



**SNV**

# Promoting Youth Employability through Enterprise and Skills Development (YES)



March 2016

Uganda's youth unemployment rate, which stands at 80%, is one of the highest in Africa. The problem is magnified by the fact that an estimated 50% of the country's 35 million people are under the age of 15. Youth unemployment is of particular concern in northern Uganda, which remains the most economically depressed region in the country. Most youth in the region have limited educational opportunities, lack the skills necessary to actively participate in the labour market, and remain unemployed. The region, however, has the potential to create sufficient jobs and business opportunities for its youth, especially through growing sectors such as agriculture, mining, and the service industry.



**2000**  
youth started a  
business in 2015

SNV in Uganda, together with local partners AFARD and CEGED, are implementing a three-year Youth Employability through Enterprise and Skills Development (YES) project in the districts of Nebbi, Arua, Yumbe, and Moyo in West Nile.

The goal of the YES project is to improve access to employment and business opportunities for 5,000 rural and urban youth in West Nile, ages 15-30, who are in and out of school by 2017. This will be achieved through training and mentorship in business skills and internship and apprenticeship placements. The project focuses on enterprise development in growth sectors with proven opportunities for job creation.

The capacity of business, technical and vocational education and training (BTVET) institutions and non-state actors is being built so that they are able to offer impactful entrepreneurship training to the youth. In addition, rural youth who are not in school are receiving agribusiness skills and long-term apprenticeship led by young model farmers (YMFs). Urban youth with existing enterprises are being provided with entrepreneurial skills that will support them in managing and growing their businesses.

## 2015 project results

### Internship provides West Nile youth with hands-on work experience

14 business, technical and vocational education and training (BTVET) institutions implemented internship programmes at their schools. A baseline study showed that many of these institutions were inadequately prepared to manage the internship programme and supervise interns. Subsequently, the YES project team developed a set of tools to support internships at the institutional level and assisted the instructors in supervising the students. This support gave principals and instructors valuable insights about the mismatch between the skills they offered at their institutions and labour market demands. They committed to revising their courses to address this issue.

**“I learnt a lot from the internship training. Lessons I picked from the joint supervision will help us revise our course content and tailor them to the current needs of the job market.”** – Orio Wilson, Principal – Nile Institute of Management Studies, Arua District

Pre-internship meetings held at the BTVETs helped students understand the expectations and objectives of their internships, both for themselves and the businesses they were pursuing. 70 private sector enterprises (PSEs) and nine individuals offered placements for interns. This significantly exceeded the target of 50 for the year. Supervisors at the private sector enterprises had interactive sessions with the BTVET instructors and offered substantial feedback regarding the performance of the interns.

To date, 315 students have participated in internship and acquired hands-on skills from private sector entrepreneurs. They have gained hands-on, practical experience from private sector enterprises and working professionals. 50 students are now employed with different private sector entrepreneurs.

**“Without practical knowledge acquired through internships, we are simply raising half-baked students who are useless in the job market. Private sector enterprises help us to bridge this gap by providing valuable skills to our students through internship placements.”**

- Adubang Meck Jakech, Principal, Moyo Technical Institute, Moyo District



A youth entrepreneur shares her business lessons during a youth forum in Arua

## BTVETs deliver entrepreneurship and life skills training to youth

28 BTVET instructors and eight staff were trained using a comprehensive entrepreneurship and life skills manual developed by SNV. The topics covered included how to: generate a business idea, develop a business plan, market, cost and price commodities, keep record, save, and develop life skills. The 28 BTVETS integrated entrepreneurship and life skills training in their curriculum and to date 700 students have benefited from the trainings.

500 urban youth were also trained in entrepreneurship and life skills. As part of their training, they developed and completed 290 business plans which were submitted in a competition that awarded 100 youth with assorted non-cash prizes to expand their businesses.

## Young model farmers trained to provide long-term apprenticeships for rural youth

80 young model farmers (YMFs) in eight sub-counties were trained in farming as a business and good agricultural practices. The training covered the roles of young model farmers; programmed hatching (local poultry management); good agricultural practices for onions, tomatoes, Irish potatoes, cabbages, carrots, and other crops; developing agribusiness plans; record-keeping; marketing; and customer care. The young model farmers, who are now principle trainers in good agricultural practices and agribusiness, are supported by YES project officers. Each young model farmer is currently attached to 29 youth farmers in their community to provide coaching and mentoring.



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Youth learn good agricultural practices at a demonstration garden

Youth farmers have adopted many good agricultural practices. Over 900 youth are now engaged in at least one agricultural enterprise, growing crops such as tomatoes, beans, onions, and cabbages. In Arua District, 57 farmers planted tomatoes and earned a total of UGX 7.7 million (€2,000). The largest amount was earned by Ariozi Aldo, a young model farmer who planted tomatoes on his three-fourths of an acre farm and made UGX 1.2 million (€300).

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