivise them to give good customer service. Only few have tip boxes where tip is shared amongst all waiters. Non-teaching staff at schools such as gardeners and cleaners can earn between 60,000 and 100,000. A sales person in a shop can earn about 100,000, but some are given food and transport allowance in addition. People working in salons can get from 50,000 in small salons, up to 400,000 in larger salons. Management personnel in most businesses can earn from 300,000 to 1 million shillings per month, and most of these have diplomas or university degrees. However, even a pharmacist with a diploma will only get about 150,000. Chefs are paid between 400,000 and 800,000 and good chefs are extremely demanded. Many hire chefs from Kenya because they fail to find qualified Ugandans. It was extremely difficult to estimate how much self-employed businessmen are earning because none of them calculate profits or were able to say how much they can take for themselves in a month. However, some salons and retail shops have grown to be able to pay employees, so the wage levels above can give an indication.

Compared to the expenses of living in Kampala, these salaries are low but this is how the market is. Most people pay at least 200,000 per month for rent, and school fees easily amount to 300,000 per term for each child.

Most employers replied that they prefer to hire staff from the local area. The main reason was late coming and people being delayed in traffic jam. Some businesses need to be able to call staff on short notice, for example mechanics when machines break down or waiters when there is an event. In addition, the employers can spend less money on transport allowances, although not all give them. Managers of bars and restaurants also worry about the security of their staff when going home late at night, and prefer that they stay close.

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<sup>7</sup> 100,000 Uganda shillings is currently about 40 USD or 220 NOK

Many employers had complaints about their employees. A general strong trend was that employers think that the youth today is lazy and not willing to work hard. They say that the youth lacks vision, motivation and interest, and all they think about is money. They do not have a goal in life. Being a good professional or doing the job well is not a motivation, so employers have to find ways to motivate employees to do a good job with money incentives. Stealing goods and cheating customers on bills is widespread and extremely difficult for employers. Margins are small, so when goods are stolen it can seriously affect the business. This does not seem to bother employees, and some employers even claim that they look for jobs not to work but to steal. Employers think this comes from the general corruption in society and especially the impunity of politicians that steal public money. Employers also say that it is difficult to see the ability of an employee in the paperwork because many certificates are fake and even if an employee has a diploma in catering this does not mean they know their job. The quality of vocational schools is poor, and therefore some prefer to hire Kenyans from famous hotel schools. Other problems are that employees do not take their job seriously and show up late or do not come at all, and their body language shows they do not want to work. This is a problem, especially in jobs that involve customer care. In addition, employees prefer to be paid on a daily or weekly basis, and do not want to wait until the end of the month. Employers say this is because they do not have a savings culture, and just want money quickly to spend on pleasures such as alcohol. Many youths live at home and get food at home, and they do not see why to work long hours for a small pay. Uganda does not have a social security system, so extended family caters for unemployed family members. This is good in bad times, but also reduces the incentive of the youth to get into employment. The youth want to start with a lot of money immediately, and are selective about jobs. They see the people in the suburbs owning large houses and driving big cars to work in town every day and want to be like them, not knowing that most of the cars are not theirs and most of the houses are on credit or built with stolen money. Employers say that workers that have gone through extreme hardship, come from the village or are orphans are much better workers because they know that this is their only chance. One employer even went as far as saying that it is good that the cost of living has increased, because this might put more pressure on the employees to be serious about their work. Especially jobs that involve manual labour or long working hours are unattractive for the youth; most of them want jobs in offices or supermarkets. It has to be noted that the foreign employers complain the most, however also Ugandan managers express their frustration.

Seen from a different perspective, many employers also exploit their workers. Almost none of the employers surveyed sign contracts with their workers, so that they can be dismissed any time without pay or compensation. Only few employers provide health insurance or cover some health payments, and there is no minimum wage. Especially uneducated workers are taken advantage of. Payment on a daily or weekly basis does not allow for long-term thinking or savings, and gives the workers little confidence in the future.

When asked about what skills they look for in a good employee, most employers said:

- Honesty
- Loyalty
- Hard working
- Reliability
- Motivated and willing to learn
- Must love their work
- Has a vision and a plan in life

Others added specific qualities for the work that needs to be carried out such as good communication, well dressed, well presented, efficiency, physical ability, self-confidence, able to talk easily to customers and language skills (English, Swahili and French). In short, it is not the education or experience that counts, but the value that the employee is able to add to the business. Most employers said that if the employee is willing to learn there are possibilities for promotion after on-the-job training, and several even mentioned specific cases where a cleaner or a waiter had been promoted to better positions with better pay after showing their loyalty, motivation and willingness to learn.

#### Starting a salon

One lady had only started her salon two months ago. She had placed her new salon next to two other, established salons in the same building. Salon businesses do well in Kabalagala due to the high levels of prostitution and the demand for beauty services. The lady said she has no experience in hairdressing, but she was working with her mother all her life and had a dream about starting her own business. Finally her aunt gave her some money to start up. She hired a girl with a certificate in hairdressing, and is now learning the profession herself. Her main challenge now is to get customers, because the neighbouring salons already have a customer base. She has no knowledge of book-keeping and business management, but says she would like to learn.

## SMALL BUSINESSES

Amongst the employers, many were small businesses. Since this project has a special focus on entrepreneurship, some lessons from the interviews with the owners of small businesses will be included here.

Most small businesses had started up during the last year, several in the last few months. This shows that there is a spirit of entrepreneurship and that the market is quite dynamic. Most people said that what motivated them to start a business was the desire to make money, but some also said it was because they love their profession. Most businesses had experienced rapid growth over the short time in operation. Some had already added new features such as fridges in the last year, and others had started alone but are now already employing several people. No business owners reported that they had taken a loan to start the business. This is because most microfinance institutions do not give loans to people that have no business (you have to have had the business for at least 1 year) and they also require securities. Some got the start-up capital from relatives, others had started with almost nothing. Others worked as an employee for several years and saved up enough to start the business. Getting the capital was the biggest challenge, followed by paying the trading licence. Some said that the trading licence (normally 50,000) was more than their start-up capital. Some businesses had taken up loans after the business had taken off, for example short term loans to increase stock. These loans

are provided by microfinance institutions and have to be paid back within 6 months. Other challenges are competition; many people start the same business as neighbouring shops. This shows lack of knowledge about how to interpret the existing market and have a good business idea. People see that other businesses are working in the area and think they can copy them, without thinking about the limitations of demand.

Most business owners do not keep records at all. Some keep records, however they are not able to calculate profit. It was extremely difficult to try and understand how profitable the businesses were, or how much the owner was able to extract for own use per month. Probably the values are between 40,000 and 100,000 per month. Some business owners had little education, whereas others had a diploma in hotel management and one was a teacher. She said she was earning more with her shop than being a teacher in a private school, although she only started the shop a year ago. Most shop owners said that they would like to learn more about business management, especially saving. Capital seems to be a challenge for many businesses even if they are already in operation, because they have high running costs such as rent. However, when asked what they would use the money for if they got a loan, almost all replied that they would increase stock or buy more materials, and only one or two said they would use it for investments that can benefit the business in the long term, such as better tools or machines.

#### Saving over time

One owner of a salon told us the story of how he managed to start his own business. He worked in a salon for about three years in order to learn the profession and to save money. Every month he used some of his salary to buy some equipment for his future salon; a hair dryer, a chair or a mirror. After three years he managed to get a shop and started the renovation, still working at his former work place. When the salon was ready he put a person to work there, but he still had to keep his employment to finish all payments. After a year he was finally ready to go and work in his own salon. From that moment business started to take off. Now he employs 8 people in the salon, and has modern equipment such as sinks, hot water and electric dryers. He does hair, nails, facials and massages. He trains most of his staff himself, and one of the most important features he looks for is that the person must really love the profession. In addition, employees must be able to make the customers their friends, because then the customer will come back, even if the service was not perfect. He encourages the youth to work hard and have a long term project, and to love their work.



*Kabalagala Youth Group Metal Workshop and other businesses*

## EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Some education institutions visited were in the project area, others outside. There were several objectives with visiting the education institutions. Some are employers and stakeholders in the project area. Others run similar projects focusing on youth and vocational training and can contribute with experiences that should be taken into account when designing this programme. Others were visited because they have resourceful people that work with youth and education on a daily basis, and can give important insights into the problems and challenges facing the youth today.

In Uganda most private education institutions are run strictly as a business. This means that the school fees that children pay need to be enough to pay salaries, running costs, investments and maintenance. Some schools, however, are attached to churches or other charity organisations, and have an objective to provide low-cost education for disadvantaged children. These either subsidise running costs with external support, or they cover investments such as new buildings with donations. All institutions visited that had this policy were supported by churches, mostly catholic. Since the government does not operate many vocational schools, most vocational schools are private. Vocational schools have an extra challenge because in order to teach practical courses, equipment such as tools, machines and materials are needed. School fees for vocational schools can therefore be high. Some vocational schools use the curriculum given by the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEBC), whereas others make their own curricula. In addition to the course, students need to go for industrial training for three months after completing either one or two years. Some institutions find the placements for the students, others do not. The length of the courses also vary, some offer certificates of one year and diplomas of two years, however if students come from lower levels of education even certificates can take two years. Some even offer certificates of three years. In the Ugandan curricula there are elements of entrepreneurship training in all vocational courses, however it depends on each institution how much this is emphasised.

When asked what most students do after they leave vocational training institutes, most answered that they go into employment. Some are employed by the businesses where they do their internships. Others go in completely different directions such as police or the prison guard, or work in factories. Only few start their own businesses, mainly for two reasons; they lack access to start-up capital, and even after finishing the course they do not feel confident enough to start a business.

Many of the senior teachers interviewed also had interesting insights into the general problematic of the youth today. Most have been in the education sector for many decades, and have been teaching at different institutions. Some of their views are summarised below.

Generally, teachers at all levels (primary to university) think that there is something wrong with the education system. They see that students waste time on many subjects that are not useful to them and do not prepare them for either being a good employee or starting a business. They say that students are only taught to repeat what has been said and do not understand fully what they learn. They are not forced to be creative or problem solvers, and can in most cases not apply what they have learned in practice. This leads to passive students that are not self-confident and not creative, and do not know what to do with their lives. They go to school and study in order to get a certificate, not to actually learn something. Many are pushed to do things they do not want to do, and most do not know what they want to do at all. After finishing tertiary education, they expect government or somebody to give them an office job. When they do not get one, they do not have the energy or creativity to find something to do. Many people sit in offices in jobs that they dislike, and this also affects their productivity and the possibility for businesses to grow. In the long run, this will affect the economy as a whole.

Some of the older teachers were terrified with how the young generation has changed, and attributed this both to lack of guidance from parents but also to the influence from media such as TV. The previous generation had to work hard through war and bad times, however the young generation has grown up in a stable country where food is enough. They therefore find pleasure and leisure more important than work. In addition, the modern consumer society adds pressure on the youth to always have new clothes, shoes, phones and gadgets, and money is spent on this instead of saving for the future.

Teachers think that one of the biggest problems is the lack of career guidance. Parents are not able or willing to guide the youth, and most of them do not know

#### 7 Things That Will Destroy Us

One of the senior lecturers illustrated his thoughts about the youth today with the following poem by Mahatma Gandhi:

#### 7 Things That Will Destroy Us

1. Wealth without work
2. Pleasure without conscience
3. Knowledge without character
4. Commerce without morality
5. Science without humanity
6. Worship without sacrifice
7. Politics without principals

what they want to do. Career guidance should therefore be available at all schools and universities. Another thing teachers are asking for is more practical skills in schools, even in traditional academic schools. This can teach students how to use their hands and their creativity. If they drop out of school, at least they have learned something useful. However, practical courses are expensive due to the need for tools and materials. Teachers also think that doing practical courses can boost the self-esteem of students, because they can see the product of what they have done. In general, the economy has so many opportunities for productive activities, however most of the youth only want to go into the services sector where the growth potential is limited. Lastly, teachers think that entrepreneurship skills and business management skills should be integrated from primary level and emphasised on secondary level. Students should be able to write project proposals and business plans, make market assessments and calculate profits so that they can start successful businesses. Nowadays, even students that have studied business at university level struggle to make a simple business plan that can be applied in practice.

One education institution and one project were particularly close to what this project wants to do, and therefore these cases are explained more in detail below.

### SHARING

Sharing is a youth centre not far from the project area, in Nsambya. It is connected to the Catholic Church, and has been operating since 1989. It has several activities for the youth:

1. Vocational skills training (tailoring, catering, carpentry)
2. Sports (football, badminton, basketball, volleyball, baseball, table tennis)
3. Dance (breakdance)
4. Library
5. A and O level exams (high school diplomas)
6. Computer room

In the vocational training section they offer certificates of one or two years, and they currently have about 60 students out of which almost all are girls. Some students register to take the “external” certificate (UNEB), others just get an internal one. Students pay relatively low fees (<100.000 per term) and students that struggle to pay are allowed to pay in installments or are offered small casual jobs around the centre to pay for the fees or the other requirements. The fees include two meals per day, and the centre does not include boarding facilities. The centre tries to support its courses by taking on work in tailoring, catering and carpentry, however only the carpentry workshop manages to make sufficient money from the local demand. The vocational courses include basic English, basic mathematics, business skills and entrepreneurship, however not enough since the time does not allow it. At the same time, both the teachers and the priests constantly counsel the students, and every Friday they attend “life skills” sessions with the priests. Although the centre is connected to the Church and religious education is part of the programme, Sharing does not discriminate in terms of religion and everyone is welcome. After finishing the course, the students go for industrial training for 3 months. Some get employed by the companies they intern for, and others try to start their own businesses.

Sharing tries to help some of the most brilliant students with start-up tools so that they can get going.

The sports are the most popular activities at Sharing. All the teams have great success in competition, and the football team even played in the Ugandan national league once. School scouts come to the Sharing teams to pick out special talents and give them scholarships for secondary education. Sharing has one of the best break dance groups in Uganda. More than 600 youth turn up for the sports and dance activities. They have to pay a small fee, about 1000 shillings per month. This is to make sure that the youths are really motivated and serious. The centre provides all equipment and clothes, and they have most of the pitches themselves. Only for football they use a public space. The coaches are hired part-time to come and coach the teams in the evenings, and they also take time to talk to the youth and counsel them. Once a year the centre organises a youth festival where different sports competitions are organised, but also other games such as poetry competitions. This brings the youth together, and also helps the centre advertise the courses and raise funding locally.

The library provides a space where students from both Sharing and other schools can come and study. Many youths from the area live in slums where they have no space to read and where they are distracted by noise. They therefore come to Sharing where they can get access to books against a small fee, and study in a quiet environment.

In order to give the students, who drop out of secondary school due to lack of school fees, an opportunity to still complete their education, Sharing offers them the possibility to register for the national O- and A- level exams. Students read on their own and use the library to prepare for the exams, and in this way they can get their certificates without having to pay school fees.

Teachers talk about many social problems that affect the youth's ability to learn and develop. Many live with guardians who want to use them as maids or houseboys, and do not allow them to go to class. Many are physically and sexually harassed at home. Others turn to prostitution to get money to survive, and get pregnant. Some are married off very young, and their husbands do not let them go for training.

### **KIBO FOUNDATION**

Kibo programme was launched four years ago by initiative of founder Abraham Temu. They started with only 8 students and only 8 computers in Kansanga, Kampala. Now they have 25 students per class. Over four years of operation, Kibo programme gave way to 300 graduates, with an average of 115 students per year. They have a 90 % of success, from which a high percentage of students end up having their own business.

The programme covers but is not limited to foundational ICT (Information and Communications Technology) skills, project and financial management skills, and skills related to community development and entrepreneurship. The current in-house programme is 15 weeks long.

The programme targets youth between 18- 30 years of age. The average age over 4 years is 24. It's an equal opportunity programme open to eligible young men and women including those who are out of school, unemployed, disabled or unskilled. The students vary in regards to social and regional status, as they come from many areas in Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya and even Sudan.

Kibo has established a set of steps in order to be admitted within the centre. Students first fill out a form and drop it off at centre. After that, team of trainers and board members call students for a first interview. Students are asked about their backgrounds, personal, educational and professional skills. Trainers and board members discuss each student among them and they choose students for each class carefully. Students will have to pay a small registration fee, and there are also a few institutions which give scholarships so some students.

Kibo Foundation keeps track of their students once they graduate until now, they affirm it is a hard task but it is the only way to have a record of the success of the programme. The different ways they do it, are emailing, telephone calls and through different events. They may also call former graduates in to come to the centre and talk to the new students, and they are always invited to every graduation parties. Thus, there is a good exchange of ideas and communication among all.

Kibo main training value is to give back- self powering aid. Hence mentors and trainers strive to engage youth within their communities at the same time they are learning. They have created a community programme, and each class is expected to raise money to give to any institution, church, orphanage, etc. of their choice within the community. This is key to Kibo programme and mandatory for each class. Thus, after 15 weeks, students in each class not only learn course skills but they contribute to the development and well being in the community. Students get to see the insights of a community project as a team, by being leaders, community participants, empowering fundraising effort and giving forward.

Apart from the community project as part of the program, students are required and expected to cover 25 hour of community service. Without this, they will not be able to graduate.

The course program is divided into 2 parts:

- ITC skills, 2 teachers - All courses related to computer skills and typing (Kibo is very strict about following up with student's typing abilities and improvements)
- Life skills (mentoring, guidance and counseling are included here), team of 4 teachers/mentors - 4 main groups:
  - Job application process
  - Project management
  - Proposal writing
  - Integrating thinking
- After graduating, students have the possibility to engage in internships at companies and workplaces, previously arranged with Kibo and partners.

- As Kibo founder stated: “Kibo programme is an evolving one”. This means, they always leave a margin within the program for possible and future changes.

## YOUTH EDUCATION PACK PROGRAMME OF NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL (YEP)

This programme has been running since 2006 and targets youth in Northern Uganda, often former abductees and orphans. Since 2006, more than 10 centres have been constructed around Gulu, Kitgum and Pader with more than 4000 graduates in total. A simple survey carried out in 2010 revealed that 83% of graduates are still using their vocational skills to earn a living, often alongside agriculture. The YEP programme is a 9 month full time non- formal education programme with three equally - important components: literacy/numeracy, life skills and basic level skills training designed for disadvantaged (- war affected -) youth and young people. Besides empowerment and social objectives, the main aim of YEP is to provide the youth with transferable skills for sustainable employment. The program intends to serve holistic purpose of combining literacy with life skills and basic skills training.

The main objectives of the program are for the youth to: Reach functional literacy and experience an enabling environment for personal development and psychosocial support. It is also to obtain wellness and awareness that will further their development and awareness as individuals and as members of their societies. They need to acquire basic practical skills that will increase their chances of finding apprenticeships and securing regular income in their communities. Youth will acquire basic practical skills such as carpentry, tailoring, catering and brick and cement works, that will allow them to pursue further professional training, acquire personal life skills in order to live in and manage a conflict or post-conflict situation and resolve dispute non-violently. Youth also get psychosocial assistance because many are traumatised due to the war.

Basic life skills include basic literacy in the local language and some basic English, plus other cultural subjects such as Human Rights and health education. The centre follows the national curricula for vocational skills. Each centre also has a baby-care centre to encourage young mothers to attend. Some years into the programme it was discovered that the success rate was low due to missing business skills, something that has now been introduced at all centres. After graduation, the centres form Income Generation Activity (IGA) groups of 3-4 students from the same area, and give them a start-up kit. Some groups have become very successful and a carpentry cooperative formed by a IGA group is currently producing large quantities of school benches for NRC and other NGOs. The groups are followed up to 6 months after graduation with business advice.

Even though YEP has found a few **challenges** such as: High running costs (expensive school fees and cost of materials and especially cost of salaries for employees), absenteeism and drop-out rates due to domestic responsibilities and long distances to the centre, competition of marketability of the skills in the urban markets, break away from the IGA groups and taxation, the program experienced a great deal of **achievements** such as; A huge increase of participants from year to year, from 231

youth graduating in 2006, reaching 1,062 of graduates in 2010, the establishments of new and more learning centres in other northern districts of Uganda.

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The objective of interviewing representatives from local authorities was to bring them on board in the shaping process of this project, as well as to hear from their experiences with youth-related challenges. In addition, it was to check whether there are other programmes planned in the same project area in order to avoid duplication.

Local leaders, councillors and bureaucrats all underlined that youth is an important topic for the peaceful development of the country. The Division mentioned that there are some government programmes, for example the encouragement to form registered groups or circles under the Community Driven Development (CDD) programme. The Division has also already supported some youth groups with seed capital however they found that there was a lack of knowledge in financial management and business management for the groups to use the capital in a productive way. In addition there is a need for skills training so that the youth can go into productive activities. The police talks to the youth during community policing, in order to prevent crime and create openness between the communities and the police. Muyenga has its own Community Police Post that is entirely dedicated to preventive police work. Officers working there receive special training and try to solve cases through mediation and non-violent methods. There are no NGOs in Makindye Division that focus on youth empowerment.

Youth leaders agree that some might be lazy or unwilling to work, but many are also facing extraordinary hardship, trying to take care of children from early pregnancies and suffering with high rents and cost of living. They say that the youth would appreciate any initiative that could give them skills, and especially sports and computer skills are very attractive. Youth leaders also underlined the need for the youth to get counselling and sensitisation about their attitudes and the benefits of working and earning money.

Representatives from the District and the Division also mentioned that Fontes Foundation Uganda needs a certificate to operate in Kampala District, and encouraged us to start the process as soon as possible.

### OTHER YOUTH PROGRAMMES IN UGANDA

There are some other youth related programmes in Uganda that focus on youth and entrepreneurship. Some are mentioned below:

- Enterprise Uganda is an organisation that provides one-week courses in business and entrepreneurship. The “Business and Enterprise Start-up Tool” is designed for graduates from tertiary education such as universities to encourage them to start a business and give them the necessary knowledge. Fontes Foundation Uganda sent a representative to the last course held in February 2011, in order to learn from this initiative. The organisation is funded by UNDP, UNCTAD and the Government of Uganda.
- Young Achievers Awards is an event organised every year, where successful business initiatives are awarded prizes in different categories. The winners

are selected by a board of prominent Ugandans from the private and public sector. The President of Uganda is a regular guest at the ceremony, something that shows his support and motivates the participants. The Young Achievers Awards is organised by Tetea Uganda and funded by various corporate companies.

- The Junior Achievement (JA) Uganda programme works together with secondary schools and encourages students in A-level to start businesses. Volunteers from the different corporate companies that fund the programme help the students with their expertise. The project has produced many successful business initiatives, and helps youth manage the transition from education to the working life. JA Uganda also organises a National Expo where all the companies are displayed, and the best initiatives are even invited to participate at regional events in East Africa.

## CONCLUSION

From the discussions with employers, business owners, education institutions and other stakeholders, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. There seem to be jobs and employment opportunities, however many are not paying well
2. The education system as a whole does not provide the youth with adequate skills (academic or practical) to be productive in working life
3. The focus on education and skills training is exaggerated. People seem to think that if they have education they are guaranteed to have a job. This is not true, and many employers see the capacity of learning on the job as more important than background or experience. In addition, many educated people earn less than people that have started their own businesses or have been trained on the job. However, basic literacy and English are a must.
4. Modern youth is selective about jobs and think that they can start on the top. They are not willing to start slowly and grow, and do not have long-term visions
5. There is a general lack of entrepreneurship training, business management knowledge, project management, knowledge of basic accounting, market studies and how to access credit in society due to negligence of these subjects in all types of curricula
6. Many young people are obliged to do things they do not like, and are therefore not motivated or productive. After a life of being told to do things, they have difficulties understanding what they really want to do
7. Career guidance is lacking both at home and in school. The youth lacks access to mentors or people with experience that can help them finding their path in life and give them encouragement and confidence
8. A problem is lack of self confidence in youth; even if they have the potential to learn or have the skills they do not have the confidence to start a business
9. Capital is a serious problem for people that want to start a business, but there is also a lack of business management skills and little understanding of the market

10. It is important to attract the interest of youth by offering activities like sports or computer skills training. Many vocational centres fail because the students do not turn up.
11. Community development activities give youth leadership skills, mobilisation skills and make them aware of their place in the community
12. It is important with a carefully designed enrolment policy
13. It is important to follow up students after they complete the course, for further guidance but also in order to improve the programme progressively and track success rates