Economic empowerment of youth with disabilities in rural Uganda
Stevens Bechange, PhD
Background

12.4% of Ugandans live with a disability

~2 million young women and men with disabilities are most vulnerable

Having to cope with neglect, exploitation and inequitable access to opportunities for employment and livelihoods
Funded by EC – multi-year programme set out

Provide basic vocational skills training, start-up kits and linkage to local businesses and entrepreneurs for apprenticeships and job opportunities

Start: 2012
Catchment area

Economic empowerment of youth with disabilities
Intervention logic

Vocational skills training, start up kits and apprenticeships opportunities for young men and women with disabilities will improve their employment prospects, make their business more sustainable, improve their livelihoods and decrease economic dependency.

A nested mixed methods study longitudinally examines this proposition.
Data presented

Are from an ongoing programme in which several cohorts of youth with disability have been enrolled

Qualitative data was collected from the pilot cohort enrolled between August 2012 and March 2015

Quantitative data was collected from two later cohorts enrolled between December 2016 and April 2018
How – peer researchers main actors

Pre/post survey of a cohort of project participants

Qualitative

Economic empowerment of youth with disabilities
Data and analyses

Survey electronic data collection. Collected socio-demographic variables, livelihoods and employment history

Qualitative interviews: focused on experiences of participation in the project, audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim

Quantitative data analysed using STATA V 14.2

Qualitative data analysed thematically during a participatory workshop
Baseline characteristics, N=334

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected variables</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>172 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age, years (range)</td>
<td>22 (15-35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No school</td>
<td>132 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>107 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post primary school</td>
<td>87 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>87 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote rural residence</td>
<td>201 (60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## To sustain a livelihood, N=252

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th></th>
<th>12-months</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/trade</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage/salaried</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Livelihoods outcomes, N=252

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>12-mo</th>
<th>AOR (95%CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting a job</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>3.5 (2.5, 4.9)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to finance</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>6.2 (3.8, 10.0)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>1.6 (1.0, 2.4)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collapse of a business</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>2.1 (1.6, 2.9)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community discrimination</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>1.2 (0.9, 1.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough money for food</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>1.3 (0.9, 1.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative analyses reveal

Positive experiences

Feeling creative and positive about their future

Some started savings

Feeling more empowered and independent

Appreciating new knowledge and skills

“From what I get I am able to feed myself and also save. I save weekly...”

Feeling they were respected and listened to

“Now my friends are respecting me...Now I do not beg...”
Negative experiences

Remote rural locations had limited number of customers

Some had very high expectations of the programme and financial security it can bring. Often these expectations remained unmet.

“Income wise... things are worse now. Worse than it was before. I had resigned from the job where I was earning some money. Someone else has taken it. Currently, I have no employment..”

The equipment and materials provided after the training were in some cases insufficient in number or of inappropriate quality

Broken equipment required finances for repair
In addition

Some reported having serious health issues, sometimes exacerbated by working conditions and resulting in frequent hospital visits and subsequent business losses.

For others, training was very basic with limited practical exposure.

Difficulty to enter the market as a new business, difficulties in gaining customers and reputation and high competition with other businesses.

Inaccessible training and or work placements made learning harder for some.
Conclusions

Vocational skills training, apprenticeships scheme and a start-up kit can bring positive outcomes for young people with disabilities.

More youth with disabilities can get a job or open their business and fewer are dependent on others.
Conclusions

The benefits are not universal or optimal. Many youth with disabilities continue being vulnerable to business failure and for many their income is still insufficient to meet their basic needs.

Progress was enabled or constrained by multiple programme and systemic actors such as: accessibility, nature and competitiveness of market, type and quality of training, health status.
Next steps

We continue to analyse the data from the cohorts – as this is an ongoing project.

As our cohort grows, we will undertake analysis that disaggregates data by participant demographics to identify factors associated with success and failure.

Need more rigorous studies from other settings with larger samples and comparison groups to better understand who benefits from such interventions and who does not and why.

Longer-term approaches to monitoring and evaluation are needed.
Research Partners

Peer Researchers

Kyambogo University
– Dr. Winnie Kyosaba
– Dr. Paul Emong
– Dr. Eron Laurence
Thank you

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