



GENDER PULSE

A Call to Action: Advancing Gender Equality and Empowerment of Young Women through Young Africa Works

Gender Pulse

A Call to Action: Advancing Gender Equality and Empowerment of Young Women through Young Africa Works

Achieving gender equality is key to Uganda's economy becoming more productive, inclusive, and resilient. The Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa Works strategy – to enable dignified and fulfilling work for young people – seeks to contribute to gender equality and empowerment by ensuring 70 percent participation of young women and girls in all Young Africa Works programs.

Driven by this common goal, Young Africa Works partners in Uganda have committed to mainstream the needs of the different targeted segments of young women and men in their programs.

The Gender Pulse presents a platform for partners in Uganda to share information on best practices, experiences, and success stories on advancing gender equality within Young Africa Works programming.

PARTNER UPDATES ON ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

Scaling Youth Employment in the Private Sector through a Gender Responsive Lead Firm Structure (LFS) Model

Young people operating in different sectors face several challenges, which disproportionately impact young women and must be addressed to achieve gender equality in the private sector. In the agricultural sector for example, young people, especially women, have limited access to land and capital; in trade and allied services, social cultural norms and beliefs limit young women's participation in lucrative but male dominated sources of trade; and the tourism sector grapples with sex tourism and lacks a supportive environment for young people to thrive.

The Foundation is partnering with the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) to implement a gender responsive LFS model, which is strengthening the ecosystem for youth to produce and sell their products in an expanded and inclusive market that is cognizant of and can remove gendered barriers identified above.



PSFU has introduced "The Gender Thought Space", an innovative open platform which generates and disseminates knowledge about gender inclusive programming strategies suitable for Uganda's private sector. This platform provides a safe space for learning, shaping attitudes of private sector actors and enhancing their understanding and appreciation of gender mainstreaming in this sector.

Mainstreaming Gender in Agribusiness Incubation Models: Learnings from Gudie Leisure Farm

In 2020, the Foundation took a big bet on the Gudie Leisure Farm, a locally owned social enterprise whose mission is to transform youth at the base of the pyramid into competitive agripreneurs. The Farm's success means incubating 500,000 young agripreneurs and empowering them to transform their lives and their communities. This program has successfully integrated gender considerations by:

Creating a Farm Gender Equity Committee to ensure the farm's policies, guidelines, and Standard Operating Procedures prioritize gender considerations.

Setting up a free onsite daycare centre to provide childcare for the children of young people that are participating in the incubation program.

Hosting the monthly Gender Barometer for young people to engage, gain confidence, and deliberate on topical gender-related issues affecting their society and the impact these issues have on them.

Enhancing participation of young women in leadership positions in the farm structure such as the Business Management Apprentices (BMAs). Several young women are guild representatives and serve on the GLF Gender and Disciplinary Committees.

Encouraging young women under the program to seek training and employment in male dominated spheres of the agriculture value chain. Young women are enrolling as Agripreneur Transporters and using modes of transport such as bicycles and motorcycles which are predominantly ridden by men.



Empowering Young Female Entrepreneurs to Scale and Sustain their Businesses

The National Social Security Fund's (NSSF) Hi-innovator initiative supports young people in business through pre accelerator and accelerator programs. The pre-accelerator provides entrepreneurs with foundational business knowledge through a self-directed online learning platform with applied exercises. In the accelerator phase, qualifying small and growing businesses receive grant funding, technical assistance, business development, business training, and market development support to achieve investment readiness.

There were 1,532 young people who participated in the first pre-accelerator phase, which recently concluded. Of these, 71.7 percent were men and 28.3 percent were women. An analysis of the low participation of women in the pre accelerator program revealed that young women were disproportionately affected by the high internet charges, which were incurred to access the program's web-based learning platform. Women were also significantly affected by the limited presence of program representation in the more rural areas, where they are the majority.

Going forward, the Hi-innovator initiative has made the necessary adjustments to cater to these gendered perspectives and ensure higher participation of young women in the program. The initiative will adopt a zero-rating to increase access to the learning platform. The program will also engage more partners focused on rural based women to widen reach to young women. In addition, the program will enhance support towards other sectors that are not necessarily within the agricultural value chain but where there is a large participation rate of young women.

"The solution to gender-based issues in business is increasing access to funding, especially for women. Deliberately training women will also give them a chance to steer businesses that will later flourish and succeed," said Stella Lugalambi, co-founder of Hamwe East Africa, a powerful platform for agriculture technology, value chain finance, digital payments, and knowledge sharing.

Increasing inclusion of rural young women, persons with disabilities and refugees in the market system

The Markets for Youth Program implemented by GOAL employs community-led approaches to target the supply and demand actors in the market development systems; improve youth access to input and output markets; and provide various market relevant skills and financial services.

As the program works with community-based organizations, private sector actors, and other sub-partners, Gender and Social Inclusion awareness trainings are regularly undertaken to support these implementing partners to understand why inclusion is key to the program and how to integrate it into their work. During the co-design process, the program intentionally supports its implementing partners to design interventions that are inclusive and that can benefit both young women and men in all their diversity.

In the last year, consistent engagement and knowledge sharing with these key program actors has resulted in 16 members of the community (nine women and seven men) being empowered to become Gender Champions and to promote gender and social inclusion among sub-partners and in their communities. These Gender Champions also train program partners on gender and social inclusion to cascade the information to youth at the grassroots level.



“Life is much better today. Due to the mobility of the motorcycle which I bought. I can sell seeds to more farmers than I could before. This has earned me more income to look after myself,”
Nancy Koli reveals with pride as she gets ready to ride her motorbike to supply another customer in the city outskirts.

OUR SUCCESSES: HEARING FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE SERVE

NANCY KOLI

Nancy Koli is living her dream of financial sustainability thanks to GOAL Uganda's Markets for Youth Program.

At 22, Nancy Koli is a young woman who has achieved many things. Koli, the first-born of seven children, worried about her future since she had dropped out of school in 2017 due to lack of money for school fees. Worse still, there was little to eat at home because of her father's meagre income from bicycle repairs.

As Koli pondered over her own future and that of her siblings, a community member informed her about an opportunity to train as an agro-inputs supplier of quality farm seeds in her community under the Markets for Youth Program.

Koli has not only learned this skill but has also taken up fish farming. She has over 1,000 catfish in one of the three ponds recently constructed with the help of her siblings. She has been able to join a savings group and recently, from these savings, she acquired a motorcycle to facilitate her movement in distributing agro-inputs to farmers in Lira, a district in Northern Uganda.

“
Nancy preparing her produce to transport to the market



My participation in the Omwoleso event exposed me to a new marketplace for my products. I sold products worth between \$108 and \$243 and connected with many different potential customers. I also shared new creative ideas and innovations and got feedback for quality improvement of my products.

- *Samantha Wadiyo*

OUR SUCCESSES: HEARING FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE SERVE

LEVERAGING MOTIV OMWOLESO TO CONNECT TO MARKETS: SAMANTHA WADIYO

Samantha Wadiyo a 26-year-old creative entrepreneur, specializing in ceramic art had her business take a huge leap because of increased exposure after participating at The Innovation Village's MoTIV's Omwoleso (exhibition) monthly open vendors market for makers and creatives. Before joining MoTIV marketplace, Samantha – whose business specializes in production of clay ceramic items like planters, pots pieces, and jewelry trays – used to sell her products mainly online via social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

Currently, Samantha employs three young people (two artists and one business manager). She believes that the linkages and market opportunities at the Omwoleso will help her penetrate international markets. Proceeds from her business have enabled her to meet most of her personal needs, while reinvesting profits to support her business expansion plans.



” Birungi weighing her produce for sale after harvesting season 2021



” Birungi's earnings after sales

Parents Support to Young Women is Key to their Participation in Agriculture

Many young people are yet to appreciate the value of agriculture as they continue to view it as an economic activity for the elderly. Through the Mastercard Foundation's Young Africa Works program, PSFU is working to shift this attitude among young people and remove barriers to young women's engagement in agriculture. PSFU is bringing this to life through numerous avenues under the Lead Firm Structure Model (LFS) and so far, the support of parents is one of the key enabling factors to making this a reality. Take, for instance, 24-year-old Birungi, in Kiryandongo district, under Farm Uganda Ltd.

Without having access to a piece of land, Birungi joined the LFS Project under a farmers' group. When she learned about the prospective project and how it would enable her to earn income, her father rented three acres of land so she could grow maize.

The project supported the required agronomic practices for maize growing. Despite the drought that ravaged the area, Birungi has been able to harvest approximately 1000 kgs of maize from her garden. For the first time, this 24-year-old woman will earn her own income from agriculture.

Over the next period, we will be leveraging parents' support to inspire and mentor young women and men into farm production.

A Youth Agripreneurs Vendors' (YAV) Experience

Lillian Iradukunda, 26, a resident of Kisoro District, Western Uganda joined Gudie Leisure Farm on February 29, 2020. Having been part of the first cohort as a Youth Agripreneur Vendor, she now owns a business where she roasts pork and chicken in Kisoro town.

She is currently utilizing skills acquired through the program, including record keeping, cost benefit analysis, customer care, amongst others, to grow her business. Being selected by her village opened doors for her to be a leader.

She plans to use the profits gained from the business to start a bistro that sells both soft drinks and snacks in her parish, Sooko.

She hopes her fellow youth will be inspired by her success and be willing to learn the same skills.



Partner Upcoming Events

GOAL



Partner Upcoming Events

PSFU

