FEED THE FUTURE
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

CASE STUDY 2

FACILITATION INTENSITY IN YOUTH MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA

INTRODUCTION

A market systems development (MSD) approach is increasingly used to develop market-driven employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for specific populations, including young women and men. A core feature of an MSD approach is ***facilitation***[27]—working through market actors to stimulate more sustainable change, minimizing an Activity's direct role. Activities employ facilitation with ***varied levels of intensity***, ranging from ***low*** (no or minimum subsidy, low levels of project direction) to ***high*** (heavy subsidies and project direction).

Activity Highlights

Name: YLA
Lead Institution: Chemonics International
Country: Uganda
Donor: USAID
Value of Award: $21.5 million
Period of Performance: 2015-2020

Name: DYNAMIC
Lead Institution: GOAL
Country: Uganda
Donor: Mastercard Foundation
Value of Award: $21.5 million
Period of Performance: 2015-2021

Several important components of youth development—life and business skills, knowledge and competencies, healthy family and community relationships, and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) awareness—may be targeted in youth-inclusive MSD. Addressing this wider range of youth development needs is critical to the achievement of sustainable decent livelihoods, because youth need support to take advantage of the opportunities generated. However, facilitation relies on leveraging market-based incentives for change, and this can challenge the range of youth development components an MSD approach can address. For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Feed the Future Youth Leadership for Agriculture (YLA) and Mastercard Foundation's Driving Youth-led New Agribusiness and Microenterprise in Northern Uganda (DYNAMIC) both facilitate youth-inclusive MSD, but address the challenges from different angles, which are analyzed below.

Through the experience of these two Uganda-based programs, this case study explores a core **learning question: How does facilitation intensity affect the capacity of an MSD approach to address critical components of young women's and men's development?**

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[27] For more on facilitation, see https://www.marketlinks.org/good-practice-center/value-chain-wiki/facilitation and https://beamexchange.org/guidance/vision/facilitation-role/.

This is one of four case studies produced as part of a larger review of how MSD Activities include women and youth, entitled *Youth, Women, and Market Systems Development in Agriculture and Supporting Markets: Landscape Analysis and Case Studies Report*. The study was conducted for USAID by the Feed the Future AWE program and is available on the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

KEY FINDINGS

1. Employers, buyers, and financial service providers can increase their understanding and willingness to support youth and some of their needs, such as parental outreach, services closer to home, and safety considerations. However, it takes time for implementers to develop the business case and for market actors to understand and be open to it and then engage youth independently, regularly, and without facilitation.
2. Donors prescribe youth development components, such as life skills, SRH, and parental and community engagement in solicitations. These components may be challenging to facilitate through MSD approaches, because appropriate market actors may not exist or Activities may not be able to incentivize them to respond to these gaps. Therefore, to address some youth components, implementers may have to resort to intensive facilitation approaches, such as heavy subsidies. A higher-intensity facilitation approach allowed DYNAMIC to more reliably address a wide range of key youth development needs. At the time of writing, the sustainability of DYNAMIC's market-facilitated youth mobilization and empowerment approach, delivered through peer educators, is unknown.
3. When Activities provide youth with substantial input subsidies, adult parents and other community members can react negatively toward the companies providing the products. These are the same types of tensions that exist in traditional development aid projects.
4. Without a commitment to track the dimensions of change in female youth's opportunities (norms change, role change, and other non-monetary indicators of well-being) through formative gender analyses and comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) tools, outcomes for women remain either anecdotal or too high-level to glean specificity. This was the case regardless of the level and intensity of project interventions.
5. Neither MSD program was able to address youth SRH in a comprehensive manner. There remains a question as to whether the programs are suited to address SRH based on a range of factors: the limitations of facilitation, the ability to deliver blanket coverage given the range of entry points, the distraction from other core activities, and the inability to provide the service sustainably.
6. Younger youth (aged 10-17) are not well served using low-intensity facilitation. While it is possible to facilitate asset-building opportunities, these interventions are more akin to highly subsidized youth development or education programing.

ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES

Feed the Future YLA focuses on leveraging the private sector to unlock opportunities for Ugandan male and female youth aged 10-35 in agriculture-related fields to increase their incomes and build entrepreneurship, leadership, and workforce readiness. YLA strives to strengthen the capacity of selected workforce institutions and value chain actors to secure sustainability of innovative youth engagement approaches. By Activity end, YLA aims to reach 350,000 youth (of which 70 percent are women) with income and skills in agriculture.

DYNAMIC is a Mastercard Foundation-funded Activity strengthening key agricultural systems to create and sustain employment and self-employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged youth. The program focuses on tillage and improved inputs through agents, facilitates access to markets and financial services, and provides a wide range of training—from formal technical and vocational education and training to financial literacy through peer educators. By Activity end, DYNAMIC will reach 110,000 out-of-school youth aged 15-24 (original target 125,000) who live in peri-urban and rural areas in northern Uganda.

THE CONTEXT

Uganda is home to the world's second youngest population—75 percent of Ugandans are under 30 years old—with more than a million young people entering the job market each year (World Bank 2019). While the labor force expands exponentially and the economy has been growing at a steady 6-percent annual rate, job creation and labor productivity have not increased correspondingly (International Monetary Fund [IMF] 2019). As a result, 83.5 percent of the Ugandan population aged 15-29 work in informal jobs (10 percent higher for young women than men). Informal jobs are often insecure, poorly paid, and unsafe.

Women and youth are disproportionately represented in the informal economy and disadvantaged. The "youth bulge" will likely expand the informal economy as young people enter the labor market and young women struggle to benefit equally from work opportunities. Uganda has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy: 25 percent of girls aged between 15 and 19 years have had a baby or are pregnant at the time of the study (World Bank 2016). Pregnancy, motherhood, safety, home obligations, and harmful social norms limit women's ability to take advantage of economic opportunities.

The agriculture sector is underperforming compared with the rest of Uganda's economy and its growth has not kept up with the population expansion, representing ripe market opportunity (Overseas Development Institute [ODI] 2017). In this sector, Ugandans are underemployed and engaged in unstable or precarious work with poor incomes, particularly in subsistence agriculture or working for informal, low-productivity household enterprises. Modernizing rural economy requires the formalization of employment, decreased fertility rates, and increased educational attainment, among other challenging and costly reforms. With a high capacity to absorb workers and meet youth where they are, facilitating win-win opportunities for youth in the sector could contribute to this goal.

ACTIVITY STRATEGIES AND LEARNING

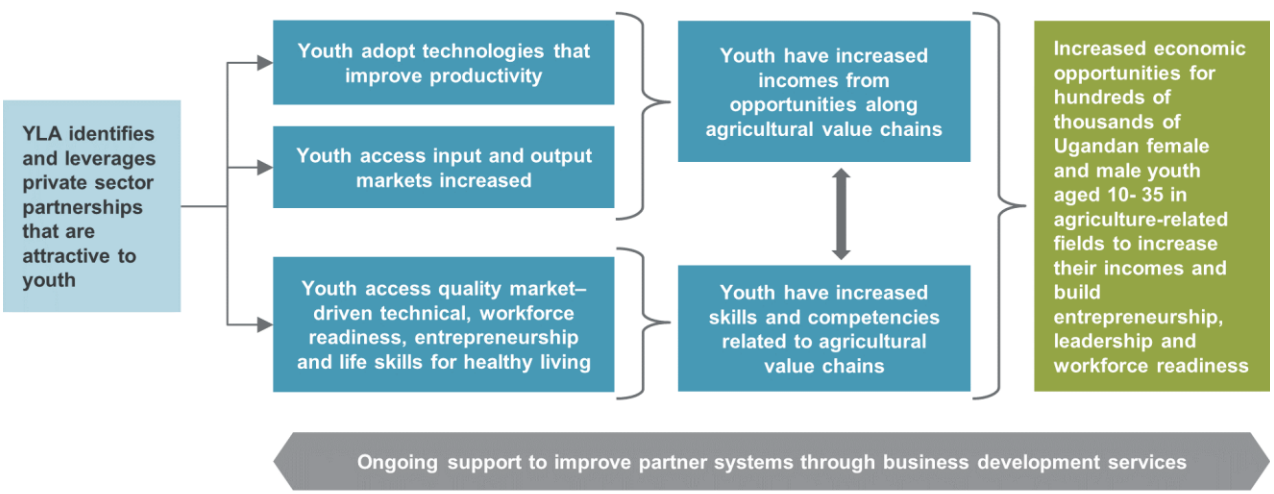
ACTIVITY 1: FEED THE FUTURE YLA

SOURCE: YLA

STRATEGY

YLA used a market-led approach to expand economic opportunities through increased incomes, skills, and competencies of a targeted 350,000 young men and women. The Activity provided business development support, investments, and incentives to encourage private-sector actors to provide youth with technical assistance, training, mentoring, and greater access to input and output markets. YLA defined youth as aged 10-35 years old and focused on a younger age cohort. Atypical for an MSD intervention, USAID required YLA to emphasize life skills for healthy living and reproductive health/family planning. In accordance with USAID's *Youth Policy*, it was acknowledged that young women in particular are unable to gain skills necessary to earn sustainable income, often due to unplanned pregnancies, child care, and other responsibilities in the home. YLA's process of change is represented in Exhibit 19, underpinned by the support to partners through business development services.

Exhibit 19: YLA's process of change



LEARNING

YLA embraced USAID's collaborating, learning, and adapting (CLA) approach,[28] which values pivots in response to ongoing learning. YLA's rapid learning cycle (mid-year strategy sessions and quarterly all-staff reflection events) focused on better understanding failures, constraints, and the ability of staff and interventions to address them through programmatic shifts. Key pivots included:

Partnership design: As an essential implementation vehicle for YLA, partnership design was an area where YLA made a critical pivot. YLA initially started partnership designs by looking at youth's needs and determining where partnerships could address them. Firms and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) brought partnership ideas to YLA that met contractual outcomes (such as training youth), rather than their own business objectives. However, because the incentives for these outcomes were ultimately prescriptive and project-driven, not partner-led and business-based, YLA worried they were not win-win interventions and were, therefore, unsustainable. To avoid this pitfall, YLA reengineered the design process to start with private-sector partners' needs: They worked with partners to identify their own business problems and opportunities, and then demonstrated how gender or youth are essential to the solution or opportunity (i.e., "the pitch") (See Equator Seeds Limited [ESL] text box below as an example). YLA calls this process ***design in reverse***: it aims to facilitate business results first to strengthen the potential for youth engagement, sustainability, and value for money (through co-investment). To reach youth, YLA had to prioritize the critical question of improving the partners' business model to catalyze the growth that would, eventually, result in increased labor needs and market demand. The gender and youth analyses performed at the beginning of the Activity provided information that, at first, was too theoretical to market actors. When the time was ripe for market actors to engage in youth needs and constraints as they became more clearly linked to their business needs, the analysis was outdated or too general to be useful.

Learning from ESL: Evolving Pivots to Deepen Youth and Women's Inclusion

Before engagement with YLA, ESL procured seeds from contract farmers, large commercial farmers, and farming cooperatives or associations. Through an evolving YLA partnership, ESL gradually introduced a new procurement model and layered additional features that both addressed core business concerns and increased youth engagement, while also improving women's working conditions.

***Procurement*: To address the challenge of producing sufficient quality seed,** ESL's leadership, with YLA's support, piloted a new procurement model that allowed them to more efficiently source seed from smallholder farmers who were not members of farmers associations or cooperatives, which allowed them to directly engage youth. YLA helped ESL generate a training curriculum for community-based facilitators (CBFs)—many of whom are female youth—in land preparation, crop management, and harvesting; CBFs then trained 6,500 youth seed growers and served as ESL aggregators. ESL saved time and money by working through CBFs who lived in the same villages as the seed growers.

***Payment*: The CBF model involved transporting large sums of cash to designated rural buying centers to pay producers:** YLA supported ESL to convert to mobile money payment methods by providing a cost-assessment, then facilitating a relationship with MobiPay, which trained youth to use the payment platform. This platform improved issues in ESL's decentralized accounting system.

***Marketing*: As the CBF model grew, an opportunity existed for improved community sales through village-level marketing kiosks.** In partnership with YLA, 300 women-operated input kiosks

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[28] For more, see https://usaidlearninglab.org/node/14633.

were established with credit from ESL. Each of these kiosks employed an additional five women who worked on commission. ESL describes this model change as "revolutionary" for their last-mile distribution and for bringing extension services closer to farmers through kiosk operators.

***Women's working conditions*: YLA identified early on that the conditions of women's work in seed processing were poor.** While YLA raised the issue, addressing it was not ESL's priority, and it took ESL 4 years to conclude this was a business issue that if resolved, would bring benefits. Through an in-kind grant, YLA furnished and trained care assistants for a nursery, while ESL provided the space, labor, and materials for construction. The childcare allows women to focus on their job in safer conditions, and children to access stimulating early child development in a safe environment.

Ultimately, ESL has seen a strong business case emerge for youth to participate at different levels of the value chain: production, extension services delivery, input distribution, and market processes. This allows ESL to increase the production of quality and affordable certified seed, and expand the outreach and monitoring of seed producers.

***Education**:* With in-school youth, YLA planned to accelerate skills by contributing to the public-school curricula while older youth, legally able to be employed at 18, could be more directly inserted into the labor pool. However, YLA was unable to secure permissions to work within the public-school system and ultimately, came to see that basic education was beyond their scope.

***Age-based cohorts*:** Given that 10-35 years is a wide range, YLA originally planned to modify activities for different age cohorts. However, segmenting, engaging, and targeting youth presented a problem for YLA's facilitation approach. Young men and women were in and out of school, taking care of children at home, or working on various economic activities that did not lead to obvious engagement entry points. Ultimately, younger youth (aged 10-15) were reached in extracurricular programs through NGO partners such as Aflatoun (financial literacy) and Faith Agro (school gardens); however, without tracer studies, the outcome is unclear.

***Vocational Training Institutes (*VTIs):** VTIs are typically structured toward traditional skills in carpentry, sewing, and hair care, among others, which did not match the skills agricultural firms were looking for (e.g., accounting, warehouse management, and machinery repair). YLA recognized that market actors needed to invest in the skills relevant to the specific business needs that allow them to sustainably grow. Rather than invest in VTIs, they supported market actors to develop specialized training related to the core business model (accounting, quality inspection), which ultimately serve to provide youth with an occupational growth-oriented skillset.

Young women's inclusion: Although YLA performed a gender analysis, they took the view that women (most of whom are "youth" in Uganda) need employment and can be trained to lead, and so, if YLA can unlock the opportunity through facilitation, young women will be engaged. There are examples demonstrating that this approach has yielded impressive role-change opportunities, such as through women's tractor maintenance and driving training, and specialized employment (see video Sing With Me Happily). By their last year, YLA had reached hundreds of thousands of young women participants (just below 50 percent/157,000 of an ambitious target of 70 percent/245,000 women)—a scale within the bounds of a 5-year Activity that is considered a success by typical MSD program standards. Most often, they are in the 10-14 age bracket, participating in financial literacy or other skill-based interventions (28 percent), followed by the 30-35 years group who accessed employment and production opportunities (20 percent). As the scale of the YLA project was ambitious, it was limited in the data it could collect on gender outcomes, beyond employment and income data. As such, the degree of inadvertent harm, hardship, or insecurity posed by improved livelihoods is poorly understood, because specialized studies to assess negative unintended consequences are currently not common practice in most agricultural development programs.

SRH: With co-funding provided by the USAID Bureau of Education, YLA committed to improved provision of *Life Skills for Healthy Living* through low-intensity facilitation: engaging a variety of partners (suppliers and buyers, business advisors, saving and credit cooperative societies [SACCOs], and NGOs) to integrate SRH training and/or messages within young farmer training. For example, in 2018, YLA partnered with an NGO called Kulika to train youth in good agronomic practices and promote SRH by strengthening life skills for healthy living. Kulika formalized memoranda of understanding with community health centers to provide access to comprehensive health services to its farmers, and worked with the centers to disseminate health information to farmers through training sessions on nutrition, family planning, proper child spacing, early pregnancy prevention, and testing and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Targets were repeatedly missed due to the private sector-driven approach (18 percent of target reached in 2018; 21 percent in 2019). YLA observed that market players did not prioritize the activities because they drained time and resources, and fell short of addressing critical adolescent SRH needs. YLA acknowledges that the high birthrate has a disproportionate effect on young women's opportunities, yet concludes that a market-responsive program is not best placed to address this challenge. The USAID mission in Uganda is now exploring how a portfolio approach within a region (e.g., multiple programs with more intentional coordinating and layering) can respond to multifold needs and leverage partners' respective expertise.

YLA's theory of change evolved to rely entirely on strengthening the market system, so that market actors themselves could engage youth in ways that fit their current and future business needs. Youth represented 70 percent of the people residing in the areas of implementation, so their participation was ultimately dependent on the success of the business, rather than incentives to include them.

> *At the end of the day, if the business is successful, you can be sure that engaging youth at scale will happen – partner growth will trigger that. – Marcos Moreno, Former YLA Chief of Party*

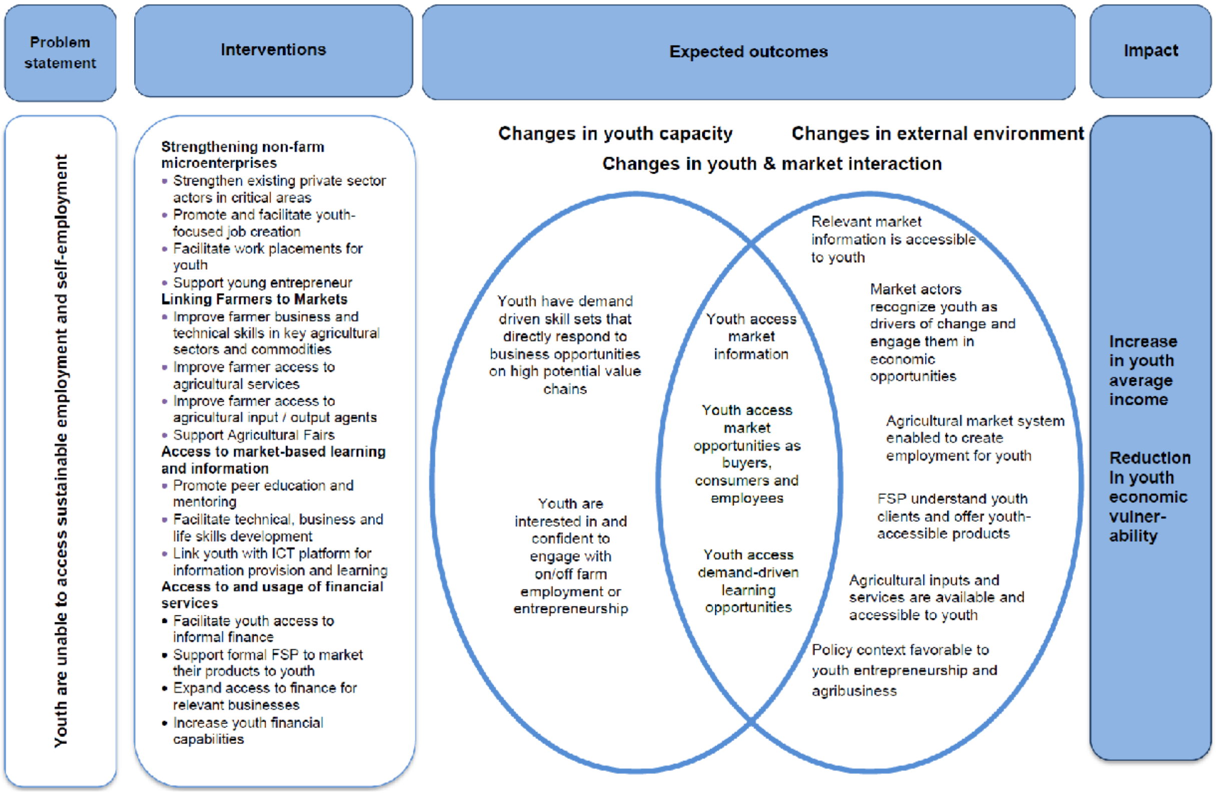
ACTIVITY II: DYNAMIC

STRATEGY

DYNAMIC used a Making Markets Work for Youth (M4Y) approach, referred to by staff as a hybrid (MSD and development programming) approach that addresses both supply- and demand-side opportunities and barriers to youth engagement in agriculture and animal industry markets. In this context, youth engagement refers to the development of youth-inclusive businesses where private-sector actors leverage commercial incentives to provide important products, services, support, and market access to youth producers and consumers in their value chains. DYNAMIC was the first project in the Mastercard Foundation's portfolio to focus on facilitating MSD to engage youth in economic opportunities. They targeted youth aged 15-24, living on less than $2/day, and out of school, unemployed, or underemployed and seeking quality employment or the opportunity to start their own businesses.

DYNAMIC had a 1-year design phase, during which results chains (including crop, animal, financial, and education markets) and youth analysis and engagement strategies were developed. DYNAMIC considered the growth potential of markets, and opportunities for youth with low upfront costs and near-term returns, so that youth could reinvest earnings and continue to engage in agribusiness.

Exhibit 20: DYNAMIC theory of change



DYNAMIC embraces a mix of facilitation via partnerships with the private sector. Skills training are facilitated through peer education (PE) model and vocational training institutions. Changes in youth capacity and the external environment in the ovals in Exhibit 20 illustrate the hybrid nature of the program. Overall, 60 to 70 percent of the Activity's budget (technical, in-kind, and financial) is allocated to building skills of youth, creating or expanding access to input/output market, and increasing access to financial services to youth through PEs, vocational training, private-sector partners, and financial institutions. Upfront investment in youth skills is meant to improve youth's ability to act as potential clients of stakeholders as producers and consumers.

LEARNING

DYNAMIC intervened in facilitating youth-led microenterprises and access to markets, training, and financial services. DYNAMIC developed a skills curriculum for youth and a cohort of youth educators and agents. They developed other curricula with education authorities and VTIs to strengthen agriculture-related subjects through public institutions and private education service providers, which are high-intensity activities. Using an adaptive management approach developed over time, the Activity has focused on improving partner engagement. A learning agenda exists for each pillar and is regularly visited to inform program improvements. Although there have been modest pivots, the original design is largely the same blueprint.

Key program elements and learning include:

The peer educator/agent model: Based on a youth analysis, DYNAMIC determined that the high rates of school dropout required a skills-based intervention. DYNAMIC believed that commercial partners could only provide training that served their specific commercial interests, so life skills, business skills, and financial literacy were delivered through a PE model at scale. The concept was that PEs would mobilize youth and offer training for a fee, and facilitate youth engagement in shared-value market opportunities. PEs should reach 90 percent of out-of-school youth participants who are then put in groups of 30 youth aged 15-24 years. They are trained in four skill sets: life skills, financial literacy, village savings and loan associations (VSLA) methodology, and business skills. These are complemented by technical skills private-sector actors provide to both PEs and youth group members. At select stages, PEs and staff of DYNAMIC's youth engagement team mobilize parents, spouses, and caregivers in the youth group training sessions. This process helps the team gain participation consent from the spouses and parents (required for youth below 18 years) and ensures youth are relieved of their daily chores and commitment.

Learning from this intervention showed that the skills youth learned were relevant and valued by the private sector (see box below). Some PEs were able to earn enough to support themselves in part or completely. Others had difficulty getting youth or market actors to pay them for their services, because market actors had some experience with NGOs providing such support at no cost.

Learning from TruTrade Africa: Upskilling Value-Add

TruTrade was set up to transform the way smallholder farmers access markets. They do this by pooling small-scale producers and placing them on their market connect platform. This offers farmers an alternative to the usual buy-low sell-high practice of middlemen, and allows them to more easily meet local, regional, and international market demands. TruTrade regularly engages youth as agents and women are encouraged to take on the agent role.

Working with DYNAMIC presented TruTrade with unique efficiencies, such as pre-screening and a strong work ethic. TruTrade requires agents to have official documentation and records as critical parts of due diligence. Youth have been functionally pre-screened. They routinely visit parents and require police clearance. Additionally, youth do not want to let DYNAMIC down. They have a sense of duty to put the skills they have acquired into practice and be the "top flying agents." While TruTrade trained youth agents in its technology and business practices, the company would prefer to hire DYNAMIC-trained over other youth. This indicates that DYNAMIC creates value (the trained youth) through the PE model.

> ***They (youth from DYNAMIC) are really much, much easier to work with compared to the ones that we select. – TruTrade***

Additionally, DYNAMIC trade agents have opened up their personal social networks to TruTrade to source other potential agents, representing an opportunity to expand the number of available, trained youth, independent of DYNAMIC.

VTIs: Youth also had many constraints with regards to accessing formal education beyond primary school system. To facilitate workforce development and job competitiveness, DYNAMIC subsidized the cost of youth attending VTI courses on various agriculture and livestock topics. DYNAMIC also built capacity of VTIs in market assessment to make training courses market-relevant; co-developed agricultural curricula to be relevant and meet certification standards; and created linkages for graduates with the private sector to foster access to market opportunities upon completion of technical training, including links to opportunities leveraged through cost shares with businesses. Most of the graduates were male (70 percent) and had not completed primary school. They found employment in commercial agriculture (45 percent), as self-employed (31 percent), and in formal employment (12 percent).

An important advancement was the establishment of outreach or satellite centers, where youth are trained within their communities—especially young mothers who were unable or unwilling to move because VTIs were out of reach. This has led to increased enrollment of young women at the outreach training centers (i.e., there is a 60-percent enrollment rate for young women in Karamoja). DYNAMIC recognized there were multiple streams of vocational training opportunity to be pursued and that they would reach scale differently, involve different types of education, and result in different opportunities. Partner Homa Farms, a private agriculture business, provided technical training like a VTI, because they offered start-up support for young farmers.

Access to finance and inputs: DYNAMIC research showed that a key barrier to youth's ability to profit from agriculture is their access to productive resources, particularly inputs. DYNAMIC took long- and short-term strategies to address this gap. Many youth are engaged in informal savings, but are limited by their earning potential. In order for youth to be able to access improved inputs, DYNAMIC supported input suppliers to discount the price of high-quality seeds for youth's first harvest by 70 percent as a means to bridge the financial burden until the first crop could be monetized. This represented high risk: many youth businesses were not resilient enough to survive a poor initial harvest, drought, and/or pests, and were unable to continue their businesses. They often lost their 30-percent share of the investment, not to mention emotional and physical labor costs. Overall, the seed discount approach was considered successful in that thousands of youth received vouchers the companies provided, both individually and in groups. While many youth were ultimately unsuccessful, others earned enough to buy the seeds again at full price, which was the intended outcome. An unintended consequence was the high demand the discounts produced—there were not enough high-quality seeds available in the market during the following planting season, which was an important lesson learned around market adjustment. One market actor noted that the subsidy created tension in the market, because parents could take advantage of the subsidy in lieu of their children or parents demanded that the subsidy be passed on to them as well.

In the long term, to stimulate new players in the formal financial markets to enter DYNAMIC's geographic targets, DYNAMIC took a more facilitative approach—incentivizing financial actors to provide financial literacy training and education about financial products and services. For example, DYNAMIC has worked with financial service providers to extend the Bank Agency network from urban to rural areas. This has resulted in more accounts being opened. Additionally, mature VSLAs have been linked to the banks so that they can, in time, build sufficient banking history to be eligible to apply for formal loan products. DYNAMIC has supported the digitization of VSLAs to improve their visibility and attractiveness to banks.

Young women's inclusion: DYNAMIC did not have a gender target or gender components, nor was there an initial gender rapid analysis or assessment. However, the Activity operated based on a set of gender principles. In the final years of the program, once data were analyzed and adaptive methodologies were more firmly ingrained, a number of gaps for women were identified. Some examples are the better management of stereotypes, physical access and timing of training sessions, parental consent and family obligations, and management of gender dynamics in youth groups. DYNAMIC has been able to make provisions for some of these—for example, making childcare available for young mothers so they can focus on training. They have also been able to celebrate some good practices, such as the benefits of social cohesion and opportunity for empowerment nurtured through group membership and leadership. DYNAMIC has identified that partners require more support to integrate gender balance in their recruitment of private-sector agents and implement gender-sensitive outreach methods to reach more female youth, among others. They plan to mitigate this through a gender equality training specifically for market actors.

DYNAMIC similarly reached just under 50 percent of women (out of 125,000). They believe they may have come further had the program been designed intentionally for gender inclusion at the outset.

SRH facilitation: DYNAMIC's peer engagement curriculum covered some SRH topics. These topics were introduced later in the DYNAMIC program, so most PEs who started as a self-sustaining service provider may not have been able to offer SRH training. The approach where a PE offers services against a fee has worked for providing life skills training for VTI students or specific components such as drafting a constitution for VSLAs, but not (yet) for SRH.

It was noted that without health services in many of the communities, or referral pathways, there was insufficient potential to take a market approach with regards to SRH.

CONCLUSION

How does facilitation intensity affect the capacity of an MSD approach to address critical components of young women's and men's development?

The YLA and DYNAMIC cases demonstrate that the level of facilitation intensity, flexibility with regards to when and how youth are to be engaged, and the program logic model play a large part in the capacity of MSD Activities to address youth's—male and female—development. Advantageously, the response to the needs of youth and/or the market can change over time depending on whose needs implementing partners listen to the most intently (youth or the partner). The fundamental difference between these two Activities is the emphasis they placed on youth development for inclusion in the market vs. market development for youth inclusion, which, to a certain extent, dictates the level of facilitation intensity.

Higher-intensity interventions, such as DYNAMIC, can address many components of youth development—life skills, financial literacy, business training, parental engagement, leadership, community involvement, and SRH—while engaging youth as agents of change and addressing constraints in the market and enabling environment using MSD tactics. DYNAMIC's PE model and discounting of inputs dealt with some of youth's largest challenges—education and access to finance. The program employed an innovative method of putting youth in the facilitator position as agents who would not only provide services to other youth, but recruit them for companies and their own education services. DYNAMIC worked in fewer districts and achieved high levels of concentration of engagement (high percentage of youth reached) in each.

YLA was originally conceived to be able to intervene in some areas typically outside of an MSD Activity's realm (basic education, health). The Activity quickly came to realize that these barriers to youth inclusion were not the ones they could address well. They pivoted to focus squarely on the market system actors who could, over time, provide not only employment but also technical skills, non-traditional opportunities, and non-farm opportunities. YLA relied on the will of the market actors to address youth engagement, training, and improved work conditions. YLA's lower level of facilitation characterized by business development services, data provision, and facilitation of partnerships was able to secure opportunities for youth, male and female, in high numbers and at a lower cost per person. YLA's intervention was more expansive geographically and, therefore, achieved less penetration in the youth market. Understanding the relative merits of these two programs in terms of youth development should be complemented by a study of the cost and sustainability of the models.

In youth development approaches, youth inclusion means youth of a younger age and of all genders. In these MSD Activities, most—but not all—staff from the two Activities agree that the youngest age cohort is not well served by the range of tactics and partners available to develop opportunities that respond to their developmental stage. It is not yet proven to what extent younger youth interventions that largely build assets and exposure will result in improved livelihoods. In both cases, equal gender representation was achieved, although nuances of gender integration were made clearer due to experimentation, learning papers, and incidents. An adaptable outcome reporting system is warranted to deepen the understanding of the impact for young women in both cases and understand the extent to which facilitative approaches, intensive or not, affect harmful social norms, disempowerment, and unequal gender roles. This would allow responses to new opportunities and barriers—superb Activity additionalities—to be captured as project outcomes, as opposed to anecdotally.

Finally, this case attempted to determine whether youth MSD programs could not only fulfill employment and income-generation objectives, but myriad youth development needs. This may be an unfair expectation. A 2020 USAID randomized control trial in Bangladesh showed that youth exposed to reproductive health topics in the workplace *"may not leave the program with substantially improved knowledge on family planning or reproductive health topics, but they leave better equipped to identify when they need more knowledge and are to seek it out."*[29] Donors who grant to facilitated interventions may need to revisit expectations and recognize the limitations of an MSD approach to address youth development components, such as education and health. Perhaps the key is understanding where risks lie in not addressing the broad range of youth needs, prioritizing them, and identifying where little gains can be achieved without compromising the intent and sustainability of the intervention.

CONTACT

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[29] Omoeva, C., Nanda, G., Gates, S., Cunha, N., Hatch, R. and Thomas, R. (2020). Integrated Workforce Development and Family Planning and Reproductive Health for Youth in Bangladesh. Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.