

# YOUTH AGRI-SKILLING FOR DECENT EMPLOYMENT(YADE) PROJECT, UGANDA





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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFARD	Agency for Accelerated Regional Development
BTVET,	Business, Technical, vocational Education training
COVID-19	Corona Virus of 2019
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DKA	Dreikönigsaktion Austria
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
LCI	Local Council
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning
NPDIII	National Development Plan III
NGO	Non-Government organization
ODK	Open Data Kit
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PWDs	People with Disabilities
RA	Research Assistant
SPSS	Special Package for Social Scientists
TOR	Terms of Reference
UDHS	Uganda Demographic and Health Survey
UBOS	Uganda National Bureau of Statistics
UPE	Uganda Primary Education
UGX	Uganda Shillings
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loans Associations
YADE	Youth Agri-Skilling for Decent Employment
YIGs	Youth Investment Groups

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It is our sincere hope that the findings of this evaluation give HORIZONT3000 and AFARD the requisite information and key insights for planning and implementing transformative interventions in the community now and in the future.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Youth Agri-skilling for Decent Employment (YADE) was a 3- year project (01.04.2021 – 31.03.2024) that sought to primarily address the high youth unemployment rate in Wadelai sub-county, Pakwach district, West Nile region of Uganda through skilling active youths (15–35 years) for increased access to gainful agricultural employment opportunities targeting the youth-led market scan priority niche markets such as animal traction, cage fish farming, horticulture, agroforestry and other agro-related vocational skills. . YADE's overall objective is, “to contribute to sustainable poverty reduction among youth through agri-enterprise development.” Its specific objective is to increase access to gainful agricultural employment opportunities for 500 youth (60% females) in Pakwach district through marketable non-formal vocational and complementary skills training.

The methodological approach for this evaluation included a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. A two-stage cluster random sampling process that involved selection of villages from the parishes and then respondents from villages was adopted. Beneficiary respondents who participated in this evaluation were selected from the master beneficiary list using systematic sampling methods. A sample of 232 beneficiary households were interviewed to obtain quantitative data. We gathered qualitative data from 10 key informants and conducted three focus group discussions (FGDs) involving males, females, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) across the project locations. Quantitative data was acquired through Open Data Kit (ODK) data collection and analyzed using a combination of Excel and SPSS. Thematic analysis with the assistance of ATLAS.ti7 was employed for the analysis of qualitative data.

### Summary of findings

#### Project relevance

The YADE project exhibited a robust alignment with global, national, and local policies and priorities. On a global scale, the project resonated with Sustainable Development Goal 8, emphasizing sustained economic growth and full employment, while also aligning with the African Union's Agenda 2063, focusing on youth empowerment and the eradication of unemployment through education and skills development.

Nationally, the project seamlessly integrated with Uganda's National Development Plan (NPDIII) and National Youth Policy, targeting youth unemployment through skill development and economic empowerment. It further aligned with key national strategies, including Agriculture Development, Financial Inclusion, Private Sector Development, and BTVET, that emphasize productivity, financial inclusion, enterprise development, and equitable access to skills. At the local level, the project was in line with the district development plan, specifically addressing youth unemployment through opportunities in agriculture and vocational courses. Furthermore, the YADE project demonstrated alignment with the strategies of Medicor Foundation, DKA and HORIZONT3000, reflecting a dedication to empowering beneficiaries and improving their living conditions. It also directly contributed to Medicor Foundation's overarching development priorities of enhancing the well-being and empowerment of vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals.

#### Project effectiveness

Although the YADE project fell short of some of the targets, all indicators were evaluated to be above the baseline with most indicators showing significant progress from the baseline. The summarised table below portrays the status of all indicators.

Result Area	Indicators / target values by 2023	Baseline Value	Evaluation
To increase access to gainful agricultural employment opportunities for 500 youth in the Pakwach district through marketable non-formal vocational and complementary skills training by 2024.	500 targeted and non-targeted youth are employed in the project promoted agribusinesses	13	↑ 595
	The average income of targeted youth increased by 50% (UGX 851,029)	718,102	↑ 783,292
		100%	↑ 109%
	Agri-vocational skills	523,423	↓ 170,278
	Animal traction	757,234	↑ 881,071
	Cage fish farming (these youth have now changed to piggery production)	1,072,000	↑ 1,395,000
	Horticulture	519,751	↑ 534,831
<b>Result 1:</b> To establish and strengthen 24 agribusinesses Youth Investment Groups (YIGs) with functional VSLA by 2024	24 youth investment groups established and functional	0	↑ 24
	90% of members participate in €5 average monthly savings	0.80%	↑ 33.6%
<b>Result 2:</b> To improve the employability of 500 youth through entrepreneurship, financial literacy, collective marketing, and non-formal vocational skills training by	85% of targeted youth adopted climate-smart and good agricultural practices	7.80%	↑ 56%
	65% of targeted youth adopt good financial management practices	65%	↑ 72%
<b>Result 3:</b> To increase the ownership and growth of 500 youth agribusinesses for self-employment by 2024	At least a 50% increase in the value of agribusinesses and productive assets owned by	1,704,096	2,026,313
		100%	↑ 119%
	75% increase in the average number of hours/days worked among targeted youth	3.8	↑ 5.6
		100%	↑ 148%
At least 500 youth earn an average of UGX 300,000 per month.	0	↑ 846,263	

**Key**



- Increase in comparison with the baseline



- Decrease in comparison with the baseline

Baseline acts as a reference point

**Project efficiency**

Overall, evaluation results affirmed that the costs reflect activities and results manifested by the YADE project interventions. One notable approach utilized by the YADE project was the decision to engage subcounty extension workers in facilitating training and capacity-building activities related to cage fish farming, animal traction, and horticulture, rather than relying solely on hiring external consultants or trainers. By leveraging existing local expertise and infrastructure, such as the knowledge and experience of subcounty extension workers, the project effectively minimized costs associated with external consultancy fees while simultaneously fostering community ownership and sustainability. This approach not only ensured cost-effectiveness but also facilitated the transfer of skills and knowledge to beneficiaries in a culturally relevant and context-specific manner, thereby enhancing the overall impact and long-term viability of the YADE project interventions. Moreover, the peer-to-peer approach was also deemed a cost-effective way of cascading the gains of YADE interventions to many targeted youths within the subcounty.

**Project impact**

There was sufficient evidence to demonstrate the YADE project impact. Evaluation results confirmed an increase in the value of productive assets from the baseline (baseline-Ugx-1,704,096 vs. endline Ugx 2,026,313). There were variations across the gender groups, with males earning more than their female counterparts (Male-2,376,130 & Female-1,658,084). This disparity in the financial net worth of the targeted categories of youth has significantly reduced, being five times less from the baseline, where results showed that male youth were six times better off than their female counterparts. There was also an increase in the annual incomes and

average monthly savings of the targeted groups, indicating that the project has had a significant impact on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries.

### **Project Sustainability**

The evaluation of the YADE project revealed a notable degree of ownership by AFARD, the implementing partner, evidenced through the establishment of coordination mechanisms and collaborations with local governments and private actors. These efforts are expected to bolster the sustainability of youth interventions beyond the project's lifespan, despite some reported community vulnerabilities and ongoing demand for further livelihood support due to financial constraints. AFARD's interventions, particularly through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), equipped youth with essential skills in climate-smart agriculture and financial management, fostering self-sustaining income-generating activities. Leveraging VSLAs for knowledge exchange and resource mobilization, AFARD ensured the integration of these skills into community development, enhancing sustainability and self-reliance among youth beneficiaries. However, the evaluation noted potential risks to sustainability, such as agricultural businesses' vulnerability to weather uncertainties and market fluctuations, highlighting the need for risk mitigation strategies.

AFARD employed various knowledge management tools, including knowledge-sharing platforms, digital technologies, and documentation of lessons learned and best practices. Through facilitating information exchange and collaboration among stakeholders, AFARD ensured real-time access to information resources and fostered continuous learning. Through mentorship programs and peer learning initiatives, AFARD promoted skills development and knowledge transfer, empowering youth beneficiaries to navigate challenges and implement sustainable livelihood strategies. These comprehensive knowledge management efforts underscore AFARD's commitment to enhancing the sustainability of project interventions, contributing to long-term resilience and self-reliance among youth beneficiaries in Wadelai subcounty.

### **Conclusions**

In general, the project was effectively implemented, accomplishing its impact and outcome indicators across the three result areas, although some predefined targets were not entirely met as outlined in the report. Specifically, 595 youths are now employed in supported agribusinesses, showcasing an increased average income for the targeted youth, and the establishment of 24 functional youth investment groups. Positive shifts were observed in climate-smart practices, financial management, asset ownership, and work hours among the targeted youth. Despite the YADE project being well-executed within the available resources and timeframes, its technical sustainability may encounter challenges due to uncertainties in supported trades, posing potential risks to youth when support concludes.

The following are recommendations from the evaluation.

- Expansion of the project: Given the positive impact of the YADE project, it may be beneficial to consider expanding the project to reach more sub counties, especially those with similar needs and challenges. The extension should focus mainly on graduating the already

established VSLAs into area cooperatives, capacity building initiatives and widening the scope of trades to ensure project benefits are sustained in the long term.

- Forge partnerships with other development partners to scale-up project interventions and support more beneficiaries given the big gap that exists, arising from a bigger population in need compared to the ones that were supported by the project. Extension of a similar project with higher targeting in the project locations is recommended to support more affected youths within the broader district
- In the future, the project design should review age grouping to ensure that older age groups (35-60 years) are considered. This would help more in bolstering group cohesion but also strengthen leadership, better engagement and participation as participants within the old age groups are perceived to impact the young ones when they are part of the groups.
- Continue engaging with local and central government authorities: The involvement of local and central government authorities during the project's implementation was a potential source of support for the project's sustainability. Horizontal integration of the project under local government relevant sector is strongly recommended to ensure their continued support for the project's benefits in the long term.
- Introducing youth to subsidized agricultural and business insurance schemes is advised for economic continuity.
- To mitigate unforeseen disasters like COVID-19, future projects should incorporate risk management plans, and a comprehensive annual review of targets is essential to ensure ongoing relevance and alignment with the existing context
- Exchange rate losses need to be effectively managed as this greatly affected the project operations in year 3. Future projects could include budget lines for unforeseen expenditures due to external circumstances to mitigate effects from high exchange rate losses and devaluation of local currency.

# 1

## INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS

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### 1.1. Introduction

Uganda, like many other developing nations, grapples with the challenge of youth unemployment. This issue poses a significant threat to the country's economic development and stability. Uganda's youth unemployment rate has been a cause for concern in recent years. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), as of 2022, the youth unemployment rate stood at 7.3%, significantly higher than the national average of 5.7%. Factors contributing to this challenge include rapid population growth, inadequate access to quality education, and a lack of diversified employment opportunities among others.

Northern Uganda is not exceptional to youth unemployment and has faced unique challenges in the aftermath of decades-long conflicts, which significantly impacted the region's socio-economic landscape. The prolonged conflict disrupted normal economic activities, leading to the displacement of communities and the destruction of infrastructure. The post-conflict period has seen slow recovery and rebuilding processes, impacting the availability of employment opportunities for the youth. Additionally, access to quality education remains a challenge in some parts of Northern Uganda. The Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) (2021) indicates that educational disparities persist, affecting the youth's ability to access higher-skilled jobs.

Pakwach district exhibits, a comparable scenario of elevated youth unemployment. It is a common occurrence to observe numerous young individuals aimlessly wandering in villages with little engagement in productive activities. By 9 a.m., it is not uncommon to witness many youths either inebriated or gathered, participating in card games ("Umweso"). Discussions with local government officials and the youth highlighted two primary drivers contributing significantly to this situation: deficiency in pertinent and marketable skills, exacerbated by the low educational attainment, and a misalignment between formal education and the contemporary job demands of the 21st century. The Universal Primary Education (UPE) system grapples with an unusually high dropout rate of 44%. Additionally, Business, Technical, and Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) opportunities remain inaccessible to rural youth due to the urban-centric locations of these training institutions and their high fee structures. Consequently, a considerable proportion of the youth, approximately 30%, lacks literacy skills. This demographic reality implies that the expanding population in the region contributes predominantly low-skilled or unskilled labour to Uganda's workforce.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> YADE project design document

## 1.2. Background context to YADE

The Ugandan agricultural sector has become a catalyst for addressing the pressing issue of youth unemployment. Evidence presented from policy documents and national strategic plans highlights the transformative impact of vocational skilling, aquaculture, horticulture, and animal traction in addressing youth unemployment in Uganda's agricultural sector. These initiatives not only provide employment opportunities but also contribute to the overall economic development of the country. As Uganda continues to prioritize and invest in these strategic areas, it sets the stage for sustainable growth, youth empowerment, and a more resilient agricultural sector.

The Youth Agri-skilling for Decent Employment (YADE) project seeks to primarily address the high youth unemployment rate in Wadelai sub-county, Pakwach district, West Nile region of Uganda through skilling active youths (15-35 years) for increased access to gainful agricultural employment opportunities targeting the youth-led market scan priority niche markets such as animal traction, cage fish farming, horticulture, agroforestry and other agro-related vocational skills. The project uses “a holistic and bundled-package approach” that includes: a) youth employability development with foundation skills trainings in entrepreneurship, life skills, village savings and loan methodology (VSLA), and financial literacy); b) agri-vocational skilling; c) provision of business start-up kits; and d) business development services including collective marketing.” These are envisaged to enable the targeted youth to immediately join the world of work in sustainable and viable agribusinesses that can lift them out of extreme poverty. YADE's overall objective is, “to contribute to sustainable poverty reduction among youth through agri-enterprise development.” Its specific objective is to increase access to gainful agricultural employment opportunities for 500 youth (60% females) in Pakwach district through marketable non-formal vocational and complementary skills training.

YADE project envisaged two results which are; 1) To establish and strengthen 24 agribusiness youth investment groups (a-YIGs) with functional VSLA in order to address the challenge of limited access to business capital. 2) To improve the employability of 500 youth through entrepreneurship, financial literacy, collective marketing and non-formal vocational skills training so as to enhance the work readiness of the targeted youth and improve their productivity and 3) To increase the ownership and growth of 500 youth agribusinesses for self-employment by enabling the skilled youth to initiate, manage, and grow their agri-enterprises.

## 1.3. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was two dimensional as seen below;

- ✓ Learning: the project's partner organization AFARD, donors and HORIZONT3000 are interested in learning from the implementation of the projects to continuously improve their own work and the cooperation with other actors.
- ✓ Accountability and reporting: The evaluation should also examine the success and quality of the project's implementation on the basis of the OECD DAC criteria.

## 1.4. Specific objectives of the evaluation

The specific objectives of the evaluation were as follows

- ✓ Analysis of the effectiveness and sustainability at the level of the YADE project
- ✓ Analysis of the strengths and potential for improvement. Obtain recommendations for relevant stakeholders for further replication to improve the approach's effectiveness

# 2

## EVALUATION DESIGN AND APPROACH

### 2.1. Methodological approach

#### 2.1.1. Evaluation design

The evaluation design was cross-sectional and encompassed a blend of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to offer a more profound understanding of project stakeholder perspectives. Quantitative methods comprised beneficiary in-person interviews, while qualitative methods included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), impact story documentation, and a review of project documents such as the project design document, semi-annual reports, annual reports, key national policy, and other sector strategic documents. This inclusive design allowed the integration of methodologies, incorporating triangulation to validate findings, complementarity to enhance and clarify results across diverse methods, and the identification of contradictions or inconsistencies.

#### 2.1.2. Survey Sample Size determination

The quantitative part was administered within the 24 Agribusiness Youth Investment Groups level where the targeted youths formed the sampling unit. A sample size of 217 youths out of the total target population of 500 direct project beneficiaries within the investment groups was calculated. The sample was determined using the proven sample selection formula as illustrated below.

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1-p)N}{(e)^2} \quad \text{Whereby; } N \text{ is the population size. } e \text{ is the level of precision which is assumed at } 0.5 \text{ (} z = 1.96 \text{ with a CL =95\%).}$$

We assumed a proportion (P) = 0.5, on the assumption that youths were normally distributed and internally homogeneous in the selected areas. Given that beneficiaries were randomly sampled in the project villages, a 95% confidence level and at 5% level of precision/degree of error was assumed. Using the above formula, the total sample size becomes 217 Households as calculated below and spread out in the selected areas. The sample size determination took into consideration possible attrition as some youth may not be traced and/or contacted due either to a change of phone number or migration from the project areas. Therefore, an additional 5% (11 youths) was added to make the target sample of 232 respondents. Snowballing technique was employed to ensure that a statistically representative sample was achieved for the study. Snowballing involved requesting the first identified youth to assist in identifying their colleagues from the respective trades and where those colleagues could be found. Additionally, support of AFARD field staff shall be sought while tracing to ensure that the desired sample sizes are met in the project target area.

A total of 232 project beneficiaries were interviewed. In addition, 3 FGDs, 10 KIIs, and 2 case studies were conducted to supplement quantitative results

### 2.1.3. Allocation of Sampled Respondents

The samples were proportionately allocated across the different trades considered by the project ensuring that trades that had the highest number of beneficiaries took the biggest sample and those that had the lowest beneficiaries had the lowest sample.

### 2.1.4. Sample size selection

Using the available master database of project beneficiaries, the database was sorted in alphabetical order beginning by trades, name and location to select a systematic random sample of beneficiaries that was representative of the trades that the project supported. A random starting point was chosen and the  $n$ th respondent was generated by adding the position of the starting point to the sampling interval until the sample size was exhausted.

## 2.2. Data collection and analysis tools

### 2.2.1. Data collection methods

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were employed to address evaluation objectives.

For the quantitative approach, the Questionnaire method was employed; The questionnaire was developed to capture quantitative data that would be used to gauge the difference between the situation before the start of the project, how different indicators have performed over the Programme period (indicator trend analysis) and how perceptions and attitudes have changed since the start of the project.

For the qualitative approach, the following data collection methods were utilized.

- Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews; Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized in a group about 8 to 12 participants with the help of a focus group discussion guide. On the other hand, Key informant interviews were conducted with the help of an interview guide. A total of 10 FGDs and 23 Key informant interviews were conducted.
- Case studies and Field observations; Case studies were documented while interacting with the beneficiaries. The evaluation team also conducted field observations throughout the data collection process, to further enable verification as well as to provide qualitative illustration of the quantitative information collected.
- Document reviews; A comprehensive document review of the project design documents including among others; the baseline report, annual project management progress reports, , log frames and M&E plans was carried out to enrich the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the field.

### 2.2.2. Management and Analysis of Data

Quantitative data was collected using electronic data collection Open Data Kit facilitated by android tablets. Collected data was sent wirelessly to a secure server at the end of each day of data collection for the evaluators to review and investigate anomalies prior to the following morning's de-brief of enumerators. After the data collection exercise, the collected data was downloaded from the server as a CSV file, exported to Excel, cleaned and additional codes developed for some variables. It was then exported to STATA for analysis. Percentages, graphs

and cross tabulations were adopted to present aspects relating to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of project interventions.

Qualitative data on the other hand was collected using notebooks and transcribed in word for each day of data collection by the evaluation team. It was then exported to atlasti.7 for purposes of developing codes, quotations, and themes in line with the evaluation objectives. Thematic analysis was then applied, and narratives and quotations developed based on respondents' perceptions and the evaluation team's experience of the Programme components.

### 2.2.3. Quality Control Measures

The evaluation exercise went through several procedures for quality control purposes, and these included the following:

- a) Training of interviewers and close supervision: All the interviewers had at least attained university or diploma and were trained in research ethics, research methodology and questionnaire administration. The Research Assistants (RAs) were also supervised closely to flag out any challenges. Re-training on key issues was done regularly throughout the survey period. A random check of a range of forms captured by different RAs by a consultant was also done to ensure that the quality of data was up to the desired standard.
- b) Data capture form programming: The data collection tool was programmed to ensure that all fields were mandatory (logically) and also to limit illogical and inconsistent entries. This ensured 100% completeness and possibly reduce inconsistent entries to less than 5%. Lastly, the questionnaires were programmed in the tablets with logical skips that helped to check for consistency of responses and reduced time taken in administering the questionnaire.
- c) Questionnaire and procedure pre-test: The questionnaires and procedures were pre-tested, after which a standard operating guideline for the study was finalized detailing all the steps and the likely actions for the different scenario cases.
- d) Data collection process and field coordination: All questionnaires were administered in the local languages while responses were typed in English to ensure consistency of the meaning and to illicit accurate responses.

### 2.2.4. Ethical Considerations

The consultant addressed ethical concerns in the process of data collection, analysis and presentation. Voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Respondents were fully briefed on the purpose and objectives of the evaluation so that they make voluntary consent to participate. No promises were made to them as a way of getting consent. In Addition, respondents' confidentiality was strictly upheld. Moreover, we ensured the lists of names and other information that could lead to the identification of the respondents were not published. The names of the key informants were noted with their consent. Other principles of beneficence, neutrality, impartially were strongly emphasized throughout the exercise.

## 2.3. Study Limitations, risks Mitigation Measures

- Recall bias could have resulted from interviews with participants as some questions required them to remember situations before or during implementation of the project. In order to minimize this recall bias, the evaluation team and enumerators were trained in advanced moderation skills such as probing during interviews. Findings were also triangulated with various data sources to further mitigate this potential bias.

- Difficulty in tracing the beneficiaries; Beneficiaries were rarely in their homesteads because most times, they had gone to work in their farm fields/gardens or migrated from their previous project locations. This also greatly slowed down field work. Efforts were made by the enumerators to trace and interview them. Where some beneficiaries could not be traced, replacement was done
- Mobilization constraints: There was difficulty in mobilizing Programme beneficiaries, especially during the Focus Group Discussions. The evaluation team, worked closely with the Local leadership and the project team to support in mobilisation of FGD participants.
- Social desirability bias was another limitation as some beneficiaries may not have felt comfortable saying something negative about the project because of the feeling that this could jeopardize future aid. To mitigate this, the evaluation team made sure that the questions in the evaluation tool were made neutral, unbiased and non-threatening. Additionally, the purpose of the evaluation was made clear to the project participants to elicit honest responses from them.

# 3

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

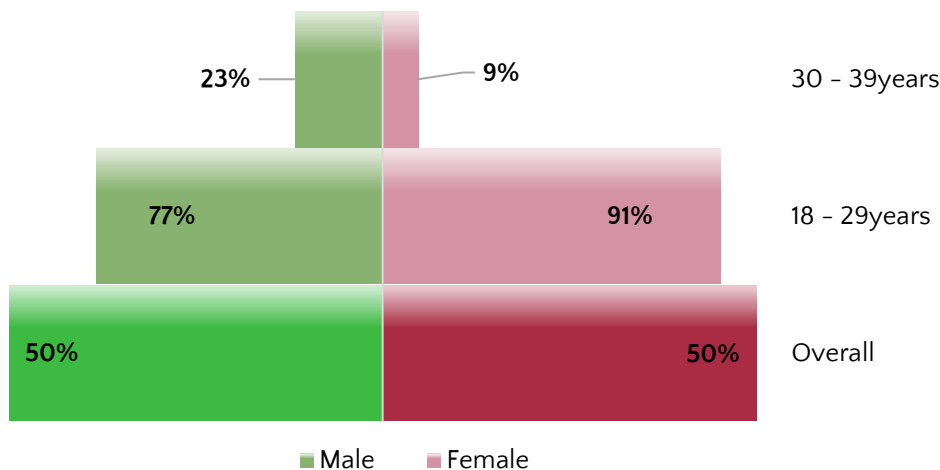
### 3.1. Results

#### 3.1.1. Respondent social demographic information

##### a) Gender, Age distribution

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on their gender and age categories. The evaluation successfully achieved a balanced gender participation, with half (50%) of the respondents being male and the other half (50%) being female. These results closely align with the YADE project's design, which aimed to target 60% female and 40% male beneficiaries. Regarding age groups, the average age was approximately 25 years. The majority of respondents (77% male and 91% female) belonged to the 18–29 age category, while a smaller proportion (23% male and 9% female) fell within the 30–39 age range. Given that this was a three-year project targeting the 15–35 age category, it is evident that the lower and upper age limits for the categories are 18 and 39 years, respectively.

Figure 1: Gender and Age distribution of YADE project beneficiaries



##### b) Disability status

Table 2 presents the disability status of the respondents. When queried about any form of disability, the majority (94%) reported not having any disability, while a smaller proportion (6%) acknowledged having disabilities. Among those with disabilities, the majority were male (6%), with females representing only 5%. Visual impairment (47%) and physical impairment (38%) exhibited the highest prevalence, while hearing impairment had the least representation at 15%. When considering gender categories, various disability types were more pronounced among

females in comparison to their male counterparts. The detailed results are outlined in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Respondent Disability status**

<b>Disabled</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Yes	6%	5%	6%
No	94%	95%	94%
<b>Type of disability</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Visual	43%	50%	47%
Hearing	14%	17%	15%
Physical	43%	33%	38%

**c) Level of Education and marital status**

A majority of the respondents had completed primary education [56% of 232 (48 male /82 female)], followed by those with an ordinary level of education [37% of 232 (58 male/30 female)]. A small percentage had attended advanced (2% of 232(5 male/no female) and tertiary levels [ (3% of 232(4male/3 Female)]. The evaluation findings indicate that male beneficiaries tend to have higher levels of education compared to their female counterparts. Overall, these findings are in line with the project's objectives of targeting out-of-school youth, providing them with relevant, marketable, and demand-driven skills to enhance their employability in the labor market. In terms of marital status, 63% of 232 (70 male/77 female) were married, 35% of 232 (44 male/36 female) were single, and only 2% of 232 (2 male/3 female) were divorced. The summary of the remaining demographic information for the respondents is provided in the table below.

**Table 2: Summary of respondent demographic information**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Education levels</b>			
No formal Education	0%	1%	1%
Primary Education	41%	71%	56%
Ordinary level (S1-S4)	50%	26%	37%
Advanced level (S5-S6)	4%	0%	2%
University level	1%	0%	1%
Tertiary level	4%	2%	3%
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married/Cohabiting	60%	66%	63%
Not married/Single	38%	31%	35%
Divorced/separated	2%	3%	2%
<b>Disabled</b>			
<b>Currently employed in the same trade</b>			
Yes	99%	95%	97%
No	1%	5%	3%

## 3.2. Extent of Achievement of project results

### 3.2.1. Relevance of the project

The assessment of relevance and appropriateness was focused on establishing the extent to which YADE project interventions aligned with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries; were aligned with global, regional & national priorities, plans and policies; and consistent with the development goals and strategies of key partners. The relevance section further assessed the extent to which the approaches/methods were appropriate in the context of the target participants.

#### *a) Conformity with the global, Regional & National Mandates and development partner Priorities*

YADE project was aligned with the existing global, national, district and subcounty policies and priorities. Specifically, the project was aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 8 which looks at promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. In addition, the project aligns with the African Union's Agenda 2063 that looks at empowering and engaging youth to eliminate youth unemployment through full access to educating, training and skills as well as fostering stronger links between thriving industries and labour markets.

Nationally, YADE project was aligned with the national priority to address youth unemployment through skilling and economic empowerment as stipulated in Uganda's National Development Plan (NPDIII) 2020/21-2024/25. Moreover, the project was consistent with National Youth Policy 2001 that promotes productive employment for effective youth participation in national economic growth and development; Agriculture Development Strategy 2020-2025 that targets increased agricultural production, productivity, profitability and competitiveness; The national Financial Inclusion Strategy 2017-2022 that seeks to facilitate access to financial assets and knowledge among rural populations; The National Strategy for Private Sector Development 2017-22 that focuses on boosting enterprise development and industrialization; and the BTVET Strategic Plan (2011-2020) or Skilling Uganda that focuses on productivity enhancing and equitable access to skilling opportunities. The project was also well aligned with the district development plan that looks at curbing down youth unemployment through creating avenues for employment in agriculture and vocational courses.

Lastly, the YADE was well aligned with the strategy of Medicor Foundation, DKA and HORIZONT3000 of empowering beneficiaries and improving their living conditions. Moreover, the project was relevant in Improving the wellbeing and empowerment of vulnerable and disadvantaged people which is at the core of Medicor Foundations development support priorities.

#### *b) Alignment with beneficiary needs and priorities*

The YADE project interventions were fundamental in addressing the needs of the youth and priorities in Wadelai sub country. The baseline survey findings revealed worrisome results as 68% (30% males and 37% females) of the youth in Wadelai subcounty were not employed. The results further indicated that out of all those who were employed, they were self-employed in own-account enterprises (65%) as compared to only 35% who worked for other people<sup>2</sup>. Review of the project narrative also indicated that youth unemployment was rampant with

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<sup>2</sup> YADE Baseline report, 18th July 2021.

young men and women spending much of their time roaming in the villages without any productive activity and even some resorting to drinking or playing cards and local games as early as 9:00 am<sup>3</sup>. These results necessitated urgent interventions to support youth with market and demand driven skills for their employability. By 2021, a total of 495 youths were employed by project<sup>4</sup>. These results portray the relevance of the YADE project in addressing the needs of the youth within the subcounty. Discussion with key informants further revealed that the targeting of the right age category and administration of a holistic and bundled layer of interventions was deemed relevant and appropriate in addressing the unemployment challenge within the subcounty. However, most key informants alluded that inclusion of other age categories of 35+ years would bolster social cohesion & experience across the youth investment groups as old beneficiaries would motivate young ones based on life lessons from their own experiences.

*“I would say that the project was really relevant because all the groups and age categories that were targeted are likely the most vulnerable and those who are grossly affected by unemployment., therefore, YADE bundled interventions were relevant in addressing skills deficits and capacity needs of these youth. Mobilisation of the youth into groups was necessary for them to work together, have access to finance, save, carry out joint and individual investments. Capacity building in the areas of financial literacy, business management and climate smart agriculture was also relevant to enable them acquire marketable and self-sustainable skills, Thanks to YADE” - Director of Programs, AFARD*

Interaction with FGD participants also revealed that the project was necessary for building social cohesion among the youth in the community. The participants also applauded the nature of selection of trades as this was done in consultation with the community leaders to ensure that the most vulnerable categories were selected to benefit from the project.

*“The project was necessary to bring youth in our community together to work for a common cause. The nature of selected also gave a chance to majority of us the women to participate and be equipped with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which are sustainable”-Female FGD participant, Ojogo Central*

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3 YADE project narrative

4 First Annual progress report, April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022

### 3.1.1. Effectiveness of YADE project Interventions

- *To what extent have the objectives and results (outcomes and outputs) of the intervention been achieved?*

Overall, all evaluation indicator figures were above the baseline values an indication that the YADE project was effective in achieving its results. However, some targets were not met as shown in the detailed table below;

Result Area	Indicators / target values 2023	Baseline Value	Target	Progress as of 2021	Evaluation
To increase access to gainful agricultural employment opportunities for 500 youth in the Pakwach district through marketable non-formal vocational and complementary skills training by 2024.	500 targeted and non-targeted youth are employed in the project promoted agribusinesses	13	500	595	↑
	The average income of targeted youth increased by 50% (UGX 851,029)	718,102	851,029	561,917	↑
		<b>100%</b>	<b>150%</b>	<b>178%</b>	↑
	Agri-vocational skills	523,423	785,135	473,185	↓
	Animal traction	757,234	1,135,851	606,903	↑
	Cage fish farming (these youth have now changed to piggery production)	1,072,000	1,608,000	544,467	↑
Horticulture	519,751	779,627	623,114	↑	
<b>Result 1:</b> To establish and strengthen 24 agribusinesses Youth Investment Groups (YIGs) with functional VSLA by	24 youth investment groups established and functional	0	24	24	↑
	90% of members participate in €5 average monthly savings	0.80%	90%	72%	↑
<b>Result 2:</b> To improve the employability of 500 youth through entrepreneurship, financial literacy, collective marketing, and non-formal vocational skills training by	85% of targeted youth adopted climate-smart and good agricultural practices	7.80%	85%	60%	↑
	65% of targeted youth adopt good financial management practices	65%	65%	68%	↑
<b>Result 3:</b> To increase the ownership and growth of 500 youth agribusinesses for self-employment by 2024	At least a 50% increase in the value of agribusinesses and productive assets owned by targeted youth	1,704,096		1,912,731	
		<b>100%</b>	<b>150%</b>	<b>112%</b>	↑
	75% increase in the average number of hours/days worked among targeted youth	3.8	6.7	5.1	↑
		<b>100%</b>	<b>175%</b>	<b>134%</b>	↑
	At least 500 youth earn an average of UGX 300,000 per month.	0	300,000	-	↑

**Key**  
 - Increase in comparison to the baseline  
 - Decrease in comparison to the baseline  
 Baseline - Reference point

- *What changes have been brought about (or achieved) in the lives of the target groups, in particular female youth and other marginalised groups?*

Evaluation results revealed that, through participation in training and capacity-building activities offered by the YADE project, female youths have gained a greater sense of self-confidence, decision-making autonomy, and leadership skills. In addition to the tangible outcomes of increased employment opportunities, improved livelihoods, and strengthened social networks, the YADE project has fostered significant empowerment among female youth and other marginalized groups through its activities. One notable change has been the heightened sense of self-efficacy among these individuals, as they have gained the skills, knowledge, and confidence to actively participate in decision-making processes within their communities. Through entrepreneurship training and capacity-building initiatives, female youths and other marginalized groups have been empowered to take control of their economic destinies, initiating and managing their own income-generating activities. Moreover, the project has facilitated a shift in gender norms and power dynamics, empowering women and other marginalized individuals to challenge traditional roles and stereotypes and assert their rights to equal opportunities and participation in economic and social spheres. Through providing a platform for skill development, leadership training, and advocacy, the YADE project has empowered female youths and marginalized groups to assert their voices, contribute to community development, and pursue their aspirations with greater confidence and determination.

- *What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives and results (outcomes and outputs)?*

These three evaluation questions were hinged on critically measuring indicator performance against the baseline and targets set by the project at different levels of the result hierarchy (Goal, Outcomes and outputs). Moreover, the major factors underlying achievement/nonachievement of the project objectives have also been integrated in the explanation of the variation of the evaluation results as shown below;

Project goal: To increase access to gainful agricultural employment opportunities for 500 youth in the Pakwach district through marketable non-formal vocational and complementary skills training by 2022.

Under the project goal, two indicators were considered; 500 targeted and non-targeted youth are employed in the project promoted agribusinesses and the average income of targeted youth increased by 50% (UGX 851,029). Review of project documents indicate that a total of 500 targeted and 95 non-targeted youth had been employed. The 95 additional youths were employed by the targeted youth representing 119% achievement on this indicator. This finding is further supported by the 100% (100% Male & 100% Female) of the respondents who confirmed during the survey that they are employed in the YADE project supported trades.

Regarding incomes of the YADE beneficiaries, evaluation findings in figure 3 below confirmed that there has been a significant increase in the incomes of beneficiaries from a baseline of Ugx 567,353 to Ugx 783,292 at endline. This however falls short of the project target by Ugx 283,676. There was still a variation across the gender categories with male earning 1.8 times more than their female counterparts (Male-980,703 & Female 551,322). This however shows a significant

improvement from the baseline where men were reported to be earning six times better off than female<sup>5</sup>.

Across the trades, the increase in incomes was more pronounced in cage fish farming (Baseline Ugx 1,072,000 vs Endline Ugx 1,395,000; 30%) and Animal traction (Baseline-Ugx 757,234 & Endline-Ugx 881,071; 16%). There was a slight increase in income in Horticulture (Baseline 519,751 Vs Endline 534,831).

There was a 67% reduction in incomes under agri-vocational skills from the baseline. According to the FGD and key informant participants, the projects supported trades under agri-vocational skilling were Juice making, catering, and bakery. Juice making and bakery were cited to be capital intensive and hence limited investment of most graduates. Additionally, the beneficiaries of this trade cited low purchasing power of the community in buying bakery products which reduces the returns from these trades. Future projects could explore supporting youth beneficiaries under this trade by providing alternative energy solutions, such as solar power, to provide reliable and affordable electricity for refrigeration purposes. Collaborating with local authorities and energy providers to invest in community-based electricity infrastructure, ensuring that youth entrepreneurs have the necessary resources to operate their businesses efficiently is very fundamental to ensuring sustainable businesses. Also, future projects could focus on raising awareness within the community about the value and benefits of supporting local youth-led enterprises in Agri-vocational skills. Foster a culture of patronage and appreciation for locally produced goods and services by highlighting their unique qualities, freshness, and contribution to local economic development. Engage in community outreach and educational campaigns to promote consumer loyalty and encourage support for youth entrepreneurs, thereby creating a conducive environment for income growth and business success.

*“Beneficiaries who deal in Juice making require fridges to cool the drinks throughout out the day. The biggest challenge in this community is that we don’t have electricity that can be used. When someone makes juice, it doesn’t last so long before it gets contaminated. Besides electricity, these appliances are very expensive for the graduates to afford, you are likely to find a freezer going for over Ugx 600,00 which they can’t afford. Those that deal in bakery are forced to sell at low prices compared to the existing market prices because if they hiked their products, people in this community would abandon them in favour of the already manufactured ones sold in shops.” -Agriculture Officer, Wadelai Subcounty*

On the other hand, that practical sessions were highly valued and effective in enhancing the participant’s understanding and retention of the content. The preference for live scenarios over traditional blackboard teaching methods suggests that hands-on, experiential learning is more beneficial. The participants found the combination of practical and theoretical training to be advantageous, particularly because they could apply the newly acquired skills in their garden. The positive feedback on AFARD’s training approach, which was described as friendly and inclusive of all genders, indicates that the training not only met but exceeded expectations, adding significant value to the participant’s existing knowledge. This suggests that a blended

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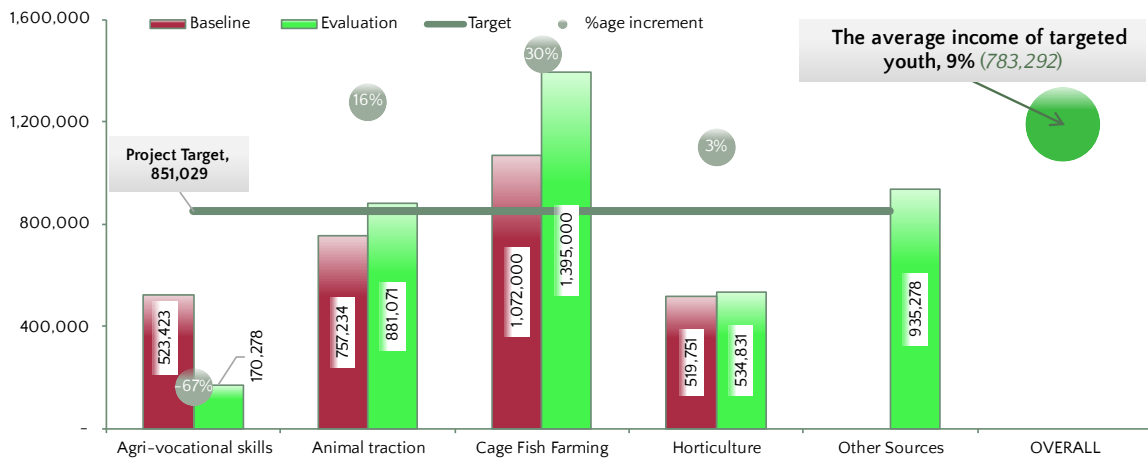
<sup>5</sup> YADE project baseline report

approach combining practical, theoretical, and gender-inclusive training methods is crucial for effective skills development.

*“I was satisfied with the practical sessions because you’re taken through live scenarios as opposed to writing on the blackboard which easily leaves one with no grasp of the content. With that our training was a blend of practical & theory and this came as an opportunity to me because I was already practicing some of the skills in my garden. The trainings conducted by AFARD were friendly and catered for all gender interests as well as adding value to what I already knew”* -Male FDG participant, Tik Kutego Group

The beneficiary incomes are visualised in figure 3 below

Figure 2: Visualisation of YADE project beneficiaries’ incomes





One of the beneficiaries of YADE project in Mutir East village, Mutir East parish showing animals that he had bought as a result of the incomes earned from the YADE supported trades

To further validate increase in incomes, respondents were asked whether their incomes had increased, reduced or remained constant after their participation in the YADE project. Close to three quarters (73%) of the respondents asserted that their incomes had increased with animal traction, horticulture and cage fish farming taking the lead at 96%,80% and 76% respectively. It is not surprising that agri-vocational skilling had the least representation at 48%. The overarching drivers for the increase in incomes were; Skills acquired through project related trainings (61%; Males-77, 66% & Female-65, 56%), increased business profitability and (38%; Male-48, 41%, Female-40, 34%) and enhanced job opportunities at 26% (Male 33, 28% & Female-27, 23%). The results are visualised in figure 4 and 5 below;

Figure 3: State of beneficiary incomes after participation in the YADE project

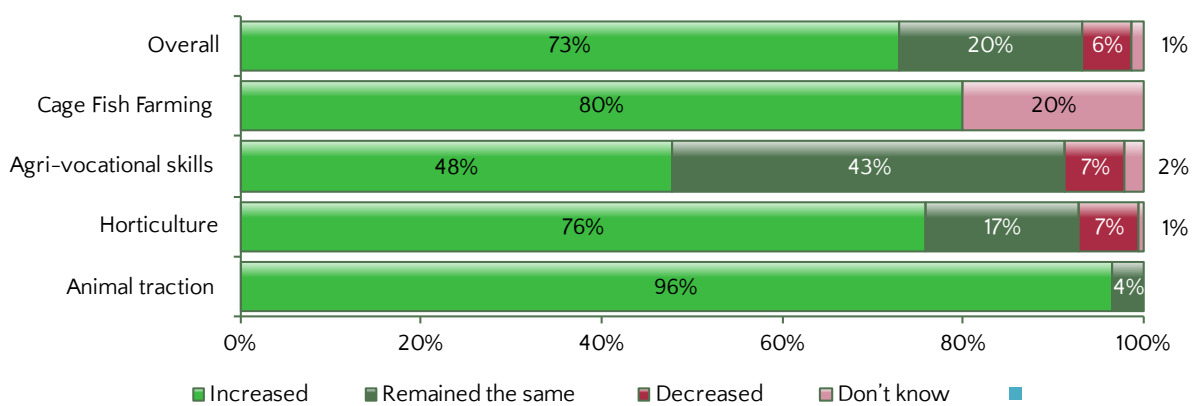
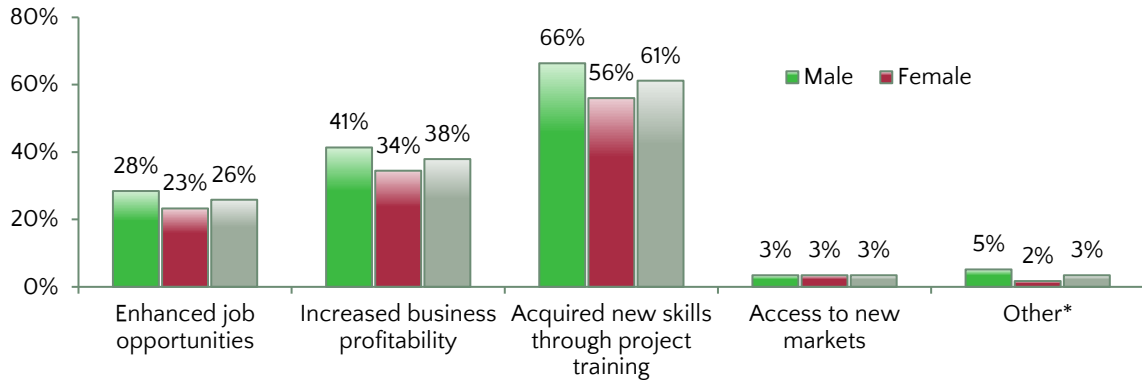


Figure 4: Factors leading to increase in beneficiary incomes



**Result 1: Result 1: To establish and strengthen 24 agribusinesses Youth Investment Groups (YIGs) with functional VSLA by 2024**

This result area had two indicators which were; #of youth investment groups established and functional, % of members that participate in €5 average monthly savings. Results from the review of project documents indicated that a total of 24 Youth Investment Groups were established as shown. All the Youth investment clubs were functional at the time of evaluation. The groups and their savings performance are also shown below<sup>6</sup>;



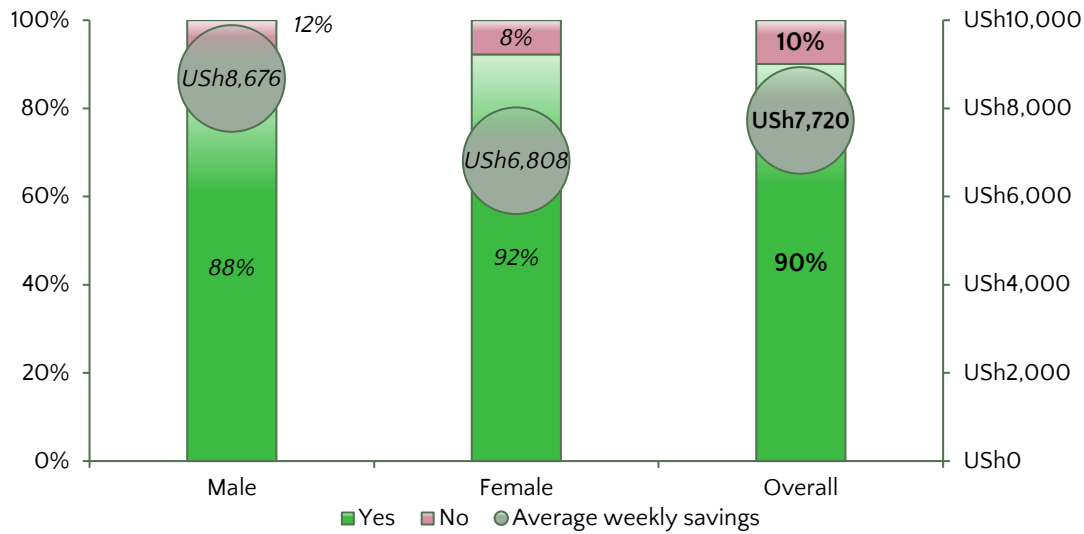
**Table 3: YADE project savings groups**

Name of group	No. Members	No. females	Savings amount	Outstanding loans	Fines	Social fund	Agro - input fund	Total savings
1. PATEN TIC KU TEGO	30	18	3,400,000	2,345,700	-	507,000	-	3,907,000
2. DIKIRI ENETEGO	20	11	1,261,000	934,300	-	546,400	31,500	1,838,900
3. MER BER	20	13	1,390,300	346,000	120,000	350,000	-	1,860,300
4. TELABOLO	30	16	1,685,800	1,697,400	-	305,000	72,100	2,062,900
5. RIEMCAN	30	21	2,022,500	2,088,000	73,000	73,000	46,500	2,215,000
6. KONY PACHO	20	10	2,150,000	2,200,050	93,000	321,000	86,800	2,650,800
7. KWER KABO CAN	10	5	440,000	676,300	-	65,000	2,500	507,500
8. TORO YOUTH	30	15	1,787,500	907,000	300,400	300,400	108,900	2,497,200
9. AKOMO LANDING SITE	5	2	1,045,000	659,900	84,000	84,000	5,000	1,218,000
10. MUNGUTIMO	20	12	740,000	561,400	4,000	53,500	7,500	805,000
11. ONDWELLE UNITED	10	6	427,000	495,600	-	66,000	-	493,000
12. DIKIRIBER	10	3	120,000	109,000	2,000	10,000	-	132,000
13. AGU SOUTH YOUNG FARMERS ASS	30	18	198,000	198,000	173,300	173,300	80,000	624,600
14. WANGMUPAKA CAN KELORYEKO	30	18	259,000	1,770,900	216,100	80,000	26,000	581,100
15. TIC KU TEGO	30	20	382,000	110,000	11,000	270,000	250,000	913,000
16. ANYIM LONYO	10	4	50,000	-	20,000	50,000	50,000	170,000
17. NGEK ELONYO	10	5	169,000	760,000	268,000	268,000	149,000	854,000
18. KWERKABUCAN	20	14	177,000	895,000	19,000	227,000	9,000	432,000
19. CAN THUM	30	7	2,273,000	422,000	-	341,000	36,000	2,650,000
20. JWIGIRI BER	5	2	48,000	310,000	3,000	44,000	12,000	107,000
21. FUR EN ELONYO	30	13	2,069,000	654,000	238,000	338,000	183,000	2,828,000
22. PIKWO HORTICULTURAL	30	15	45,000	43,600	10,000	25,400	35,800	116,200
23. MERBER	30	16	277,500	805,000	8,000	29,500	189,400	504,400
24. TIC KU TEGO BER	10	6	14,000	566,400	53,000	52,000	9,000	128,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>22,430,600</b>	<b>19,555,550</b>	<b>1,695,800</b>	<b>4,579,500</b>	<b>1,390,000</b>	<b>30,095,900</b>

The indicator regarding proportion of members that are able to save € 5 increased from 0.5% at baseline to 34% at Endline. Evaluation findings in figure 6 below confirmed that overall, 90% of the beneficiaries participate in weekly savings and save an average of Ugx 7,720 per week. Across gender categories, female beneficiaries were reported to save more than their male counterparts (Male-88% vs female-92%). The average savings per week increased from baseline of Ugx 6,152 to Ugx 7720 at endline representing approximately 26% increase in savings. The findings are represented in figure 5 below;

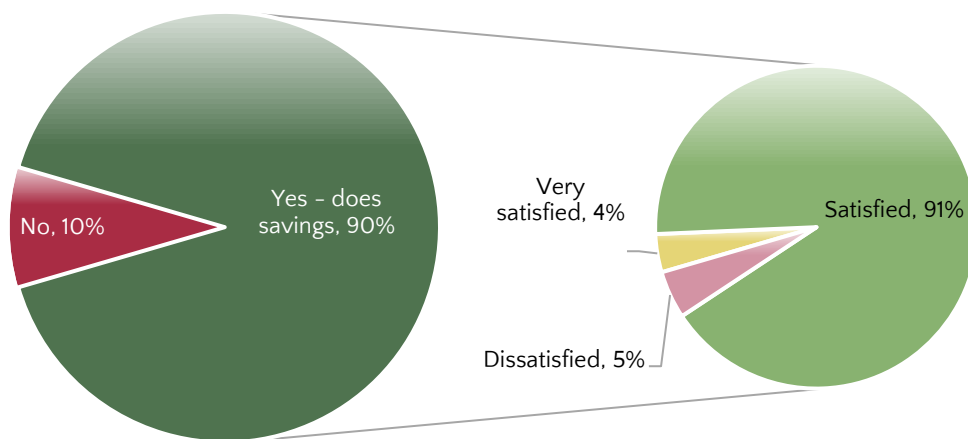


Figure 5: Beneficiary average weekly savings



Out of those that reported to be saving, 95% were satisfied with their savings while only 5% were dissatisfied. The results are presented in figure 7 below

Figure 6: Beneficiary Satisfaction with average weekly savings



**Result 2: To improve the employability of 500 youth through entrepreneurship, financial literacy, collective marketing, and non-formal vocational skills training by 2024**

This result area had two indicators which were; % of targeted youth who adopt climate-smart and good agricultural practices and proportion of targeted youth adopt good finance management practices. The proportion of youth that adopt climate smart agriculture was noted to have significantly increased from a baseline of 7.8% to 56% (Male-47, 58% & Female-38, 53%) at endline. This however fell short of the target of 85% set for the project.

Correspondingly, the percentage of targeted youth that apply good financial management practices rose from a baseline of 66.4% to 72% (Male-84, 72% & Female-84, 72%) at endline. This surpassed the target of 65% set at the end of the project. According to qualitative findings, the improvement was brought about by the climate smart agriculture and financial management capacity building sessions that were given to the targeted beneficiaries.

“The trainings that I received helped me to acquire more information and insights about climate smart agriculture and business management. I had no idea how to conduct audits, but I have now become an expert in that area. This project has opened our eyes and everyone has now embraced saving with a purpose and goal. AFARD also trained us on horticulture and provided seedlings which has improved my life as I now earn from selling vegetables” -**Female Horticulture graduate, Tikutego Group**

Adoption of better climate smart agriculture and financial management practices are displayed in figure 7 and 8 below;

Figure 7: Adoption of better climate smart Agriculture practices

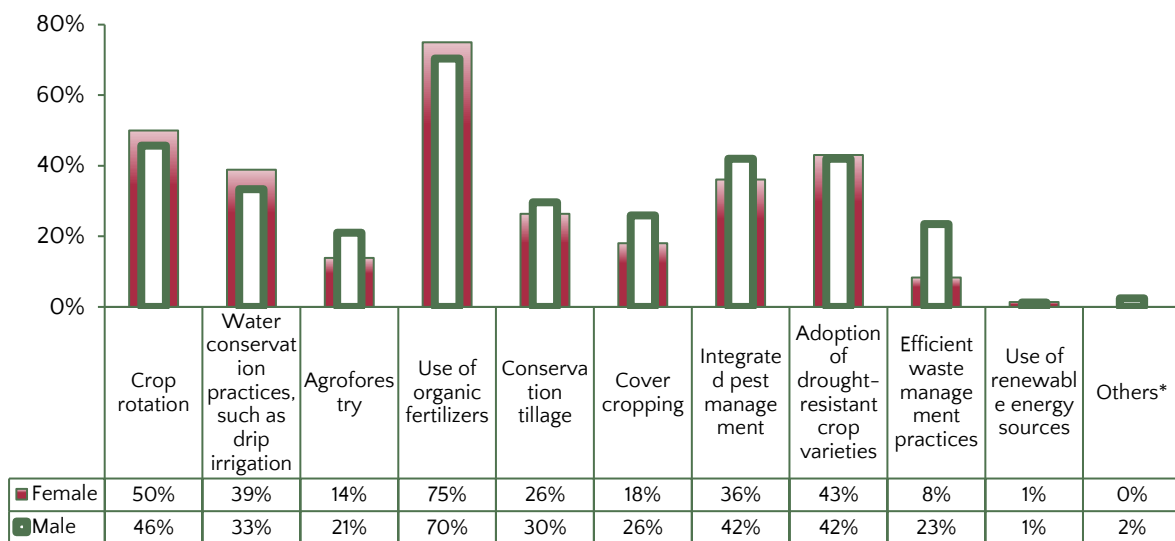
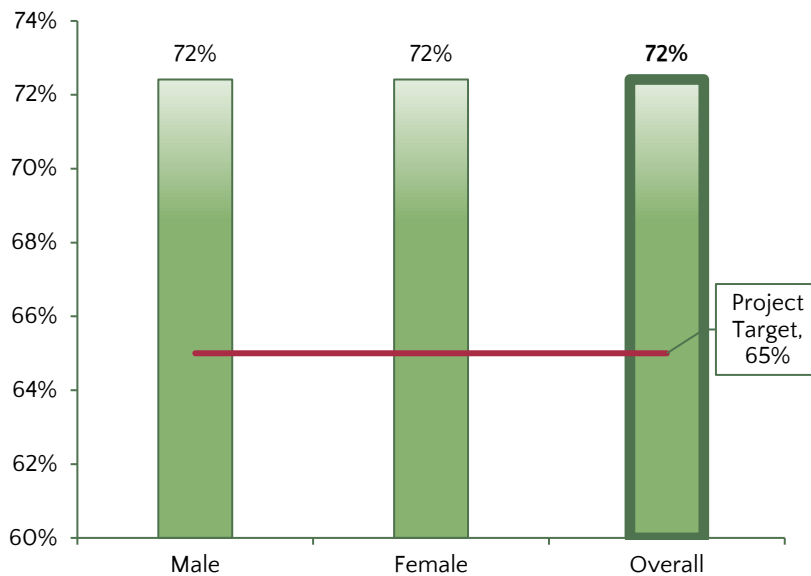


Figure 8: Adoption of better financial management practices



**Result 3: To increase the ownership and growth of 500 youth agribusinesses for self-employment by 2024**

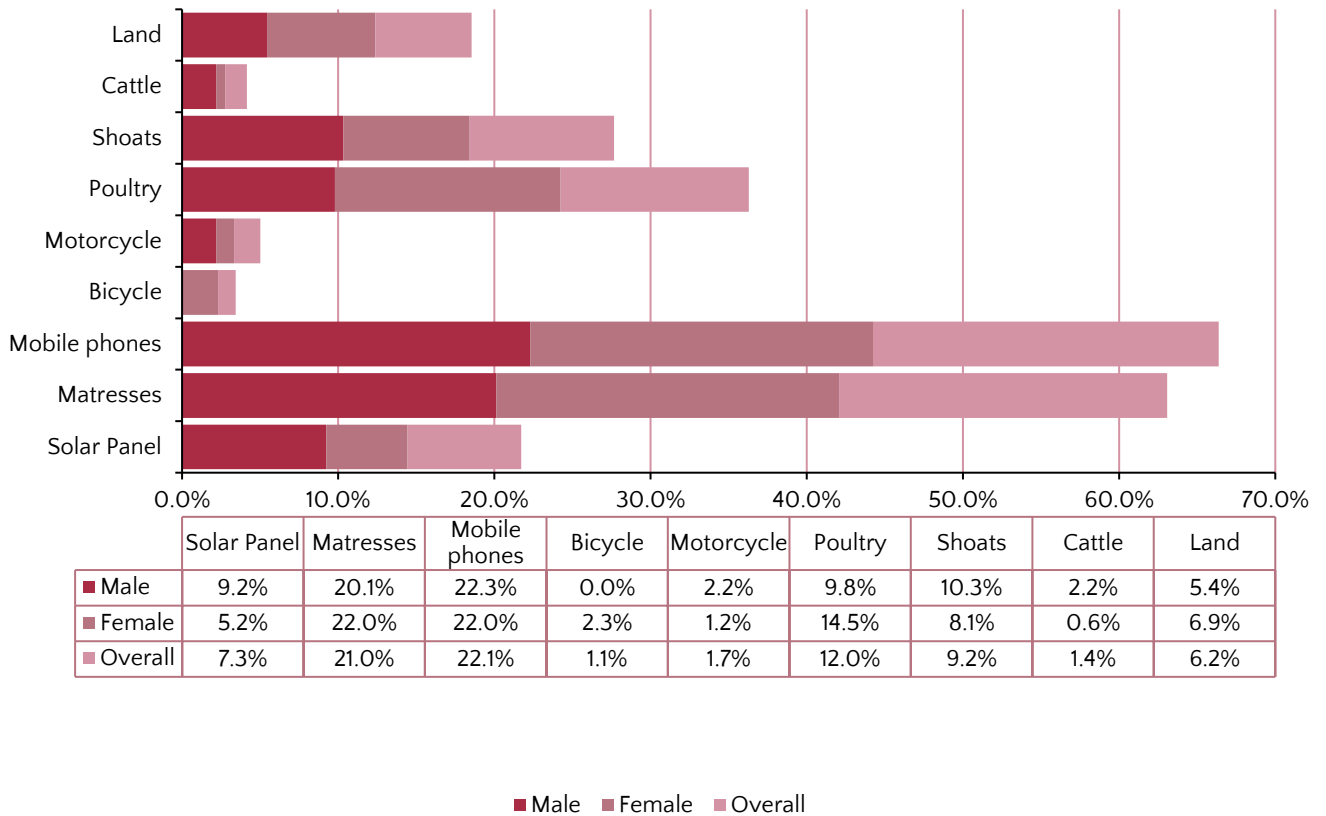
The only measurable indicators under this result area were; At least 50% increase in the value of agribusinesses and productive assets owned by targeted youth, 500 youth earn an average of UGX 300,000 per month, 75% increase in the average number of hours/days worked among targeted youth.

Several studies<sup>7</sup> have demonstrated the significance of household assets in measuring a family's capacity to endure unexpected economic shocks. These assets, which may include savings, investments, and property ownership, play a crucial role in providing financial stability and resources to navigate challenging economic circumstances. The average value of productive assets increased from Ugx 1,704,096 at baseline to Ugx 2,026,313 (Male-Ugx 2,376,130 & Female-Ugx1,658,04) representing a 9% percent point increase from the baseline. Although this fell short of the project target of 50% increase by 41%, it is an indication that there has been an improvement in the livelihoods of the youth as a result of participating in the YADE project. This improvement according to qualitative results is attributed to the comprehensive layer of bundled packages offered including mobilization of youth into Youth Investment Groups, trainings in better agronomic and financial management practices, periodic mentorships and coaching of VSLAs, and provision of business startup kits to the youth.

Beneficiaries were asked about ownership of productive assets. Figure 9 shows that the youth own some assets. The most common assets were mobile phones (22.1%), and poultry (12%). Across gender categories, there is still an insignificant difference among male and female beneficiaries in terms of ownership of assets. This is the similar trend that was observed at the baseline. The results are visualised in the figure below;

7 Annamaria Lusardi, daniel schneider & peter tufano, 2011 Financially Fragile Households: Evidence and Implications found at [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/2011a\\_bpea\\_lusardi.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/2011a_bpea_lusardi.pdf) & Blaise Gadanecz and Kaushik Jayaram 2007, Measures of financial stability found at <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=171888e66888906b686ba865bc2940e7b5f464db#page=371>

Figure 9: Ownership of productive assets

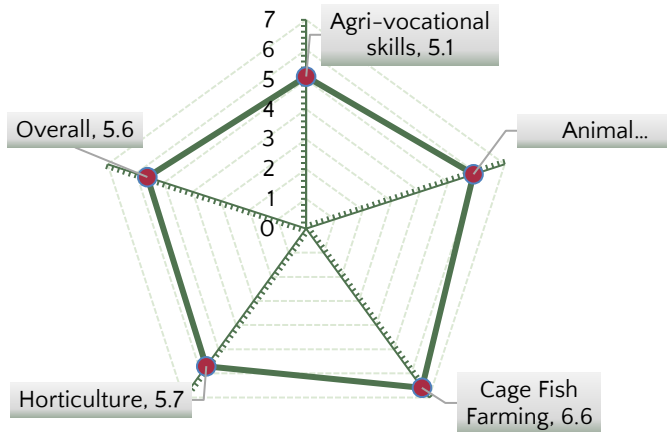


Regarding the indicator; At least 500 youth earn an average of UGX 300,000 per month, although it seems like an output indicator, was calculated by averaging the reported incomes under all the 4 trades on the assumption that the 500 youth are represented by the 232 evaluated beneficiaries. Evaluation findings indicated that the average incomes of the youth surpassed the average of Ugx 300,000 to Ugx 846,263. On the other hand, the average number of hours worked by the youth increased from the 3.8 at baseline to 5.6(Male-5.61 & Female-5.64) at endline representing a 48-percentage point increase from the baseline. This however fell short of the project target of 75% at the end of the project. Across the trade categories, beneficiaries of animal traction and cage fish farming took the highest share at 5.9 and 6.6 respectively. While the project aimed to equip youth with marketable skills and vocational training to enhance their employability, review of project documents indicates that the transition from training to actual employment took longer than anticipated especially for trades other than horticulture. Youth may have needed additional time to apply newly acquired skills, secure suitable employment opportunities, or establish their own income-generating activities, resulting in a delayed realization of the targeted increase in working hours. Additionally, Societal norms, family responsibilities, and cultural expectations may have influenced the ability and willingness of youth, particularly females, to engage in paid work for extended hours. Traditional gender roles in Pakwach district, caregiving responsibilities, and household duties could have constrained

female youth's capacity to allocate more time to employment, despite efforts to enhance their participation in the workforce

The details are shown in figure 10 below;

Figure 10: Average number of hours worked by the targeted youth



- *Are there any unintended positive and negative outcomes?*

Despite the primary goal of increasing access to agricultural employment opportunities for youth in Pakwach district, the Youth Agri Skilling for Decent Employment (YADE) project has inadvertently led to a significant improvement in food security among households where these youths resided. Through vocational training, collective action facilitated by Agribusiness Youth Investment Groups (YIGs) and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and entrepreneurship education, the project has empowered youth to adopt sustainable agricultural practices, diversify food production, and explore alternative income sources. This unanticipated outcome underscored the project's broader socio-economic impact, highlighting the importance of adaptive programming that addresses emergent needs within Wadelai subcounty.

Qualitative results from FGD and key informant interviews affirmed that another unintended positive outcome of the Youth Agri Skilling for Decent Employment (YADE) project was the enhancement of community cohesion and social capital within the target areas. Through the formation of Agribusiness Youth Investment Groups (YIGs) and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), the project fostered collective action, cooperation, and trust among community members. This increased social cohesion not only strengthened the resilience of participating youth but also created a supportive environment for collaboration and mutual assistance beyond the scope of the project. Additionally, as youth participants acquired skills and knowledge, they become agents of positive change within their communities, catalysing further development initiatives and fostering a culture of empowerment and self-reliance.

Qualitative results revealed that one notable concern was the vulnerability of agricultural businesses supported by the project, such as cage fish farming and horticulture, to various risks

including weather uncertainties, pest and disease outbreaks, and market price fluctuations. Without insurance coverage or adequate risk mitigation strategies in place, there is a heightened risk of financial losses for youth beneficiaries, undermining the long-term viability of their ventures and potentially eroding their confidence and motivation to engage in agricultural entrepreneurship. Additionally, the ongoing demand for further livelihood interventions beyond the project's scope highlights the persisting financial constraints and vulnerability of local communities, indicating a potential gap in the project's ability to address systemic issues related to poverty and economic resilience. These negative outcomes underscore the importance of comprehensive risk management and resilience-building strategies to mitigate vulnerabilities and ensure the sustainability of project benefits in the face of external shocks and challenges.

### 3.1.2. YADE project Efficiency

This section addresses the extent to which the YADE project was delivered in an efficient manner, with particular attention to project cost-effectiveness, timelines of Programme implementation and alignment with local capacities and networks.

#### *Cost Efficiency of Programme Implementation operations*

- *To what extent do the costs reflect the activities?*

Overall, Evaluation results affirmed that the costs reflect activities and results manifested by the YADE project interventions. One notable approach was the decision to engage subcounty extension workers in facilitating training and capacity building activities related to cage fish farming, animal traction, and horticulture, rather than relying solely on hiring external consultants or trainers. By leveraging existing local expertise and infrastructure, such as the knowledge and experience of subcounty extension workers, the project effectively minimized costs associated with external consultancy fees while simultaneously fostering community ownership and sustainability. This approach not only ensured cost-effectiveness but also facilitated the transfer of skills and knowledge to beneficiaries in a culturally relevant and context-specific manner, thereby enhancing the overall impact and long-term viability of the YADE project interventions. Moreover, the peer-to-peer approach was also deemed a cost-effective way of cascading the gains of YADE interventions to many targeted youths within the subcounty.

YADE also adopted a community led and district focused programming approach with periodic meetings held with Pakwach district and subcounty technical officials to create synergies for programme implementation while minimizing duplication of services. This aspect was fundamental for YADE to optimize the use of the existing resources and maximize the positive value generated for beneficiaries against the funds invested in the project.

“This project was implemented within the required timeframe by our partner AFARD. I should say the implementation and reporting time lines and reporting requirements were well observed which is one of the factors that has strengthened our relationship with our partner” -**Program Manager-HORIZONT3000**

### ***Alignment with Local Capacities and Networks***

Qualitative Evaluation results established that the use of local community networks in supporting the implementation of project activities allowed for the efficient delivery of the intervention. Partnership with local stakeholders such as AFARD the indigenous NGO, district and sub-county local administration, was seen as an efficient way of implementing the YADE project interventions. In addition, involvement of community leaders such as the Local Council (LCIs) and parish chiefs in project implementation was deemed a cost-effective way of optimizing the available resources as well as achieving sustainable outputs and outcomes at a reasonable cost.

“AFARD is one of the few NGOs that highly engages local government before and during implementation of its project activities. We had start up workshop together and periodic group joint monitoring meetings where we discussed and shared ideas on how we can work together to improve the livelihoods of the youth in Wadelai subcounty. The idea of HORIZONT3000 using such a local partner than implementing it themselves was quite efficient in terms of optimizing resources because the local partner understands the context better than anyone-” -**Subcounty Chief, Wadelai subcounty**

### ***Efficiency of Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Systems***

Efficient and effective use of data for planning and implementation plays a fundamental role in development programming. The evaluation through qualitative results and review of Programme documents discovered that monitoring and evaluation was intensified across all phases of the Programme intervention. Baseline surveys, and routine project monitoring was done. The evaluation further found that routine field visits, and periodic engagements involving the beneficiaries, and district stakeholders were the most used approaches for community M&E. The project did not have a comprehensive risk register for monitoring the risk management processes. Much as this did not significantly affect the project outcomes, it would play a fundamental role in as far as mitigating any issues or risks that arose during project implementation especially COVID 19. The implementing partner however, relied on the project assumptions stated in the project log frames to monitor and manage some of the programme unforeseeable risks though not as comprehensive as the risk management plan would have been. The other challenge encountered was during target setting. The evaluation observed that some of the targets set for the project outcomes were overly ambitious. Assets accumulation, and income increase may not drastically increase as expected especially with projects of less than 3 years.

#### **3.1.3. Impact of the YADE project interventions**

Assessment of YADE project impact looked at the tangible and lasting changes, the project had on the target beneficiaries specifically the youth. Impact stories were also documented to showcase evidence of impact for the YADE project. The impact here was assessed based on qualitative results.

Qualitative results indicated that the project's focus on increasing gainful employment opportunities has resulted in a tangible reduction in extreme asset poverty among youth beneficiaries. As youth were equipped with marketable skills and vocational training, the project

enabled them to secure sustainable livelihoods, enhance their incomes their incomes, and alleviate financial hardships that they had prior to the commencement of YADE project. This has translated into improved living standards, enhanced access to basic necessities, and reduced vulnerability to extreme poverty among targeted youth. In addition, FGD participants reported reduction in dependencies to relatives and shift in their mindsets and perspectives about unemployment and gender roles especially those perceived about female youths in the community.

“I am happy that I can no longer beg from my relatives like I used to prior to my participation in the YADE project. Also, seeing females participate in trades like cage fish farming and animal traction is an indication that there has been an improvement in the attitudes and beliefs held about these trades in the community. These were considered to be predominantly male dominated trades but seeing female participate is a total shift in community attitudes, thanks to YADE.” -**Male FGD participant, Tikutego group**

Furthermore, the project's holistic approach to addressing GBV has yielded significant improvements in fostering safer and more inclusive environments for youth. Through the project targeted VSLA interventions and the targeting criteria of 60% women, 40% men aimed at promoting gender equality, empowering women, and challenging harmful social norms, the project has contributed to a notable reduction in rates of GBV within the community. This is evidenced by changes in attitudes, behaviours, and social norms among beneficiaries. Moreover, by promoting constructive alternatives to drug abuse and violence through skills development, entrepreneurship training, and community engagement, the project has empowered youth to make positive choices, cultivate healthier lifestyles, and contribute to the creation of safer and more resilient community in Wadelai subcounty.

“We used to have quarrels in the family because I would always ask for every basic necessity from my husband, I did not have any source of income. Now when I earn from tomato sales that I take to Pokwero, Nebbi, I buy most of the household necessities and also save some monies for re-investment into the business. I have been able to relieve my husband of some responsibilities which has addressed issues of domestic violence as we can now both contribute to the family table-**Female FGD participant, Tic Kutego Group, Wadelai**

### 3.1.3.1. Impact stories from YADE project interventions

#### Impact story 1: From prison to a respected family man

Saddam Hussein, aged 30 years is a resident Ongwele East Village, Ongwele Parish, Wadelai sub-county. He is an ex-convict and beneficiary of the horticulture group belonging to Tic Kutego Group (Hard work Pays). Hussein narrates that he had just returned from prison with no resources to invest in his horticulture garden. He had incredibly difficult moments because he was unable to pay school fees for his children or even look after his family very well.

*“I was in prison for 7 years, so upon my return, my lovely wife had left and found myself in undesirable situation. Without incomes of as low as Ugx 500, the situation was turning more complex. I found when some of the youths with whom we were at the same level had progressed up the economic ladder. I attempted horticulture but I was a bit weak and lacked resources like water pump and man power. I had no finances to purchase pesticides although I attempted farming on a very small scale”.*

Hussein asserts that he was among the selected youth who participated in the YADE project and equipped with skills about better agronomic and financial management practices which turned his life around.

*“I participated in AFARDs training sessions on climate smart agriculture and business financial management and now I have been able to generate incomes out of my horticulture garden. The project also supported me with inputs for starting a chapatti stall. After earning some good incomes, my wife has been able to return and the finances obtained as a result of this project have enabled me open up a salon for my wife”.*



*Hussein spraying one of this Gardens*



He further confirms that he had inspired youth in his community to venture into horticulture and had been giving them support in form of capacity building to practice better agronomic practices

*“Other youths in the community have been inspired to carry out horticulture because of the example that I have set. My colleague who was a beneficiary of animal traction was inspired by horticulture and has cleared land awaiting to start transplanting cabbages. I have been supporting him to do it even better than I do mine”*



*Hussein showing us one of his other gardens that he is currently harvesting*

**Impact story 2: Animal traction, a revival for my household income and children’s education**

Okende Kulsum, aged 27 years, is a female resident of Ongwele Parish who belongs to Kwer Kabucan, a YADE project animal traction supported group. Kulsum narrates her ordeal before commencement of the YADE project. She confirms that agricultural production was exceedingly low because she used to plant on a very small piece of land barely an acre. She goes ahead to narrate that she was incapacitated with finances to return her children to school because the harvest was extremely low to support home consumption and at the same time commercial purposes.

*“Before the YADE project, I was used to planting quarter an acre of crops because of limitations in manpower. I was only using a hoe and therefore, production would be so low that I could barely reserve crops for sale to get school fees for my children. At some point, I had to keep them home because I didn’t have money to support their education”*, Okende Kulsum narrates



*Kulsum narrates her story during an interview*



Kulsum affirms that her success over the past two years is attributed to the YADE project interventions. She was part of the animal traction group and used this opportunity to plough her land but also worked closely with group members to plough other people’s gardens on a

seasonal basis to generate income for her living.

*“YADE project supported us with Ox- ploughs which has enabled me to cultivate over 2 acres of rice and tomatoes. Through the project, I have also been able to generate incomes as a result of collective efforts of ploughing community gardens to generate incomes that we share as a group. I am now able to send my children to school but also buy household assets like goats and chicken”.*



*Kulsum showcases her ploughed tomato garden and a well laid tomato nursery bed*

Kulsum asserted that the community has benefited from this initiative as cultivating their pieces of land has doubled their production compared to the situation before the project. She also confirms that her production of rice and tomatoes had more than doubled which had boosted her household security and incomes.

*“The community has benefited through the project because they have been afforded an opportunity to access the ox-plough at the lowest cost. I managed to plant tomatoes and harvested more than double which has boosted my incomes as well as my household food security. There is a nursery bed in under preparation for another planting phase”.* Kulsum asserts



*Kulsum in her tomato garden showing the 2 acres of land that she used for plating tomatoes*



### 3.1.4. Sustainability of YADE project Interventions

- *What is the degree of ownership of the project by the partner organisations and their target groups?*

The degree of ownership of the YADE project by partner organizations and target groups aimed at assessing the extent to which AFARD the partner organisation has embraced, internalized, and assumed responsibility for the project's continuation and success beyond the implementation period. Evaluation results indicated that AFARD established several coordination mechanisms that will enhance the sustainability of youth interventions. AFARD made collaborations with the lower local government and several private actors such as vocational institutions, input suppliers and buyers. This collaboration is likely to bolster continuous progress of some value chains even when the YADE project support ends. Key informants and FGD participants however reported

that to some extent, the community is still vulnerable and the demand for further livelihood interventions to complement the YADE project will continue because local communities are incapacitated in terms of financial resources that would make them self-reliant and maintain the project initiatives such as cage fish farming and hardware start up kits provided by the project.

- *Which measures and strategies are put in place by AFARD to ensure the sustainability of the results?*

The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) played a pivotal role as the implementing partner, focusing on building the capacity of youth beneficiaries through VSLAs. AFARD's interventions centred on equipping participants with essential skills in climate-smart agriculture, business financial management, and marketable job skills enabled them to initiate self-sustaining income-generating activities. Through targeted training and mentorship, AFARD empowered youth to adopt innovative agricultural practices resilient to climatic variations while fostering entrepreneurial acumen and financial literacy. By leveraging the VSLAs as platforms for knowledge exchange and resource mobilization, AFARD facilitated the integration of these skills into the fabric of community development, thereby enhancing the sustainability and self-reliance of youth beneficiaries in pursuing livelihood opportunities beyond the project's duration. The evaluation however noted that the project provided assistance to agricultural businesses susceptible to weather uncertainties, pest and disease outbreaks, and fluctuations in market prices (cage fish farming & horticulture) without insurance coverage, there is a potential for the youth to experience losses due to unpredictable factors, posing a risk to the sustainability of their ventures.

“The project has empowered me with knowledge and skills in business management and climate smart agriculture. I will continue running my business independently, I have also gained knowledge of best farming practices and good agronomy skills such as spacing, aeration, such will I will be able to cascade to my friends in this community so that we can all adopt sustainable ???- **Female FGD participant, Kaligiri village**

- *Which processes contributed to sustaining these benefits?*

The sustainability of benefits arising from AFARD's capacity-building initiatives for youth in climate-smart agriculture, business financial management, and marketable job skills can be attributed to several key processes. Firstly, AFARD employed a participatory approach, actively involving youth beneficiaries in decision-making and project implementation. By engaging youth in the design and execution of activities through VSLAs, AFARD fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among participants, ensuring their continued commitment to sustaining acquired skills and practices. Additionally, AFARD prioritized establishing strong linkages with local institutions, leveraging existing community structures and networks to institutionalize project interventions. Through strategic partnerships with local governments, agricultural extension services, and private sector actors, AFARD facilitated the integration of youth-led initiatives into broader development agendas and institutional frameworks, thereby enhancing the long-term sustainability and scalability of project benefits.

- *Which tools for Knowledge management are used by the partner organisation?*

Throughout the project, AFARD employed various tools for knowledge management to facilitate the dissemination, sharing, and utilization of information among stakeholders and beneficiaries. One key tool utilized was the establishment of knowledge-sharing platforms and networks, including regular workshops, training sessions, and community meetings. These platforms provided opportunities for youth beneficiaries to exchange experiences, insights, and best practices related to climate-smart agriculture, business financial management, and marketable job skills. Additionally, AFARD leveraged digital technologies, such as online forums, mobile applications, and social media platforms, to enhance communication and knowledge dissemination of the project to a wider stakeholder audience. Through harnessing the power of technology, AFARD ensured real-time access to relevant information and resources, enabling youth participants and other stakeholders to stay informed and connected throughout the project lifecycle.

Moreover, AFARD prioritized the documentation and codification of lessons learned, success stories, and innovative practices generated through project activities. Through the development of knowledge repositories, including case studies and project webpages, AFARD captured valuable insights and experiences that could be shared and replicated across similar contexts. Furthermore, AFARD facilitated mentorship and peer learning opportunities, pairing experienced practitioners with novice participants to foster knowledge transfer and skills development. By creating structured learning pathways and mentorship programs, AFARD enabled youth beneficiaries to benefit from the expertise and guidance of seasoned professionals, accelerating their learning curve and enhancing their capacity to implement sustainable livelihood strategies.

### 3.1.5. Challenges & Lessons learned

#### Challenges

- Concentration of trades in the same communities targeting the same clients significantly reduced profit margins for established businesses of YADE beneficiaries. Additionally, price fluctuations and competition from already-made products affected beneficiaries of bakery & horticulture.
- At the start of the project, COVID-19 restrictions led to the closure of vocational training institutions. The planned YMFs for horticulture could not be trained timely, and this increased the workload on project officers to provide extension support. The subcounty extension officers were called to support with extension services to keep the project afloat.
- There were conflicting priorities between personal and project activities, especially by male youth in daily fishing activities, which continued to lower their active participation in trainings and group work. To mitigate this, groups set up stringent rules to ensure members were fully attending group activities.
- Limited access to land, as many youths in horticulture planned to expand their field sizes. The youth were advised to rent adequate land from people within the community who have large acres of land.

#### Lessons learned

- Community involvement at all stages of the project cycle is critical to achieving the project's intended objectives and success. When local communities have the opportunity to participate in a development intervention, they can monitor and assess progress towards objectives, enabling them to take ownership of the intervention.
- Effective group cohesion is achieved when members are structured around shared goals and aspirations. The majority of members in the Youth Investment group, being either out of school or school dropouts, residing in the same community, and encountering similar challenges, further strengthens the unity within the group.
- Development cannot be achieved without the inclusion of other stakeholders, and partnerships are key to achieving program results. There is a need to continuously involve key partners such as the district and subcounty right from the inception of the project to the closeout stages and always communicate progress so that they continue to own the project, develop synergies, and reduce duplication of services in the same program focus areas.
- Mentoring plays a crucial role in providing essential support, trust, and encouragement for empowering the youth. The project broadened the scope of mentorship to involve various stakeholders, including Youth Investment Group (YIG) leaders, project personnel, and technical staff at the district and sub-county levels.
- Integrating fundamental skills such as soft skills, business management, financial literacy, among others into projects aimed at empowering youth, particularly those who have dropped out of school, is essential for bridging the gap between formal and informal life skills development.

# 4

## CONCLUSIONS

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In summary, the project has been effectively implemented, achieving substantial success in meeting the majority of outcome indicators across the three result areas, even though some targets remained unmet due to the mentioned limitations. Notably, 595 youth, both targeted and non-targeted, are now employed in agribusinesses supported by the project. There has been a commendable rise in the average income of the targeted youth, and the establishment and functionality of 24 youth investment groups have contributed to community engagement and financial inclusion. The increase in the number of members participating in €5 average monthly savings reflects positive financial habits fostered by the project. Moreover, the observed improvements in the adoption of climate-smart and good agricultural practices, along with enhanced financial management skills among the targeted youth, signify the project's positive impact on their livelihoods. The rise in the value of assets owned and the average number of hours worked further underline the project's success in empowering the youth. Despite facing challenges and unmet targets, the overall outcomes suggest a meaningful contribution to the well-being and development of the targeted youth.

Moreover, the project's execution demonstrated efficiency within the allocated resources and stipulated timeframes, resulting in a noteworthy positive impact on the well-being of the targeted youth and an overall enhancement of their livelihoods. The empowerment of Youth Investment Groups (YIGs) with valuable information suggests a potential cascading effect within the community, fostering sustainability. Despite these achievements, there is a looming threat to technical sustainability due to inherent uncertainties associated with supported trades, such as the risk of pests, disease outbreaks, and market price fluctuations. These uncertainties could pose challenges and potential losses for the youth once the project support concludes.

# 5

## EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended.,

- Expansion of the project: Given the positive impact of the YADE project, it may be beneficial to consider expanding the project to reach more sub counties, especially those with similar needs and challenges. The extension should focus mainly on graduating the already established VSLAs into area cooperatives, capacity building initiatives and widening the scope of trades to ensure project benefits are sustained in the long term.
- Forge partnerships with other development partners to scale-up project interventions and support more beneficiaries given the big gap that exists, arising from a bigger population in need compared to the ones that were supported by the project. Extension of a similar project with higher targeting in the project locations is recommended to support more affected youth with in the broader district.
- In the future, the project design should review age grouping to ensure that beneficiaries from other age groups are considered. This would help more in bolstering group cohesion but also strengthen leadership, better engagement and participation of YIGs as older people are perceived to impact the young ones when they are part of the groups.
- Continue engaging with local and central government authorities: The involvement of local and central government authorities during the project's implementation was a potential source of support for the project's sustainability. Horizontal integration of the project under local government relevant sector is strongly recommended to ensure their continued support for the project's benefits in the long term.
- Young individuals should be introduced to agricultural and business insurance schemes that are subsidized and endorsed by the Government of Uganda through various banks and insurance companies. This aims to provide a safeguard for the continuity of their economic endeavours by integrating them into markets.
- Future projects should consider availing risk management plans to avoid the potential effect of any unprecedented disasters like COVID19. Additionally, there is a need for comprehensive review of the project targets to avoid ambiguities in target setting. Perhaps targets should be reviewed every year of implementation to ensure that they are still realistic and align with the existing context. Setting realistic targets involves the recognition that most desired outcomes are longer term, complex, and not quickly achieved. Thus, there is a need to establish targets as short-term objectives on the path to achieving an outcome

# 6

## ANNEXES

### Key Evaluation Questions



Key Evaluation Questions.docx

### Evaluation tools



Youth survey questionnaire.docx



Key informant Interview tools.docx



Focus Group Discussion tool.docx



Case study guide.docx

### List of Key Informant Interview and FGD participants

No	Name	Organization/ Location	Designation	Contact
1	Robert Bakyalira	AFARD / Nebbi	Programme Director	757117757
2	Innocent Kimira	Local Government / Wadelai	CDO	772633388
3	Sr. Loice Emmanuela Otyeka	Providence Training Institute Nebbi	Deputy Principle	778618789
4	Ochungi Francis	AFARD /Nebbi	Project Coordinator	770608081
5	Paul Gingiera	Shida Nakazi, Zombo	Director	772786478
6	Katrin Jordan	HORIZONT3000	Program Coordinator,	-
7	Komaketch casito	Wadelai	Agriculture Officer,	763100603
8	Bashir Ibrahim	AFARD	Project Officer	773635534
9	Abaja Samuel	Pakwach	District Production Officer Officer	782410991
10	Edmund	Pakwach	Agriculture Officer	785849464

Name of the FGD-FGD1

Venue: Adiri Parish, Paten Village

No	Name	Village	Age	Gender	Contact
1	Owacgiu Alfred	Borowio C	20	M	0786181818
2	Orieke Denis	Kalire	30	M	0776612481
3	Oworwoth Derlil	Kalingiri	19	M	-
4	Olum Stephen	Kalingiri	28	M	0764972578
5	Oyirwoth Innocent	Kalingiri	16	M	0780155838
6	Okur Both Robert	Adiri	18	M	0775595458
7	Otingiu Commeth	Borowio C	29	M	0774806029
8	Opio Geoffrey	Adiri	30	M	-
9	Oyirwoth Benson	Borowio C	30	M	0762614707
10	Odongo Jacob	Paten	22	M	0781817165

Name of the FGD: FGD2

Venue: Adiri Parish, Paten Village

No	Name	Village	Age	Gender	Contact
1	Munguriek Prossy	Kaligiri	19	F	0764955892
2	Awekonimungu Maurene	Kaligiri	24	F	0775363061
3	Pimer Charity	Kaligiri	20	F	0771037755
4	Anirwoth Peace	Kaligiri	17	F	-
5	Anirwoth Lilian	Paten	17	F	
6	Acen Sylvia	Adiri	17	F	0764752816
7	Atimano Consolate	Adiri	22	F	0782606881
8	Cida Maurene	Adiri	20	F	0771294003
9	Akello Paska	Adiri	30	F	0771149958

Name of the FGD: FGD3

Venue: Ojigo Primary School

No	Name	Village	Age	Gender	Contact
1	Owachgiu Dan	Ojigo Central	21	M	0770683899
2	Agenorwoth Roderick	Opoko	18	M	0775543793
3	Ajok Pauline	Ojigo North	26	F	0770866179
4	Abalo Patricia	Ojigo East	23	F	0765013225
5	Onega David	Ojigo Central		M	0780862612
6	Odaga Brian	Ojigo South	29	M	0781923695
7	Picho Stephen	Palam East	30	M	0775722470
8	Ayweka Jude	Palam East	28	M	0771412087
9	Ngamita Dorine	Ojigo Central	26	F	0771412487