



UNLEASHING THE POWER OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Educating, empowering and
employing Uganda's next
generation



A window of opportunity for Uganda's development

Uganda is one of the youngest countries in the world with 78 per cent of the population under the age of 30. With this booming youth population, Uganda faces a significant opportunity to flourish socially and economically. Yet, too often, the need to invest in young people to achieve the desired social and economic targets is forgotten.

Young Ugandans aged 15-19 face one of the highest HIV infection burdens in the world, with an estimated 570 young women newly infected with HIV every week. This problem is compounded by a high rate of teenage pregnancy, which affects one in four girls up to the age of 19.

Poor SRH indicators are accompanied by limited economic opportunities accessible to young people. More than half of young people in Uganda are unemployed. Among those with a job, the majority are self-employed, working in the small informal wage sector.

This underscores the need to urgently invest in young people, building their knowledge and skills and providing them with opportunities for a healthier and more prosperous future.

Through practical vocational training, young Ugandans can create or work for small and medium enterprises and become self-employed. However, their ability to earn a living is dependent on maintaining good sexual and reproductive health. Failing to address negative sexual practices among young people can threaten their ability to save capital, complete vocational training and stay healthy and productive.

As UNFPA, we know that empowering, educating and employing adolescents and youth is a precondition for harnessing the demographic dividend, unleashing the power of young people and paving the path to prosperity.

This is what the Youth Enterprise Model (YEM) embodies. By integrating sexual and reproductive health with formal and informal business and employment training, YEM presents great opportunities for Uganda's young people.

The project has been working side-by-side with vocational training institutions and small and medium enterprises since 2012; equipping health facilities with contraceptives and training health personnel to improve access and quality health care; and empowering young entrepreneurs and peer educators in driving behaviour change in their private and business lives.

With the generous support of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, YEM is not only showing significant results, but is fulfilling a significant gap where few have tread. By combining health and economics, the project is enabling young people to thrive and secure their own future, the future of their families and that of Uganda as a whole.

Dr. Julitta Onabanjo
Regional Director

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund
East and Southern Africa Region





A new approach

Funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and implemented by UNFPA in partnership with Communication for Development Foundation Uganda, Reproductive Health Uganda and Straight Talk Foundation, YEM aims to ensure young people are not only building employable skills, but are also gaining knowledge and safe decision-making behaviours related to their sexual and reproductive health. Since the project began in 2012, YEM has reached more than 963,000 adolescents and young people, helping shape better health-seeking and financially responsible behaviours.

This report is a collection of stories from service providers, peer educators and the young people who benefit from YEM and are witnessing its positive impact in action.

"The Youth Enterprise Model is going where no one else has gone. No one in this country has attempted to merge health with business like this."

- Hassan Sekajoolo, Straight Talk Foundation

"This is first-of-its kind in East and Southern Africa. It proves that innovative approaches to health can truly change lives."

- Renata Tallarico, UNFPA East and Southern Africa

No wealth without health

Linking health and economics

Youth financial security, long-term productivity and social empowerment cannot be achieved if the sexual health of young people is not protected¹.

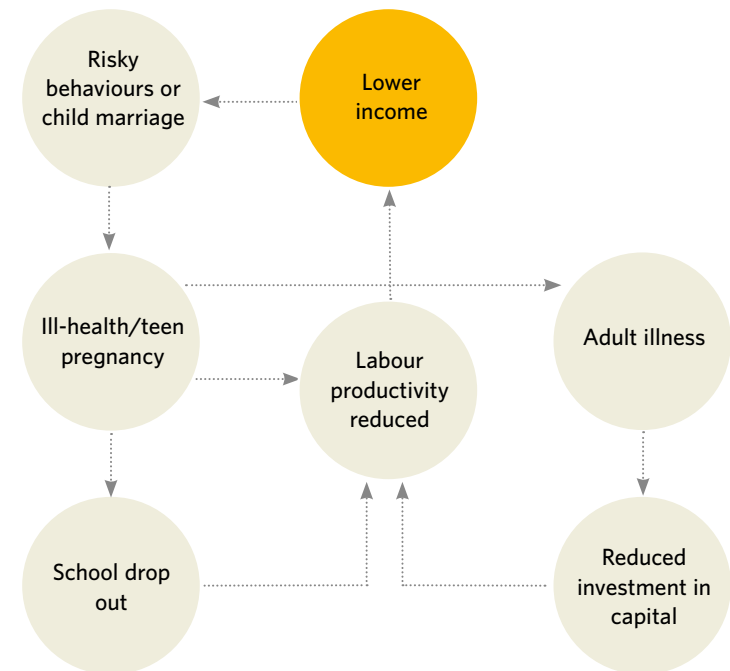
Uganda's human capital is dependent on youth maintaining good health, particularly, sexual and reproductive health. The disproportionate occurrence of HIV and AIDS among young adults, which is by far the leading cause of death among youth across Sub-Saharan Africa, is a prominent cause of human capital destruction², contributing to a net annual loss of one per cent of GDP³.

When young people are economically vulnerable, they are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviours in efforts to survive⁴. For example, a girl may enter an intergenerational relationship, early marriage or sex work to support herself, which puts her at risk of teen pregnancy, STIs, HIV, and dropping out of school.

Risky sexual behaviour among young people also impact their ability to save capital, complete vocational training and be healthy and productive workers and entrepreneurs⁵. Fifty-nine per cent of young people in vocational training institutions and small and medium enterprises are sexually active, yet only two in every five of them are currently using a contraceptive method.

Given the crucial link between health and business, there is an overwhelming need to address sexual and reproductive health issues within business environments. YEM has taken this principle into practice: proving that a combined approach can make profound impacts in the lives of many.

A health and economic gap facing the largest population in Uganda⁶



1 Leatherman, S., & Dunford, C. (2010). Linking health to microfinance to reduce poverty. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 88, 470-471.

2 World Bank. (2005). Poverty reduction: Does reproductive health matter? Washington D.C.: Margaret E. Greene and Thomas Merrick

3 Bonnel, R. (2000). HIV/AIDS: Does it increase or decrease growth in Africa?. ACT, Africa Department, Washington, DC, World Bank

4 US Agency for International Development. (2009) Fact sheet on youth reproductive health policy: poverty and youth reproductive health policy initiative. 2009

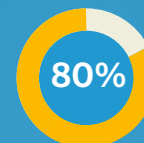
5 Correia M, Bannon I, editors. The other half of gender: men's issues in development. Washington (DC): World Bank; 2006

6 Adapted from Ruger, J. P., D. T. Jamison, et al. (2001). Health and the Economy. International Public Health: Diseases, Programs, systems, and Policies. Merson, Black and Mills. Gaithersburg, Maryland, Aspen Publishers: 617-666.



▼ Nokyamsadde Leontina, 18, sits in a health clinic bed, ready to give birth to her baby at the Kiganda Health Clinic in Mubende

Tapping into an unmet need



of Uganda's unemployed are youth⁷
Out of those employed, 19 out of 20 work in the informal wage sector⁸



of young people in vocational training institutions and small and medium enterprises are sexually active⁹



But only 2 in 5

young people in small and medium enterprises currently use a contraceptive method⁹

7 International Youth Foundation. (2011). Navigating Challenges. Charting Hope. A Cross-Sector Situational Analysis on Youth in Uganda. Volume 1. Uganda: USAID.

8 The Government of Uganda. National Development Plan 2015/16 - 2019/2020

9 Imakit R. (2016). YEM Midline Report. Kampala: Straight Talk Foundation, unpublished.



“

I learned to protect myself and
abstain from sex. I hope to work
and make money to earn a living.

- Angellah Nahteba, 17, student at a vocational training
institution in Kampala

Shaping a new future

The Youth Enterprise Model

Operating in two districts, Kampala and Mubende, YEM is tapping into a new market, using three major access points to target young people in business:

- 1 Market (small and medium youth enterprises, commercial banks and microfinance institutions),
- 2 Education (vocational training institutions),
- 3 Health-care (health facilities and outreaches)

YEM approaches communities holistically by focusing on both upstream (influencing national policies and strategies) and downstream (working with local business, health facilities and communities).

As a result of YEM, 50 small and medium enterprises, 23 institutions, 27 health facilities and 6 financial institutions were trained on youth-friendly service delivery to young people in enterprises.

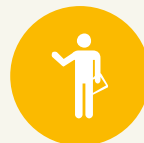
Knowledge about their sexual and reproductive health among young people is improving in the target districts. For example, in 2013, 53 per cent of youth believed a girl could not get pregnant if she had sex while standing. This misconception has decreased to 34 per cent in 2016.

YEM has led to a significant boost in contraception use among young people, including uptake of condoms, implants, pills and injectables.

Through projects like YEM, Uganda has the power to harness the strengths and advantages of a surge in a growing youth population. When youth are given the knowledge and skills, they will lead a new and prosperous way forward.

Results at a glance:

Increased access to sexual and reproductive health information and services



784,200

young people received an increase in access to sexual and reproductive health information (excluding radio listenership)



40%

of young people accessed sexual and reproductive health services as a result of the information received from YEM activities

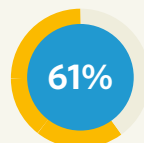


1.7 million

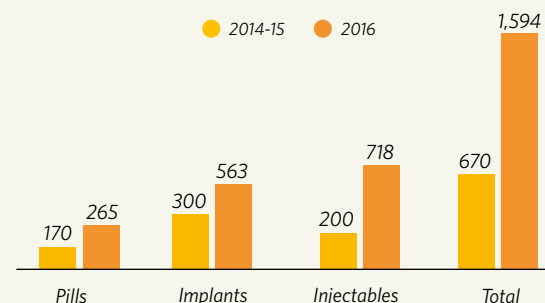
condoms distributed to young people in enterprises and communities

Increased use of family planning

New family planning users as a direct result of YEM



of young people in small and medium enterprises and vocational training institutions have started using contraceptives in the past 12 months



Markets: working together for economic empowerment

Paving the way in the first-of-its-kind partnership, YEM is working together with financial institutions to embed sexual and reproductive health messages into their financial literacy outreach. Since the programme began, YEM has trained 142 personnel from 6 financial institutions.

Banks are seeing the benefits, including tapping into a booming customer base. Every bank who received training developed first-ever bank accounts tailored specifically for the needs of youth.

“Since we started incorporating sexual and reproductive health information in our dialogues, we are seeing a steady increase in savings every time we make a field visit.”

Mwenyango Agnes, Finance Trust Bank

“If you have money and health, you have everything you want”

In the heart of Kampala's Kasubi suburb, through the narrow, winding pathways between brick houses and swaying laundry lines sit five diligent and determined young businessmen. Tarouk, Maurice, Robert, John and Peter are having their regular, weekly executive board meeting, discussing important next steps for the empire they aspire to one day build together. They call it the 'Love Project'.

Ranging in ages between 18 and 20 years old, the boys first set up the business after participating in a Youth Enterprise Model outreach event where they were exposed to important issues relating to their sexual and reproductive health as well as business management. In partnership with FINCA, one of YEM's partner financial institution, the boys received valuable financial management advice that help further their personal and business goals.

“We learned that it is important that we keep ourselves safe so we can achieve what we want in the future,” Tarouk says.

With just 40,000 Ugandan Shillings (equivalent to about USD \$11) as start-up capital, pitched in by each of the boys, they began a paper bag business that has

already grown exponentially. The business has not only given them a strong purpose and dream for the future, but also the ability to pay school fees to finish their studies.

They have reinvested the rest into their latest venture - a poultry business. But it doesn't stop there. They hope to continue expanding their business so they can employ more young people in Kampala, across Uganda and around the world.

“We are growing more - it is still small but we hope to have something big,” Tarouk says.

“You cannot work and you cannot be a successful person without your health,” says Robert. “If you have money and health, you have everything you want - that is our dream.”



▲ (from left to right): Musisi Peter, 20; Ssenfuka Maurice, Aijuka Tarouk, 19; Abaasa Robert, 18; and Isabirte John James, 20. Young entrepreneurs in front of their chicken coop business in Kasubi Suburb, Kampala, Uganda

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The people who are very much responsible for [young people] are us – the instructors and teachers. If we close a deaf ear to these children, they will end up not surviving.

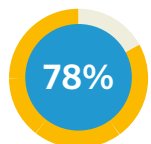
– Julius Mbiabizi, Instructor, Mulago Vocational Training Centre in Kampala

▲ Jackline, 22, with her instructor from the Mulago Vocational Training Centre in Kampala



Education: building lasting partnerships with training institutions

Capacity to provide sexual and reproductive health behaviour change programmes:



of target vocational training institutions have the capacity to provide programmes, each have at least 10 trained peer educators and 3 trained instructors



of target youth enterprises have the support of at least five trained peer educators

In Kampala and Mubende, where barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services persist, YEM has built district-wide interventions that capacitate vocational training institutions, youth enterprises and peer educators to engage youth in both sexual and reproductive health and economic-based issues. YEM has helped develop a standard delivery package to reach youth in enterprises, create guidelines for 23 vocational training institutions' extra-curricular activities and build capacity of six banks and microfinance institutions.

"If we don't give them skills, it becomes a vicious cycle"

Jackline Masika, 22, sits in a dark classroom in Mulago Vocational Training Centre. A bright beam of sunlight shines through the window illuminating her as she huddles over her work table. She clasps each delicate, colourful string and weaves it into the knitting machine – a piece of solid fabric falls off the table on the adjacent side. Jackline joins many other young people who are obtaining employable skills at the centre, including hair dressing and beauty, metal fabrication (welding), catering and hotel management, tailoring and sewing as well as computer studies.

The centre is positioned purposefully in Mulago, a low-income community along a hillside in Kampala. Julius Mbiabizi, owner and instructor of the centre, witnesses some of the everyday challenges his students face.

"There are those that we get from the streets – you find that some of them have already given birth to children. They are vulnerable," says Julius. "If we don't give them skills, it becomes a vicious cycle whereby a mother has been vulnerable, she has given birth to a kid who, in turn, becomes vulnerable."

Julius has been part of YEM since it began in 2012, participating as one of the first vocational instructors to receive training in the initiative that integrates sexual and reproductive health into vocational training modules and extra-curricular activities.

He explains that since his training, he has shared vital information about health and business with many of his students who may not have otherwise received it, encouraging them to seek safer sexual health behaviours. For example, he explains that many of the male students are now circumcised to help minimize the risk to HIV infection.

"The Youth Enterprise model is very unique because the young people who may not get the information from me, they will get from peer educators who have also been trained by Straight Talk Uganda, with the help of UNFPA."

He describes YEM as a wider community support network where even the peer educators will come back to him for consultation, clarification or support.

"The people who are very much responsible for [young people] are us – the instructors and teachers. If we close a deaf ear to these children, they will end up not surviving."

“I never knew how to save my money, how to protect myself – but now I know”

“I was 18 and there was a lot of peer pressure - you go to clubs and get drunk,” recalls Matovu Badru Kasozi, a young 24-year-old living in Mubende district in rural Uganda. Matovu is not the only one in his community who faces this challenge. Unemployed young men are at higher risk of alcohol abuse, domestic violence and other risky behaviours¹⁰.

Matovu has come a long way. He proudly sits in a plumbing workshop at a Mubende vocational training institution classroom where hundreds of students receive tactile job skills. Thanks to YEM, the vocational training institution incorporates regular visits from health-care workers, financial institutions and peer educators who educate and link students to information and services.

“They taught us about our sexual and reproductive health and about business – I like that part,” says Matovu with a wide grin. “I never knew how to save my money, how to protect myself, I knew myths about condom use – but now I know.”

Although Matovu is training to become a plumber, he is still able to maintain a steady income by hiring and training other employees through his graphic design business. This is because of the financial and business planning skills he obtained through YEM.

“I am able to put my capital to pay my workers and put back into the business,” he says proudly. “You see I am here studying but business is still moving.”

Matovu has now become a peer educator and uses his personal experience to engage with young people on issues he can relate to, such as alcohol abuse, condom use and even saving money.

“I taught and encouraged them not to drink and told them about all the dangers,” he says. It was a gradual process but his friends followed his example and stopped drinking.

Other youth approach him at the vocational training college or business to ask questions. One young man asked him why his condom was always breaking and Matovu realized he was using it incorrectly. The young man was worried he had gotten his girlfriend pregnant so Matovu taught him to apply the condom properly and referred him to health services for further care and information.

Matovu emphasizes how important it has been to combine both business and health: “You are taking money from your wallet to get treated [for an STI]. [If] you impregnate someone, you are taking money from the business. You see they are connected - they move together. So we have to be careful.”

With softness in his eyes and a gentle but steady voice he says: “you have to know how you prepare your life; how you fight for your life. I have to be safe.”

“

I never knew how to save my money, how to protect myself, I knew myths about condom use – but now I know.

- Matovu Badru Kasozi, 24, student at a vocational training institution student and entrepreneur in Mubende





“

I talk about business and pregnancy with them. Some have kids, so I talk about growth and the challenges their kids face.

- Edith, 20, peer educator and entrepreneur in Mubende

Health-care: Building knowledge and skills through local networks

Following by example: young entrepreneurs trained as peer educators

Peer educators have the unique ability to communicate and connect in ways adults and other community members cannot. They become influential local champions for change, acting as role models in their communities, providing accurate information and supporting fellow youth. More than 60 per cent of youth in vocational training institutions and small and medium enterprises, in the two districts YEM works in, have ever discussed sexual and reproductive health with peer educators¹¹. Since 2012, YEM has trained more than 818 peer educators and 88 vocational training institution instructors in sexual reproductive health, financial literacy and business planning. They have gone on to work in local health clinics, in vocational training colleges, at outreach events and through their own businesses and networks to engage and interact with more than 769,359 young people in three years.



769,400

young people reached by peer educators.



Each peer educator has supported, on average,

174 youth

per year

“I want to be an example for youth”

Edith Nambalirwa’s smile lights the bustling business district in downtown Mubende. As Edith, 20, chats with a customer in her new hair salon, she glides her fingers with ease, knitting strands of hair into intricate braids. Hair dressing comes naturally to Edith, who has grown up watching and learning from her mother. As a role model, her single mother raised Edith after her father passed away when she was a child.

“I lost my dad when I was young and I’ve seen so many challenges,” Edith says. However, she is determined to change the future for herself and her children so they do not have to go through the same challenges. With confidence, she says: “I do not want to have a baby if I do not know how to provide for her”.

More than three years ago, she participated in YEM outreach programs and received crucial

information on her sexual and reproductive health and business. Since then, her hair salon continues to grow, moving locations to accommodate expanding clientele. Inspired by what she had learned through YEM, she decided to become a peer educator so she could share her knowledge with others. Being a hair stylist, has allowed her to have unique and meaningful connections with her clients who are mainly girls and young women.

“For the young girls – it’s easy because I’m young and they are also young. They can talk to me and tell me their problems,” she says. She shares examples of salon customers she has helped, including a young person she convinced to stay on antiretroviral treatment or another to save and invest in the money they earned. She also supports mothers in communicating and supporting their children better as they journey through adolescence.

“I want to be an example for the youth, I want to help Uganda,” she says with a sparkle in her eye. “If I cannot do it with money, let me do it with knowledge.”

11 Imakit R. (2016). YEM Midline Report. Kampala: Straight Talk Foundation, unpublished.

Changing minds through information and communication technologies

YEM has been exploring new avenues to deliver sexual and reproductive health information and services to young people using cutting-edge information and communication technologies (ICT). Recognizing the diverse communication needs of both urban and rural youth requires utilizing a broad spectrum of media, from radio listenership groups and call centres to SMS and mobile app technology. Creating opportunities to share information and have a dialogue both online and offline is crucial in increasing knowledge and creating demand for access to youth-friendly health services.

Bridging entrepreneurship and sexual health on radio

Radio is the leading source of information for young people (YEM midline report). In 2016, YEM aired 99 live radio programmes on 3 radio stations, discussing entrepreneurship and sexual and reproductive health issues with a focus on the economic cost of ill health. Each radio show, either in the format of a drama or talk show, welcomed dialogue through social media, SMS and a call-back line.

Youth enterprises often become “hubs” for youth to connect and learn from one another. YEM has set up more than 40 ‘radio listenership groups’ hosted at local youth businesses such as salons and shops. Equipped with radio sets and pre-recorded material, the listenership groups have brought together 200 young people to sessions. Preliminary feedback from listenership groups have shown that it is helping inspire young people to seek services.

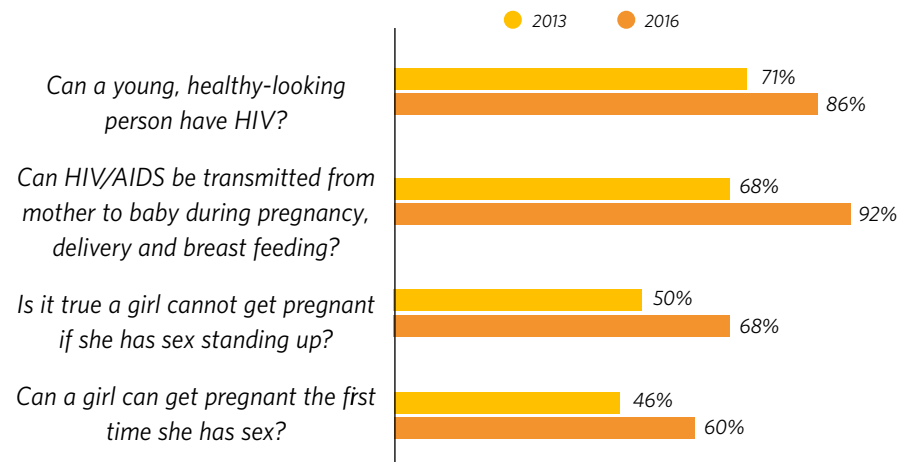
Harnessing the power of mobile

With over 1,100 subscribers, the SMS toll free line engages young people regularly with messages related to family planning, STIs, antenatal care, access to services and other general information. Since April 2016, the SMS platform has received more than 2,475 SMS messages from subscribers.

“Young people have called and been empowered not only to change their sexual behaviour but develop financially.”

Julius Ssekinkuse, Hotline Coordinator with Communication for Development Foundation Uganda.

Since 2013, adolescents and young people’s knowledge has increased.
% of young people who correctly answered the following:





▲ Two peer educators provide a lesson on female condom-use to a group of young women



200

*young people regularly
exposed to radio programmes
in 40 listenership groups*



1,149

*subscribers to an SMS toll-
free line in first year*



821

*calls from young people
received on the toll-free
hotline by the end of 2016*

Enhancing quality youth-friendly health delivery

As part of harmonizing both health and business interventions, YEM has been working with health facilities specifically targeted to engage young people in business. The capacity of 27 health facilities has been built to deliver youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. This is with the guidance of a standard sexual and reproductive health package, developed and led by the Ministry of Health, designed specifically for youth in business. In addition, 55 youth clubs have been attached to these health facilities in order to attract and engage young people who may not have otherwise sought help.



"There is an increase in the referrals of youth seeking services at the hospital... By staying supportive, we can help them live healthy lives."

Mary Makitubwa, Nursing officer, Kiganda HC III in Mubende



100

*condom dispensers in
Mubende and Kampala*



999

*referrals for young people
made by school health
programme nurses in 2016*



66

*health professionals from 44
health facilities trained in
the delivery of youth-friendly
health services*



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"The real value of the Youth Enterprise Model is the economic empowerment of the individuals. There is no freedom without economic freedom."

- Dr. Akinyele Eric Dairo, Practice Manager, Sexual and Reproductive Health, UNFPA East and Southern Africa

A new hope for Uganda's future

These personal stories and testimonies from the field are only snapshots of what is yet to come. The passionate and eager youth of today are not just shaping Uganda's future but are showing that they are already making ripples in the country today.

YEM is leading the way in unleashing the power of young people. The programme continues reaching a largely untapped market of youth who are being left behind not only in Uganda but across the continent. YEM's powerful results show us that when we invest in young people through education, empowerment and employment, it pays back.

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