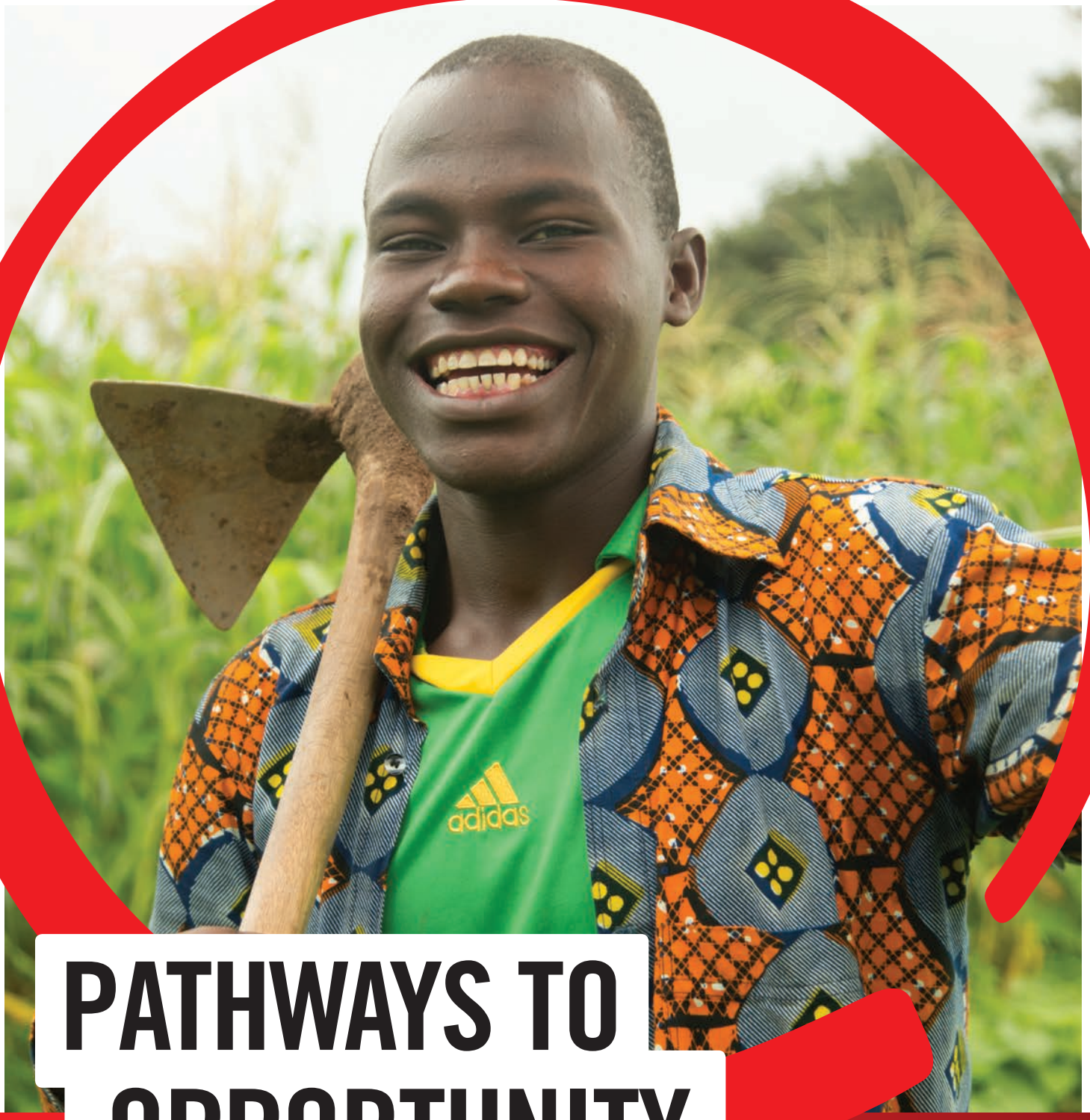

PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

Save the Children

YOUTH in ACTION
CREATING PATHWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY.

Supporting Rural Youth to Leverage Decent Work:
Evidence From the Cross-Sectoral Youth in Action Program

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Finally, the author thanks all the youth, families, community members, and employers who participated in the studies. Thank you for letting us into your lives and allowing us to better understand your lived experience.

This report is the result of a collaborative effort by the Youth in Action program global technical team, the Youth in Action country teams in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda, Search Institute, and the Mastercard Foundation, under the authorship of Dr. Nikhit D'Sa from Save the Children.

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Cover photo credit: Harrison Thane
Kassoum had never been to school before YiA came to his village in rural Burkina Faso. Through YiA, he worked with a community mentor to learn about gaps in his local market and how to plant vegetables for different seasons. He now runs a successful year-round small farm.

Foreword

Seven years ago, as we set out to develop the Youth in Action (YiA) program with our Save the Children colleagues, there was a significant gap in understanding how to effectively design livelihood programs for highly vulnerable young people living in rural communities. The choice to partner with Save the Children was an obvious one. We wanted to ensure a robust learning agenda and in them, we found a partner with the knowledge, capacity, and resourcefulness to design and implement a comprehensive program that would support young people and adolescents from 12–18 years across five countries.

This report, Pathways to Opportunity: Supporting Rural Youth to Leverage Decent Work, highlights the research findings and experiences from the six-year program, which has reached more than 40,000 young people, girls and boys in rural Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda.

Thanks to YiA, our understanding of what works when creating programs for rural youth has greatly improved and has informed a broader portfolio of youth livelihoods work at the Mastercard Foundation. In rural communities where formal employment is lacking, we know that an approach that includes foundational math and literacy skills and training, and creates spaces for engagement between families and community members can help young people create opportunities to earn income. When rural youth are mentored, taught business development and life skills, and financial literacy, they feel empowered within their social networks, which changes the way they perceive themselves – and are often perceived – in their communities.

This research is highly relevant to development practitioners, policy makers, and researchers interested in understanding the degree of support required to enable out-of-school, rural youth to improve their skills, strengthen their social networks, and increase their savings and earnings. The report provides qualitative and quantitative evidence on the impact of these interventions and highlights adjustments that were made to improve outcomes.

At the Mastercard Foundation we are committed to ensuring young Africans have access to programs that improve their skills, increase their livelihood opportunities, enable them to participate in the decisions that impact their lives, and achieve their potential. YiA has been a leader in its ability to target and support young people living in rural areas who face numerous obstacles to access services and realize their full potential within their communities. YiA has been instrumental in informing the Foundation's Young Africa Works strategy. Specifically, the program has demonstrated the value of comprehensive support including life-skills, financial literacy, money management, mentorship, and community support as well as developing livelihood programming that reflects the opportunities available in rural markets. It has also shown the need to tailor programming to the unique needs of young women to ensure their active participation and engagement, so they also benefit from increased earnings, skills, and social networks.

On behalf of Mastercard Foundation, I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to the entire YiA team for their commitment to this program over the past six years. The complexity of the model, ambition of the target, and focus on vulnerable young people has required dedication from the YiA team, local partners, community stakeholders, families, and most importantly, the young people themselves – thank you.

Ann Miles, Director, *Thought Leadership & Innovation, Mastercard Foundation*

Photo: Harrison Thane

Bonabana Grace lives in Bundibugyo, Uganda. After her divorce, Grace joined Youth in Action to further her education and develop business skills. She now trades in cocoa and owns her own hair salon. Grace is independent and is able to care for her children in a way she wasn't able to before.

Photo: Harrison Thane

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Teenage girls and boys participate in a community mapping exercise at a learning session in rural Malawi.

What is YiA?

Launched in 2012, Youth in Action (YiA) was a six-year program implemented by Save the Children in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. The goal of YiA was to improve the socioeconomic status of 40,000 out-of-school male and female youth (12-18 years) in rural Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda. The YiA program aimed to strengthen foundational work readiness skills, then develop business and management capabilities, and create space to apply learned skills, all while supported by family and community. This combination, as illustrated in Figure A, was hypothesized to lead to improved socioeconomic outcomes for youth. For the majority of program participants, this model led to opportunities grounded in agricultural value chains or agri-business.

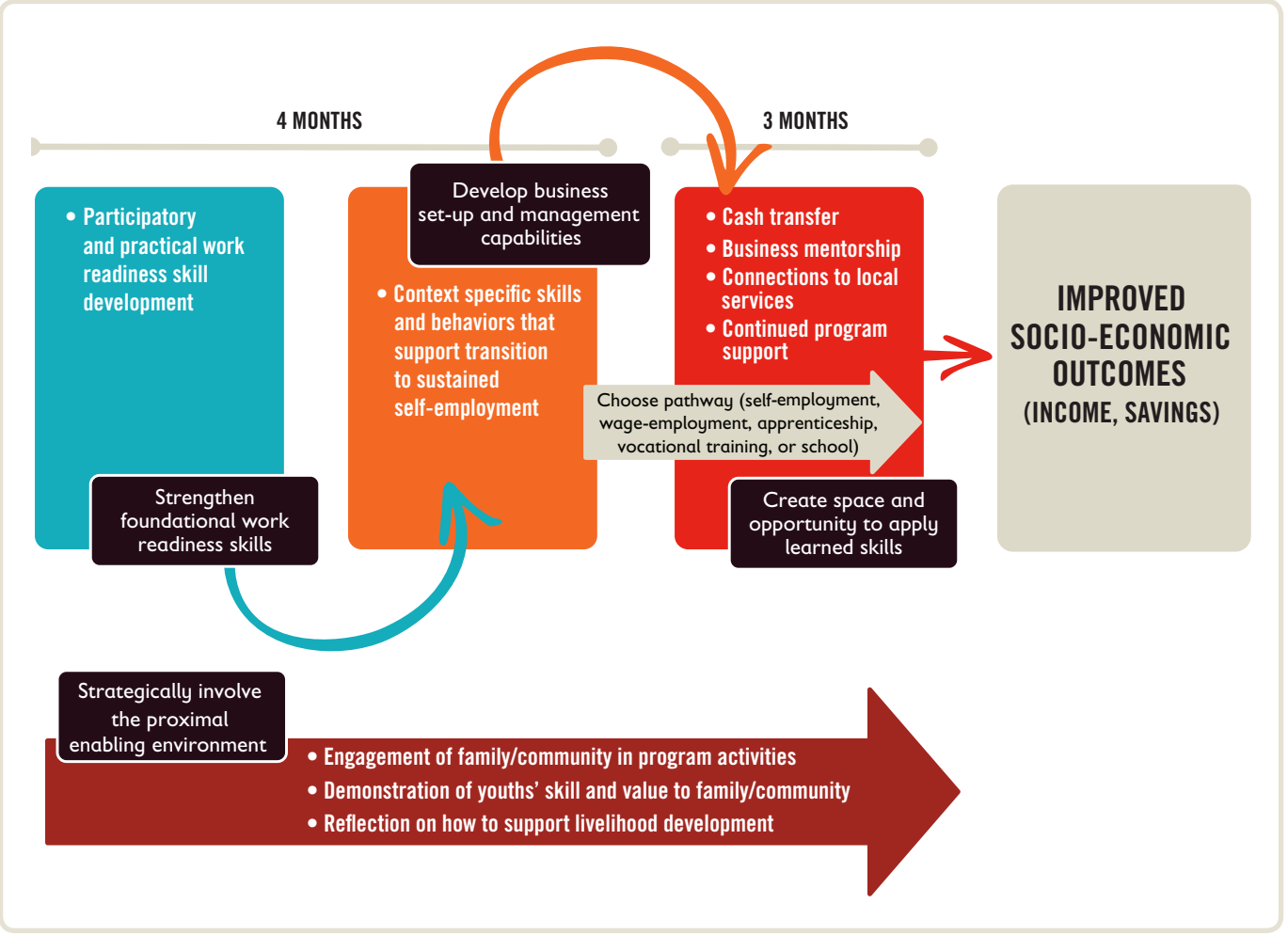

Figure A. Program model for Youth in Action

What is the purpose of this report?

While there is a growing body of research on programming for youth livelihood development, the evidence on the effectiveness of these programs is mixed. Additionally, there are still questions around equity: who benefits from these programs and who is left behind? To address some of these research gaps, Save the Children embedded 32 studies into the six years of implementing YiA. The studies included summative outcomes assessments in each country; the remaining 23 studies were operational research, primarily using mixed methods approaches, to understand the dimensions of youth skill development, family support, mentorship, business development, and gendered barriers to livelihood development. The goal of this report was to synthesize the findings from this formative and summative research in YiA to reflect on the key evidence-based lessons and provide recommendations for future programming and research. To accomplish this we conducted a secondary analysis of the data and reports that emerged from the YiA research.

LESSON 1:
WORK READINESS IS POSSIBLE IN FOUR MONTHS

Since YiA focused on vulnerable, out-of-school youth from especially rural areas in each of the five countries, the program prioritized supporting youth to build functional literacy and numeracy, financial literacy, and transferable life skills. YiA youth made significant and practical improvements in nearly all these work readiness skills in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda, but not in Malawi. Literacy was the one skill area where youth were still lagging after YiA; less than half the youth in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Malawi could read a grade 3 passage with comprehension by the end of the program. One of the issues was that unlike other work readiness skills youth had limited opportunities to practice their literacy foundations after the first four months of dedicated learning. They needed additional literacy instruction with more practical ways to practice their skills in the labor market. Overall, the findings support the YiA hypothesis that youth can build a wide variety of work readiness skills over a condensed time-period – four months of sessions, three sessions/week, and three hours/day. This accelerated programming can be especially effective if coupled with focused and explicit instruction as well as opportunities to engage in practical activities, like saving with a formal institution, that supports future livelihood development.

LESSON 2:
LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT IS ENHANCED BY FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In the rural contexts where YiA was implemented, parents and community members are the gatekeepers to the labor market. Youth are constantly negotiating their reputation in their community for being hard working and responsible. One way in which youth can build this reputation is by participating in programs like YiA, providing a signal to family and community that the youth would make a good employee or that support for a youth-run business would pay off. YiA worked on this by engaging early with communities and clearly explaining its value in reliably supporting youth development. Prior to YiA, families and communities were hesitant to provide youth with substantial financial, material, and/or emotional support for livelihood development. In all the countries, YiA youth reported marked increases in support from their family for livelihood development in the form of space for a business, land, tools, and/or emotional support. They also reported improved support from community business mentors at least nine months after graduating from the program. Additionally, increases in family and community support over the program period were associated with stronger gains in work readiness skills like financial literacy and communication.

LESSON 3:
QUANTITATIVE DATA CAN MASK GENDERED BARRIERS

Disaggregating quantitative data by gender is the first step. It gives us a picture on whether there are differences between male and female youth. However, outcomes data may mask important gendered barriers that influence the livelihood development of male and female youth. For example, while male and female youth reported equivalent levels of and gains in family and community financial, emotional, and material support in the outcomes data, the qualitative data highlighted that the kind of support often differed by gender. Families often provided female youth more limited financial resources than male youth because female youth were viewed as having a smaller payout since they would leave the home once married. Moreover, parents and community members often felt that the mobility of female youth had to be restricted to ensure their safety, resulting in more support for home-based micro-enterprises as compared to support for a wider range of non-home-based business options for male youth. In some communities, this restriction on the type of micro-enterprise limited the income and savings opportunities for female youth.

LESSON 4:
RURAL YOUTH CHOOSE AND CAN SUSTAIN SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Figure B illustrates the employment status of youth before YiA and at least nine months after graduating (pooled data for Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda). We found a marked decrease in the percent of youth wage-employed and unemployed, and a statistically and practically significant increase in youth who were self-employed. This is likely because, while YiA started with five pathways (see Figure A), youth in all five countries overwhelmingly chose self-employment and started a micro-enterprise. The decrease in wage-employment may suggest less stability for some youth. However, wage employment before YiA was primarily seasonal and temporary. This is why YiA views the move to sustained self-employment as progress toward decent work for these youth.

While we were not able to disaggregate income and savings information by which pathway youth selected, the fact that a majority of youth selected the self-employment pathway does suggest that improvements in income and savings are heavily influenced by the sustained self-employment of youth. In Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda, youth were able to establish work that allowed them to individually move above the USD 1.90/day international poverty line, effectively improving their socioeconomic status. Additionally, across Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda, 40 percent of youth reported saving formally or informally before YiA. At least nine months after YiA this increased to 80 percent of youth, with the average youth reporting an almost fivefold increase in the amount saved.

A young man in Uganda works on his masonry business, molding and baking bricks to build houses and retaining walls.

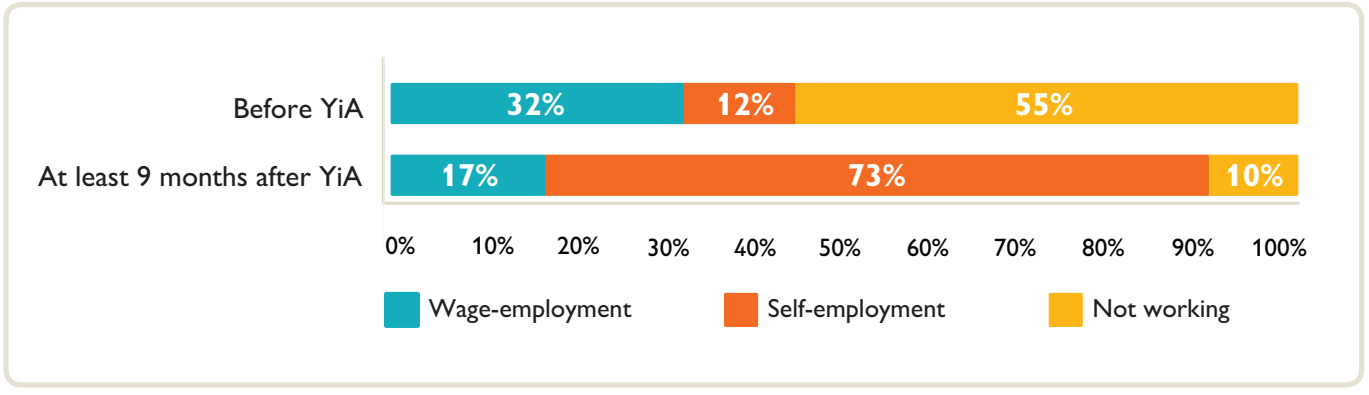

Figure B. Distribution of YiA youth employment status before and at least nine months after YiA

What do these lessons mean for future programming and research?

As we look to build more evidence on holistic skill-building models like YiA, future research should focus on more robust comparison-group prospective studies that follow youth from the start of the program to their socioeconomic development several years after the program. Furthermore, the next round of research needs to move beyond simply disaggregating data by gender. We need to collect reliable and valid mixed methods data on gender norms among youth, in their families, and in their communities. Collecting gender norms data can allow us a more dynamic understanding of the gendered barriers facing male and female youth, and how socioeconomic development varies based on the presence of specific gendered norms.

Nonetheless, a focused, participatory, and activity-based accelerated curriculum can support out-of-school youth from rural contexts build key work readiness skills. Guidance and support – like cash transfers, business mentorship, connections to local services, and business development training – can help youth use the work readiness skills and go through the trial-and-error of starting a micro-enterprise, working with a local artisan, or starting a technical training program. However, to effectively support the translation of work readiness skills into socioeconomic success, we have to complement skill building and guided work/business training with a strategic and explicit focus on the family and community through engagement, demonstration, and reflection strategies. This holistic model, when targeted to marginalized rural youth who have limited access to resources and services, can boost their income earning potential as well as their ability to save for their future.

Majesta lives in a rural community in Western Uganda. She did not finish school because her parents weren't able to pay the fees. Through Youth in Action, Majesta improved her basic numeracy and literacy. She obtained business skills and has learned how to market her mat-making business for larger communities. She also manages a small herd of cattle.

Photo: Paul Bettings

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Hana in her shop in the Amhara region of northern Ethiopia, which she started after completing the Youth in Action program. YiA taught Hana practical business skills and how to be innovative in developing a shop-keeping business.

Photo: Zacharias Abubeker

YOUTH IN ACTION: PROGRAMMING FOR VULNERABLE YOUTH

Hana grew up in a remote village in the Amhara region of northern Ethiopia. She was well on her way to completing 10th grade when her father passed away in 2013. Hana's family could only afford to send one child to school and they made the difficult choice to prioritize her brother's education. As Hana explained, in her community, "girls are only expected to get married or find ways to take care of the family. It's a bitter feeling but I had no choice." Hana started working in the small stall where her family sold coffee and snacks. However, the money her family got from the stall was not sufficient to meet their basic needs. Hana did not feel like she had the skills or opportunities to earn a decent wage in her community; it was hard to define a professional aspiration and vision, resulting in repeated disagreements with her mother. Seeing several of her friends migrate to the Middle East for work, Hana started the process of applying for a work visa. Even though she knew the risks of migrating by herself, she viewed this as her only viable option.

Hana is part of the largest cohort of young people – about 1.8 billion youth (aged 10-24) – in our global history, and like Hana, nine out of 10 youth live in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) (Gupta et al., 2014). This burgeoning youth cohort is especially evident in sub-Saharan Africa, one of the few regions in the world where the youth proportion of the population will continue to grow for the next decade (ILO, 2017; Mcginn et al., 2015). The 10 youngest nations by population age are in sub-Saharan Africa; the median age in five of these countries – Niger, Uganda, Mali, Malawi, and Zambia – is under 16 years, with approximately 60 percent of the population under the age of 25 (Mcginn et al., 2015).

However, as Hana's story illustrates, harnessing this demographic dividend in countries in continental Africa has proved difficult. Youth unemployment rates have remained persistently high for the last decade (ILO, 2017); for every adult of working age who is unemployed, about four youth of working age are also unemployed (ILO, 2017). The issue facing these youth is as much about underemployment and low quality employment as it is about unemployment. For example, the poverty rate among working youth in sub-Saharan Africa is close to 70 percent (ILO, 2016).

In response, over the last two decades, governments and non-governmental organizations have increased livelihood interventions (Kluve et al., 2016) to promote youth entry into decent work: "productive work in which rights are protected, which generates an adequate

income, with adequate social protection" (ILO, 2015, p.61). The evidence on the effectiveness of these livelihood development programs is mixed. One comprehensive review (Olenik, Fawcett, & Boyson, 2013) concluded that there is considerable evidence that labor market interventions have been successful in improving the socioeconomic outcomes for youth, especially in LMICs. However, more recent meta-analyses (Fox & Kaul, 2017; Kluve et al., 2016) have found less convincing evidence: impact evaluations from LMICs demonstrate that "two-thirds had no effect at all, and in many cases, an initial finding of a program effect disappeared after 2-3 years in the follow-up study" (Fox & Kaul, 2017). Additionally, there are still gaps in our understanding of what combination of program activities work, in what context, and for which youth.

Save the Children is addressing these gaps by including formative and summative research in its youth livelihood programs. In this report, Save the Children reflects on six years of research generated through Youth in Action (YiA): a youth education and livelihood development program in five countries – Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda – on the African continent.[1]

There are three focal chapters in this report. The first chapter summarizes the gains in key work readiness skills – literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, and transferable life skills – that YiA targeted. The second chapter provides a review of the evidence of the family and community as an enabling environment, focusing on how the program fostered family and community support and the effect of this on youth skill building. The last chapter extends the findings from the first two chapters, reflecting on youth perceptions of the long-term socioeconomic outcomes – income and savings – several months and years after participating in the program. Before diving into these three chapters, this report provides a brief summary of YiA and the research that the program conducted.

GOALS OF REPORT

- Consolidate findings from six years of formative and summative research in a youth livelihood development program
- Reflect on key evidence-based lessons
- Provide evidence-based recommendations for similar programs

Overview of YiA

Started in 2012, YiA was a six-year program implemented by Save the Children in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. The goal of YiA was to improve the socioeconomic status of 40,000 out-of-school young people (12-18 years), both female and male, in rural Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda. YiA's approach was grounded in three programmatic pillars: Youth Learn, Youth Act, and Youth Connect, and two cross-cutting themes: Participation and Partnerships. The model allowed YiA to support male and female youth to identify and explore livelihood opportunities through non-formal educational and practical learning experiences. For the majority of program participants, these opportunities were grounded in agricultural value chains or agri-business.

Youth Learn: Youth attended YiA in groups of about 30 peers, with multiple groups forming a cohort and multiple cohorts rolling out each year across the five countries. For the first four months, youth were arranged into groups of mixed literacy levels to work on an integrated and accelerated curriculum, titled *Learning for Life* (see Table 1), that involved four modules to prepare youth for the labor market or to return to school.

Diarra lives in Hauts-Bassins, Burkina Faso. By enrolling in YiA, Diarra developed budgeting and marketing skills and learned how to diversify her micro-business. She now has an ever-expanding juice and vegetable business and raises small animals.

Module	Description	Hours
Myself	Youth gain an understanding of their own capacities and interests and are able to draw upon this understanding to set goals and objectives.	45
My Family	Youth identify resources and capacity within their families and strengthen relationships by contributing to family decisions and support systems.	45
My Community	Youth map resources, services, and safe spaces, and strengthen relationships within their communities. Youth contribute to community development by solving a challenge identified collectively.	50
My Business	Youth identify and assess income-generating opportunities in local markets and develop a business plan and financial management strategy to pursue.	65

Table 1. Learning for Life curriculum overview

Youth Act: Next, youth spent about three months building on their existing work readiness skills by starting their own micro-enterprise, taking up an apprenticeship, attending a technical training program, finding decent employment, or returning to school. The program supported youth to identify and explore livelihood opportunities by providing a conditional cash transfer, community-based mentorship, and access to formal and informal financial services. The program also worked to understand specific gendered barriers that affected youth participation and how the community could help address these barriers.

Youth Connect: In addition to strengthening youths' capacities, YiA also worked to foster an enabling environment to support youth to learn from and participate in livelihoods initiatives. YiA did this by working with family and community members to support youth, as well as with community leaders, financial institutions, employers, and local government institutions to create and maintain systems that support youth livelihood development.

YiA youth: Who were they?

YiA targeted socioeconomically and geographically marginalized youth. Nearly all program youth had been out of school for at least five months or had never been to school. Additionally, the YiA communities in the five countries were rural, between a one- to four-hour commute from the nearest urban hub.

Unsurprisingly, in many of the communities there were few, if any, formal labor opportunities. YiA hosted selection events in all YiA communities. While not all youth who attended selection events ended up participating in the program, the selection event data (see Table 2), offers a glimpse into the demographic and socioeconomic status of the average YiA youth.

In Hauts-Bassins, Burkina Faso, youth have the opportunity to learn from each other and develop practical skills for future work opportunities.

	Burkina Faso		Egypt		Ethiopia		Malawi		Uganda[3]	
	Female (n=4,364)	Male (n=5,545)	Female (n=5,328)	Male (n=4,857)	Female (n=5,895)	Male (n=8,494)	Female (n=5,544)	Male (n=6,200)	Female (n=3,511)	Male (n=2,890)
Age of average youth	17		15		17		17		17	
% who had attended school	53	57	75	79	84	82	92		86	87
% who left community for more than a month	9		2	8	25	21	9		23	27
% who had children	25	2	1		8	1	32	4	60	32
% who had electricity in house	38	34	99		20	15	6		6	
% who had at least one mode of transport	97		35	45	4		40	48	26	32
% whose family owned radio, television, refrigerator, and phone	2		11		1		1		1	
% whose family owned or rented land	95		26		91	95	91		81	85
% whose family owned farm animals	94	97	32		77	85	51	54	33	42
% who were working (pre-program)	32		13	53	43	58	22	26	64	

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the average YiA youth from each country[2]

While over half the youth who attended selection events had attended school, nearly all the youth had been out of school for at least five months. Across the five YiA countries, the average youth who attended a selection event was 17 years, except Egypt. In Egypt, YiA focused more strategically on younger adolescents and so the average youth was 15 years. Egypt was also unique from the other four YiA countries when it came to the socioeconomic status of youth and their families; nearly all the youth lived in homes that had electricity and about 11 percent had a radio, television, refrigerator, and phone. Youth in the other four countries had fewer possessions in the home. On the other hand, youth in the other four YiA countries reported a much higher access to land and farm animals compared to youth in Egypt. These factors reflect the fact that the program in Egypt worked in more peri-urban communities as compared to the rural contexts of the program in the other four countries.

Another important trend is around youth migration. In Ethiopia and Uganda one out of every four youth reported leaving their village or community for more than a month at a time in the last year. This was not surprising; in both countries community members described migration to cities (primarily in Uganda) and migration to the Middle East (primarily in Ethiopia) as being a challenge since it took youth away from the village and exposed them to safety and security threats. Youth parenting was another significant demographic factor that differed by country. In Egypt and Ethiopia, very few youth reported having a child. However, in Burkina Faso and Malawi between 25-30 percent of youth reported having a child, while in Uganda this number was close to 45 percent. Additionally, it was mostly female youth in the latter three countries that said they had a child.

Secondary analysis on YiA research

The evidence that we draw on for this report comes from multiple sources, from all five YiA countries, over five and a half years (mid 2012-2018). The individual country study reports are available upon request. Table 3 offers a brief overview of the scope and depth of the research used for the secondary analysis in this report. The studies included two summative surveys –program outcomes and tracer study – conducted with youth to understand the change in work readiness skills and the longer-term socioeconomic outcomes. The rest of the studies are operational research, primarily using qualitative approaches, to understand youth, family, and community perspectives about skill development, family support, mentorship, business development, and gendered barriers to livelihood development.

Upon graduation from YiA, Alaa, Hossam, and Ali partnered to open a barbershop in Assiut Governorate, Upper Egypt

Table 3. Overview of YiA data sources used in report

Study[4]	Description	Method			Sample					Country[5]	Completed	Reference
		Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed	Representative[6]	Purposive[7]	Convenience[8]	Snowball[9]	Sample size[10]			
Program outcomes study	Summative research to understand how work readiness skills change for a sample of youth over program period, and the relationship of these changes to near-term socioeconomic outcomes. Pre-test and post-test survey data collected from 1-2 cohorts in each country once the program was running as implementers intended. No control or comparison group.	✓				✓			804	BF	Feb-18	(D'Sa, Gebru, Scales, & Wu, 2018a)
		✓				✓			798	EG	Nov-17	(D'Sa, Gebru, Scales, & Wu, 2017a)
		✓				✓			634	ET	Nov-17	(D'Sa, Gebru, Scales, & Wu, 2017b)
		✓				✓			579	MA	Jan-18	(D'Sa, Gebru, Scales, & Wu, 2018b)
		✓				✓			688	UG	Aug-17	(D'Sa, Gebru, Scales, & Wu, 2017)
Tracer study[11]	Summative research to understand the socioeconomic outcomes – work status, income, savings – for a sample of youth who had graduated from the program at least nine months previously. Retrospective survey data collected from representative sample of YiA youth from all cohorts.	✓		✓					204	BF	Dec-17	(Leer & D'Sa, 2017a)
		✓		✓					487	EG	Nov-17	(Leer & D'Sa, 2017b)
		✓		✓					382	ET	Nov-17	(Leer & D'Sa, 2017c)
		✓		✓					494	UG	Nov-17	(Leer & D'Sa, 2017d)
Transferable skills study	Operations research with YiA youth, non-YiA youth, parents, community leaders, and program facilitators to understand which transferable life skills youth used in their work and how family and community influenced the use of these skills.		✓			✓			148	MA	Dec-15	D'Sa, Agaba, & Mchenga, 2017)
			✓			✓			115	UG	Dec-15	
Rapid gender assessment	Operations research with YiA youth, parents, and community leaders to identify gendered barriers to participation in YiA and explore how YiA had or could remove these barriers.		✓				✓		71	BF	Nov-16	(Maina & Asencios, 2017)
			✓				✓		144	EG	Jul-16	
			✓				✓		78	MA	May-16	
			✓				✓		48	UG	Nov-16	
Mentorship study	Operations research with YiA youth, business mentors, peer mentors, and community members to understand opportunities and challenges with the business and peer-to-peer mentorship opportunities developed in Uganda.		✓			✓			140	UG	Aug-17	(Bayiga & Du Vent, 2017)

Study[4]	Description	Method			Sample					Country[5]	Completed	Reference
		Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed	Representative[6]	Purposive[7]	Convenience[8]	Snowball[9]	Sample size[10]			
Family support study[12]	Operations research with YiA youth, non-YiA youth, parents, community leaders, and program facilitators about what support youth received from family and community members.			✓		✓			316	EG	Aug-17	(Farahat, 2018)
				✓		✓			203	ET	Jul-17	
				✓		✓			238	MA	Jul-17	
				✓		✓			273	UG	Jan-17	
Enterprise development study	Operations research with YiA youth, non-YiA youth, parents, community leaders, and program facilitators to understand how youth used the cash transfer to develop a business.			✓		✓			316	EG	Aug-17	(Gebrehiwot, 2017)
				✓		✓			203	ET	Jul-17	
				✓		✓			238	MA	Jul-17	
				✓		✓			273	UG	Jan-17	
Quality of facilitation study	Operations research with youth, facilitators, and master trainers to understand facilitation techniques that engaged youth in learning activities, and the related gendered barriers.			✓		✓			176	UG	Nov-14	(Rydberg, 2014)
Gender sensitive programing study	Operations research with youth, parents, and community members to understand how gender sensitive programming affected youth participation in YiA, and community perceptions of youth.			✓		✓			498	EG	Jun-17	(El-Shafei, 2017)
Market assessments	Situation analysis with youth, employers, and local service providers to guide the overall program interventions by understanding labor market within high-potential agricultural value chains in YiA communities.			✓				✓	597	BF	Jun-13	(Dalberg, 2013a)
				✓				✓	472	EG	Aug-13	(Dalberg, 2013b)
				✓				✓	490	ET	May-13	(Dalberg, 2013c)
				✓				✓	417	MA	Jun-13	(Dalberg, 2013d)
				✓				✓	529	UG	Jun-13	(Dalberg, 2013e)
Monitoring and evaluation	Regular monitoring data collected monthly and quarterly by partner and field staff to address the output indicators of the M&E framework.	✓							n/a	All	Ongoing	n/a

Analysis

The secondary analysis in this report took two forms. First, for the quantitative survey data in the program outcomes and tracer studies we re-analyzed the data to understand (a) work readiness skill development over the program period and (b) the long-term socioeconomic improvements. All the models accounted for the differential effects of youth gender, age, and household wealth. Where available and appropriate, the models also controlled for differences in youth work status before YiA, youth parental status, and prior education level. For the qualitative data, we did not conduct a re-analysis of the original data. Instead, we conducted a thematic analysis of the reports that used the original qualitative data. The aims of the thematic analysis were to triangulate the findings from the quantitative data reanalysis where possible and uncover trends in the findings about youth skill development, gendered norms, family support, community support, and socioeconomic development.

YiA did not include a control or comparison group. This meant that we had to be conservative in interpretations of gains. In analyzing the quantitative survey data, we used two barometers to judge the veracity of the findings:

1. **Statistical significance:** In any statistical test, there is the possibility that a finding occurs by chance, due to sampling error or an anachronism in the data. Statistical significance refers to how sure we are that the findings are reliable and did not occur by chance.
2. **Practical significance:** Simply because a finding is statistically significant does not mean it is meaningful. To judge the substantive importance of a finding we used two methods:
    a. Attempted to understand whether or not the finding made sense in the context of the outcome being studied. For example, a one-letter difference between male and female youth in a literacy assessment may be statistically significant but does not have practical meaning when most youth cannot read any words from a passage.
    b. Calculated the effect size (omega-squared) of the difference by time. Effect size allows us to capture the magnitude of gains for youth numerically. Effect sizes of <=0.124 represent a small effect, 0.125-0.254 represent a medium effect, and 0.255 or more represent a large effect (Ferguson, 2009; Olejnik & Algina, 2003).

Limitations

There are three important limitations to this secondary data analysis. First, there were no control or comparison groups in any of the studies conducted in YiA. This meant that while we could understand gains in skills for YiA youth we could not say with full certainty that participating in YiA was the only cause of these gains. Hence, we needed to consider a maturation effect: could youth have more skills and a better socioeconomic outlook after YiA simply because they were older and their age meant that they had more opportunities in the labor market? If there were a maturation effect, we would expect older youth to be earning more prior to YiA. To account for this maturation effect we fit statistical models to understand the relationship between age and youth skills, income, and savings prior to YiA.

Second, except for the literacy and numeracy assessments, all the other data collected in YiA was self-reported by youth, their families, local employers, and community members; that is, there are few objective indicators of gain in work readiness skills and socioeconomic outcomes. The data might therefore not be fully accurate if participants responded either in an overly positive or overly negative way. We balance this limitation by attempting to triangulate the evidence wherever possible with data from the studies that used qualitative research methods.

Third, except for the program outcomes and tracer studies, the other studies used primarily qualitative research methods. Because much of the original qualitative data was in the mother-tongue language of the youth and the amount of interview and focus group data collected over five and a half years was expansive, we did not conduct direct analysis on the qualitative data. Using the study reports as the primary unit of analysis in the thematic analysis added a layer of bias to the findings.

WHAT EVIDENCE DID YIA GENERATE FOR BUILDING WORK READINESS SKILLS?

Photo: Harrison Thane

Wilfred (left) from Central Malawi negotiating with a customer to sell maize that he started growing as part of his YiA micro-enterprise.

Although youth in LMICs are staying in school for longer and more are entering higher education, they often enter the formal labor market underprepared. Two prominent concerns that employers note are: (a) youth often lack the skills that are important for entry-level positions (UNESCO, 2012), and (b) youth are unaware of what is expected of them in wage-employment (J-PAL, 2013). Moreover in many rural areas in LMICs youth are unable to access the formal labor market due to limited formal labor opportunities and services; these youth are more likely to benefit from apprenticeship and entrepreneurship skills that bolster self-employment, skills that are not often taught in formal education (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010; Owualah, 1999; Palmer, 2007).

The response to this skills-gap has been the increased focus on programs that help youth leverage the skills they need to succeed in decent work (Kluve et al., 2016). These skills range from technical training on specific trades to non-technical skills that prepare youth for the work environment. When it comes to non-technical skills there are numerous frameworks and policy papers that discuss the kinds of skills that are important for youth who are preparing for the workforce (Moore, 2015; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2016; USAID, 2012). However, in LMICs non-technical skill-development programs have been the most successful when they target the most vulnerable youth (Kluve et al., 2016) and focus on cross-sectoral skills that are supported by more holistic youth development frameworks (USAID, 2013a, 2013b)

Work readiness skills in YiA

YiA defined three broad categories of non-technical skills that were important for youth livelihood development – academic foundations like literacy and numeracy, financial literacy, and transferable life skills. These three categories of skills were based on the evidence in the extant literature as well as market assessments that were carried out in each community before starting the program.

Literacy and numeracy

YiA targeted youth who had never been to school or had been out of school for more than five months. Foundational academic skills, like being able to read with comprehension

and having a grasp of numeric operations, are critical to livelihood success for youth in LMICs (Butler, Taggart, & Chervin, 2012; Oxenham, Diallo, Katahoire, Petkova-Mwangi, & Sall, 2002). This is especially true for youth who have not had a chance to build these skills through a formal academic process (UNESCO, 2012). Additionally, during the initial market assessments, community members and employers highlighted the importance of basic literacy and numeracy among youth they would look to hire or support in business development. In YiA, literacy was measured through a letter-identification and passage reading exercise while numeracy was assessed through a short test of number identification, basic operations, and word problems.

Financial literacy

Financial capability is a combination of financial literacy and access to savings services. There is considerable evidence that financial capability helps young people build financial assets, which in turn have been associated with improved academic performance, health, future orientation, and livelihood outcomes (Loke, Choi, & Libby, 2015; Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014; McCormick, 2008; YouthSave Initiative, 2015). YiA focused on financial capability by working with youth to build their knowledge about budgeting and saving practices, connecting youth to local financial services, and providing youth with a small cash transfer to develop a livelihood. In this section of the report we focus on the first part of this financial capability, financial literacy. To measure financial literacy, we asked youth to self-report on their knowledge of and comfort with budgeting and saving strategies.

Transferable life skills

A third area of skill development was the focus on transferable life skills: "higher-order cognitive and non-cognitive skills that individuals can use to be successful in different situations in work and in life" (Brown, Rankin, Picon, & Cameron, 2015, p.1). These malleable skills are important across domains of a youths' life (e.g.: academic, social, livelihood, etc.) and can be transferred across domains (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). However, this definition covers a wide range of possible skills. One evidence-based attempt to define these skills (Lippman, Ryberg, Carney, & Moore, 2015) identified five sets of skills that were strongly associated with workforce success for youth: social skills, self-control, positive self-concept, higher-order thinking skills, and communication skills. YiA measured transferable life skills through the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) tool (Scales, 2011): a 58-item self-report measure of youths' internal strengths (social competencies, positive values, and positive identity) and external assets (opportunities and guidance from family, school, peers, and community). YiA also surveyed youths' self-reported comfort communicating and working with others.

Change in work readiness over program period

We re-analyzed the program outcomes study data to understand the change in work readiness skills for youth across five dimensions:

1. Percent of youth who could read with comprehension at a grade 3 level[13]
2. Percent of youth who demonstrated basic number operation skills (adding and subtracting)
3. Percent of youth who reported knowledge of and comfort with budgeting and saving practices
4. Percent of youth who met or exceeded the DAP threshold[14]
5. Percent of youth who reported comfort communicating and working with others

Overall, there were statistically and practically meaningful gains in most of these work readiness outcomes in four of the five countries (see Figure 1). In Burkina Faso, we did not find a statistically and practically meaningful gain in developmental assets and in Uganda we did not find a meaningful gain in literacy. However, for all the other skills, across Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda, we did find meaningful gains over the program period.

Strong academic foundation in Egypt

Youth in Egypt demonstrated very strong gains in literacy and numeracy. While the other four countries focused primarily on youth 14-18 years old (with a small sample of very young adolescents in Uganda), the Egypt program also targeted 12-14 year old youth. Given this focus, the Egypt team tailored the curriculum to emphasize literacy and numeracy. Given this focus, the Egypt team tailored the curriculum to emphasize literacy and numeracy, preparing all youth, but especially the younger youth, to return to school if they desired. This emphasis on literacy and numeracy is evident in the 390 percent and 115 percent increase in the number of youth who could read a grade 3 passage and perform basic numeric operations, respectively. While the average younger youth did demonstrate stronger gains in letter recognition, there were no other statistically and practically meaningful differences in literacy and numeracy gains between younger and older youth. This suggests that the strategic focus on academic skills, a focus driven by the inclusion of younger youth in the Egypt program, was similarly beneficial for both older and younger YiA youth.

Literacy is still lagging

Though we found very strong gains in literacy in Egypt, less than half the youth in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Malawi could read a grade 3 passage with comprehension by the end of the program. This suggests that there is still a lot of work to be done to get youth to a point where they have the functional literacy needed for wage-employment in their community. One of the issues that youth and facilitators noted in the transferable skills and quality of facilitation studies was that, unlike the other skills that youth were able to actively use in the Youth Act phase of the program, youth had limited opportunities to practice their literacy skills after the first four months of dedicated learning. They recommended either continuing literacy instruction past the first four months of learning or finding alternative ways in which youth could regularly practice and build on their literacy foundation.

Access to formal financial services in Ethiopia

Youth in Ethiopia reported a considerable improvement in financial literacy: a 530 percent increase in the number of youth who reported comfort budgeting and saving. However, this increase is likely a reflection of not only their financial literacy but of their financial capability as a whole. Because of the rural nature of YiA and the age of participants, youth in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Malawi, and Uganda were unable to access formal financial services. The primary source of saving money for youth from these communities was through informal Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). However, in Ethiopia, the country team collaborated with a Micro-Finance Institution (MFI) – Amhara Credit and Saving Institute (ACSI) – and all youth were required to open savings accounts with ACSI. Hence, youth received a viable, formal method through which to practice their budgeting and savings knowledge. This is likely why youth in Ethiopia reported the high level of comfort with these financial literacy skills at the end of the program. We triangulated this finding using data from the transferable skills and enterprise development studies. While youth in the samples from all the countries involved in these studies noted the importance of building financial literacy, the sample of youth in Ethiopia highlighted this as one of the most valuable skills they had learned. A consistent trend was that youth were transferring their knowledge to their caregivers, teaching elders how to budget for a business.

Mixed results for transferable life skills

By the end of the program, two out of every three youth reported comfort communicating with others in a work environment. Overall, the gains in work place communication are not surprising. In the transferable skills and quality of facilitation studies, the sample of youth explained that the activity-based learning sessions helped them build these skills rapidly, giving them an opportunity to practice public speaking, role-play how to negotiate, and talk about business ideas with peers and mentors. On the other hand, the gains in developmental assets was mixed. While over 80 percent of youth met or exceeded the DAP threshold by the end of the program in Egypt and Uganda, the gains in Burkina Faso and Malawi were small. The program viewed transferable life skills as a key component of skill building for youth. The mixed results could suggest the need for more targeted instruction and activities around the building of developmental assets among youth in Malawi and Burkina Faso.

Young people attend a learning center in Ntchisi district, Central Malawi, to improve their basic education skills and learn to develop business plans based on the needs of their communities.

Social desirability and sample attrition in Malawi

In Malawi we found statistically significant gains in all the work readiness skills but in most cases these improvements were not practically meaningful; the gains were substantively very small. While there are no definitive explanations for the small gains in Malawi, youth in Malawi reported a very high level of transferable life skills before the program started. This could suggest social desirability bias: when asking participants about behaviors, skills, and perceptions, this bias is the "tendency of some people to respond to items more as a result of their social acceptability than their true feelings" (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003, p.882). Youth who thought that reporting stronger transferable skills made them look better to the interviewer could have been biased to present themselves as more skilled than they were. Moreover, in the program outcomes study in Malawi we were unable to collect post-test data from 27 percent of the youth from whom we collected pretest data. While there were no statistically significant demographic differences between the pretest and post-test sample, it is possible that the youth from whom we were unable to collect post-test data differed on some unobserved (unmeasured) characteristics.

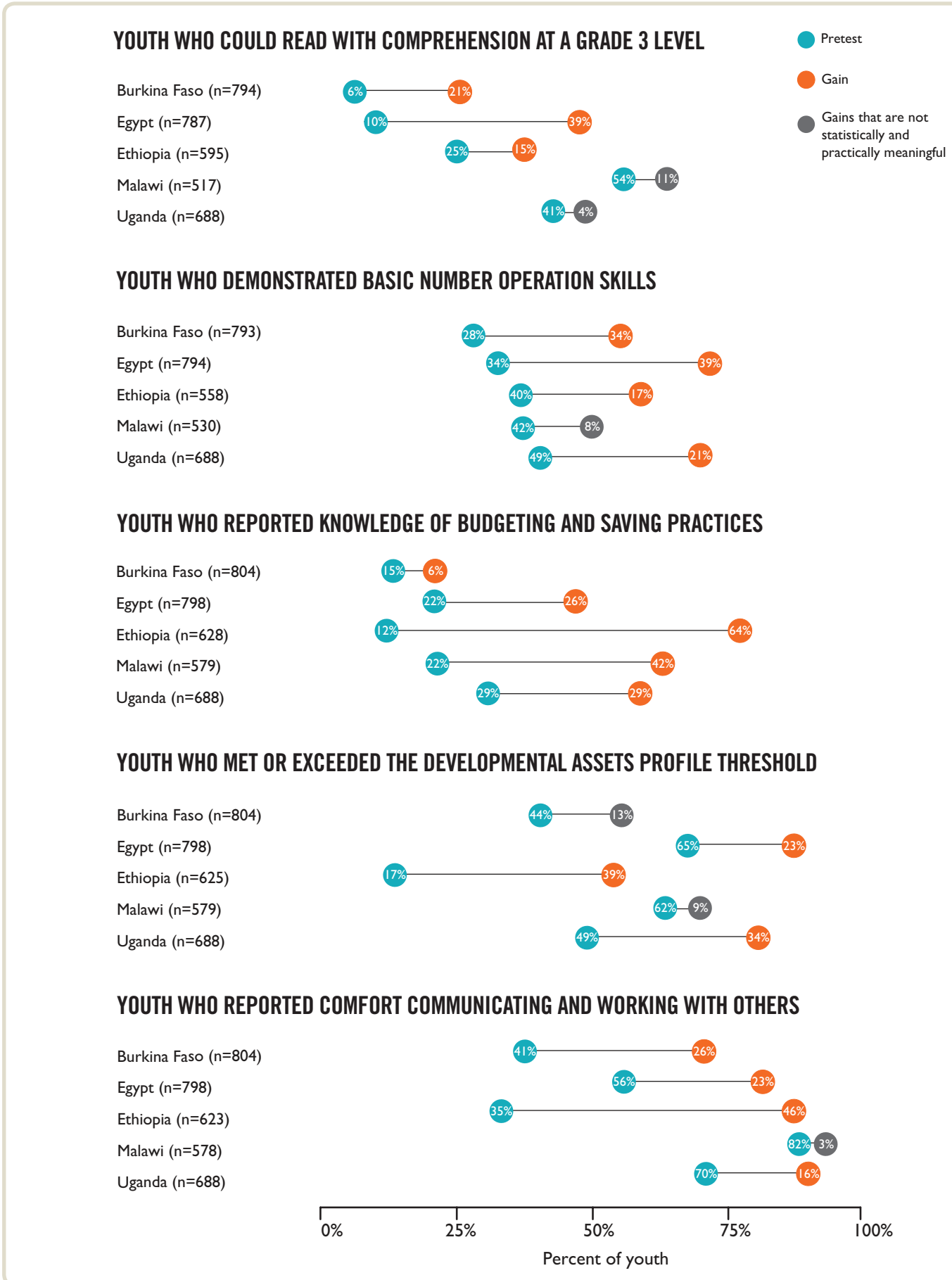


Figure 1. Gains in work readiness skills over program period

Limited gender differences in work readiness skill development

Another aim of this report was to understand if there were statistically and practically meaningful gender differences in the work readiness outcomes. We fit 10 models in each country: five to understand gender differences in work readiness skills before youth attended the program and five to understand gender differences in skills at the end of the program period. All 10 models controlled for age, household wealth, and job status prior to YiA.

Overall, there were very few statistically and practically meaningful differences in the work readiness skills between male and female youth (see Figure 2). Male and female youth in Uganda and Ethiopia started the program with about the same level of work readiness skills and made similar gains over the program period. In Egypt and Malawi, the average male youth started YiA with an advantage in his financial literacy and communication skills when compared to his female counterpart. The average male youth in Egypt also started YiA with a higher level of numeracy, while the average male youth in Burkina Faso reported a higher level of developmental assets before the program started. However, across all five countries there were no differences in the five work readiness skills at the end of the program period.

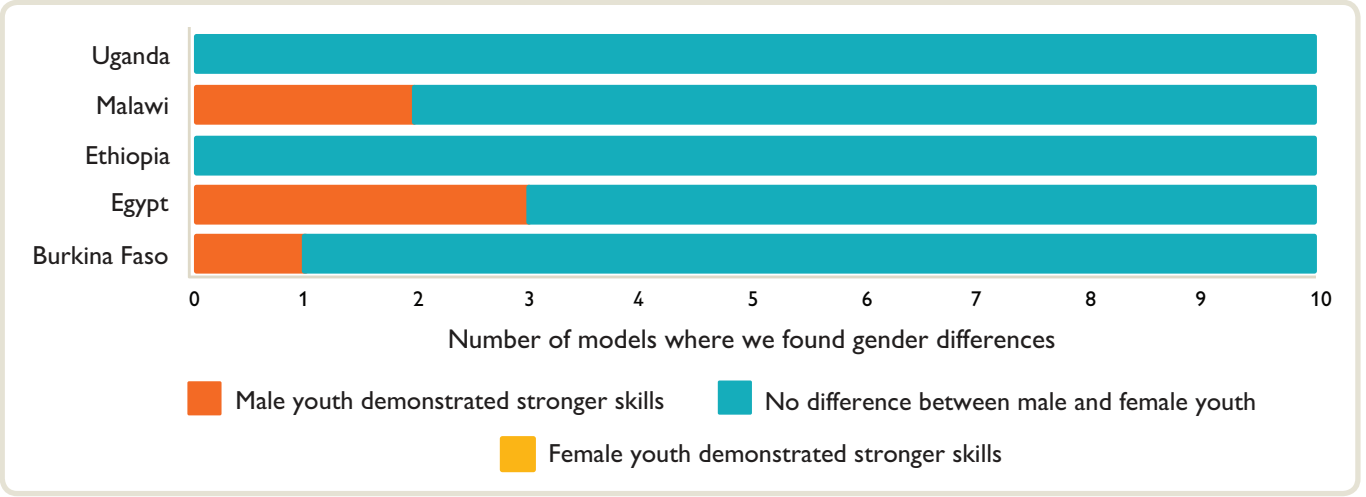


Figure 2. Number of work readiness skills for which there were statistically and practically meaningful gender differences in favor of males or females before they started YiA and in gains over program period

Given prior research that highlighted the difference between male and female youth in terms of work readiness skills (Moore, 2015; Pereznieto, Marcus, Maclure, Archer, & Mdee, 2018; Taggart, 2012; UNESCO, 2012) YiA expected to see more differences between male and female youth, especially before they started the program. However, YiA youth came from extremely rural communities that had limited access to services. All YiA youth had also been out of school or had never been to school. This meant that male and female youth started from a similarly marginalized position and the gendered nature of access to education and markets may not have had a marked impact on the work readiness development of male and female youth. Additionally, YiA had an equity impact on skills gains for female youth. It helped close the gap for female youth in Burkina Faso, Egypt, and Malawi in the few skills where they were lagging behind their male counterparts.

Mohammed lives in Assiut Governorate, Upper Egypt. He left school at age 12 to help support his family. With limited education and trade skills, Mohammed struggled to find decent, well-paying jobs in construction. After enrolling in Youth in Action, Mohammed started an apprenticeship with a construction company which led to job and steady income.

Roset lives in a small community in rural Uganda and had limited access to education growing up. Through YiA, she learned how to effectively harvest and market her produce.

Photo: Paul Bettings

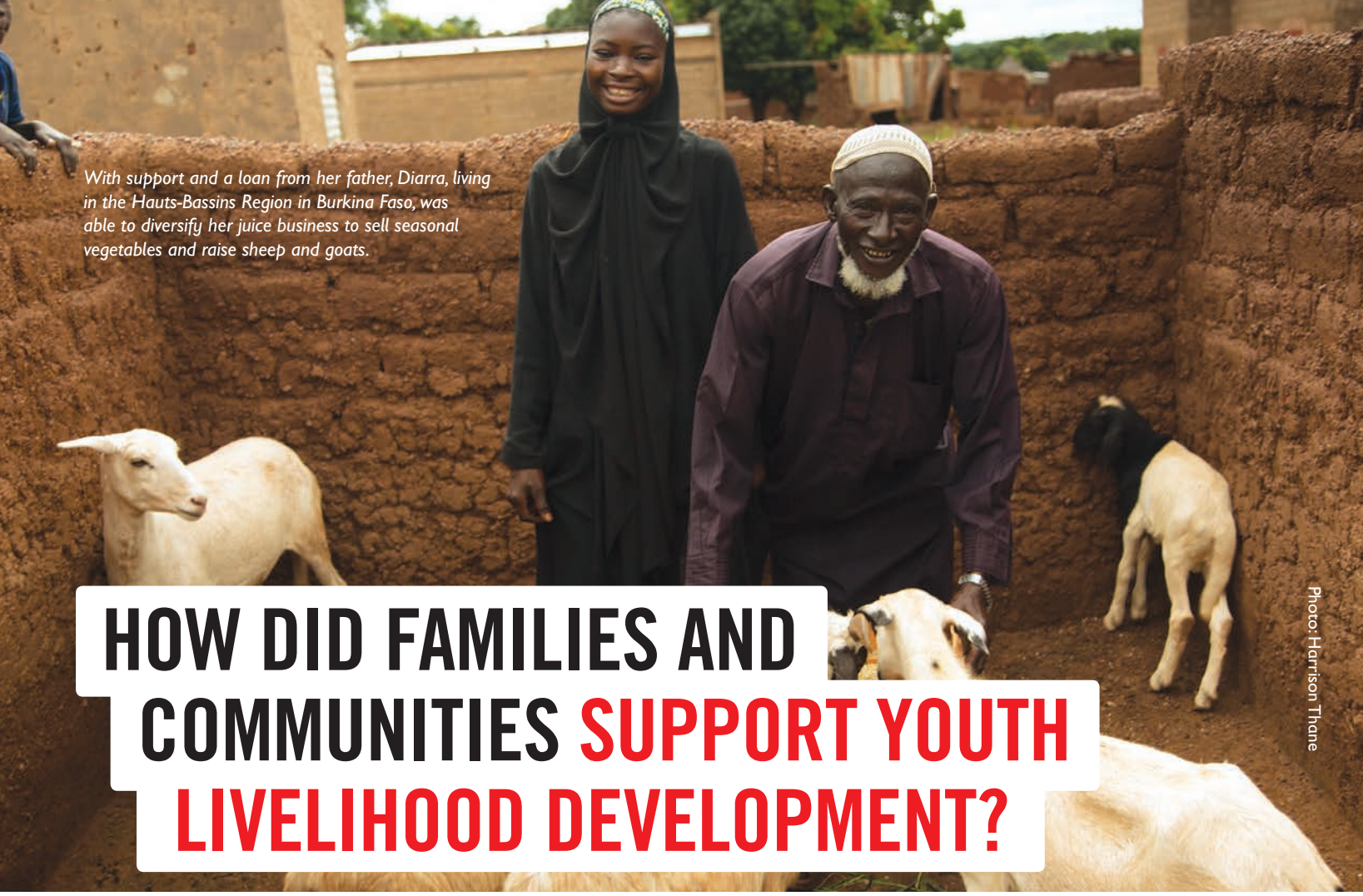
Bottom line: Focus on the building blocks of youth development

Since YiA focused on vulnerable, out-of-school youth from especially rural areas in each of the five countries, the program felt it was important to support youth to build some of the foundational skills that are important for livelihood development. The studies that YiA conducted demonstrated that youth made significant and practical improvements in most of these skills in four of the five YiA countries.

There are four key lessons from this skill-building review:

1. The findings support the YiA hypothesis that we can help youth build a wide variety of these foundational work readiness skills over a condensed time-period – four months of sessions, three sessions/week, and three hours/day.
2. Providing dedicated and intensive literacy and numeracy instruction, like what was provided in Egypt, can be effective in helping youth develop key academic skills in a short period.
3. However, while the four months of learning can help jump start youth literacy development, youth need more dedicated literacy instruction to get to a point where they can read with comprehension and use their literacy skills in the labor market effectively.
4. Experiential learning and connections to structured formal services, like youth received through their ACSI savings accounts in Ethiopia, are an effective way in which to support youth building key work readiness skills.

Increases in youths' work readiness skills are valuable in themselves in terms of promoting overall positive youth development. The fact that the increase in work readiness outcomes were demonstrated in the relatively short-term suggests that the full potential economic opportunity-enhancing effect of YiA may be more effective over the long-term, as youth start using these skills in the labor market.



With support and a loan from her father, Diarra, living in the Hauts-Bassins Region in Burkina Faso, was able to diversify her juice business to sell seasonal vegetables and raise sheep and goats.

Photo: Harrison Thane

HOW DID FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES SUPPORT YOUTH LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT?

The enabling environment references the labor market norms and values in the country, the policy, legal, and regulatory framework, financial and administrative structures, and organizations that promote, regulate, and manage the labor market structure (Clemensson & Christensen, 2010). While this enabling environment provides the national-level framework that supports youth livelihood development, we also need to consider the closer, more proximal settings and relationships that support youth to develop their professional identity and find decent work. The enabling environment that YiA focused on was the closer relationships and settings surrounding youth: the peers, families, and community members that support youth to develop and leverage the skills they need, as well as the local norms, policies, and government institutions that determine the ways in which youth engage in this development.

The focus on the enabling environment emerged from a critique of the skill building in youth livelihood development; these programs often view youth as primarily individualistic agents (Dejaeghere & Baxter, 2014; Flynn, Mader, Oosterom, & Ripoll, 2017). This individual-level focus does not sufficiently recognize, or program for, the ways in which peer groups, families, immediate communities, and local governments and institutions act upon youth agency (Flynn et al., 2017; Youth Business International, 2016). In order to strengthen the impact of skill-building interventions we need to focus on how the proximal enabling environment affects youth livelihood development. Focusing strategically on this proximal enabling environment can have a positive impact on livelihood outcomes for youth, especially in rural communities in LMICs (Dejaeghere & Baxter, 2014; France, Pelka, Kirchner, & Youth Business International & BG Group, 2016; Youth Policy Labs, 2015). Several policy documents also point out the importance of targeting the social embeddedness of youth in livelihood development programming (ILO, 2015; Olenik et al., 2013; UNDP, 2014). But programs have yet to catch up (Youth Policy Labs, 2015).

Targeting the proximal enabling environment in YiA

YiA encouraged positive shifts in the proximal enabling environment through three strategies –engagement, demonstration, and reflection (see Figure 3). YiA designed this three-pronged approach to simultaneously improve youths' perceptions of their environments, improve adults' perceptions of youth, and strengthen relationships and networks that would allow youth to enter and thrive in the labor market.

Figure 3. Description of the engagement, demonstration, and reflection strategies used by YiA to target the proximal enabling environment

Teenage girls participate in a business activity at a learning center in Assiut Governorate, Upper Egypt.

Photo: Joseph Raot

Evidence on the effect of the proximal enabling environment

One of the primary trends through multiple studies – program outcomes, tracer, transferable skills, and family support studies – was that prior to program implementation families and communities struggled to provide youth with substantial financial, material, and/or emotional support for livelihood development. This was especially concerning since nearly 95 percent of youth in all five program outcomes studies reported that they did not have sufficient access to material assets, credit services, or savings to develop a decent business prior to their engagement with YiA.

Family and community are gatekeepers for youth livelihood development

A theme in the transferable skills studies and rapid gender assessments was that family and community members are the gatekeepers for youth engagement in the labor market. However, these gatekeepers often viewed youth as lazy and not dependable. In Uganda, older community members commented that the current generation of youth were largely entitled, disrespectful, and did not heed the advice of elders: "Young people today lack determination; they take things for granted. Whenever they get money they think of spending it… And when you try to direct them, they do not understand. It is a generation that is wasted" (D'Sa, Agaba, et al., 2017). This perception had a direct effect on whether community members helped youth gain market-relevant skills, meet self-employment goals, or find work. As an employer from Malawi explained, "How can you employ someone who is known for being weak and not determined? To get employed, you need to show the employer that you can do [the work that they want them to do]" and "lazy youth are not good employees" (D'Sa, Agaba, et al., 2017).

Youth attempted to counter this perception by building a reputation for themselves in their community as hard working and responsible. The transferable skills study revealed that youth in Malawi and Uganda tried to build this reputation in three ways: using work and free time appropriately, getting additional training, and demonstrating independence. These strategies were signals to community members that a youth would make a good employee or that support for a youth-run business would pay off. Indeed, youth believed that attending YiA reassigned value to them; because they had left school, they held a perception that adults viewed them as "troublemakers" or "slackers." Attending YiA allowed them to renegotiate this reputation. One caregiver from Uganda provided the following explanation: "…my neighbor's daughter, she messed around with some [motorcycle taxi] man and she got pregnant… At least now when you see her going to [YiA], you know that maybe she can do something for her family" (D'Sa, Agaba, et al., 2017).

Family and community support predicted skill building in YiA

The qualitative evidence presented above can be triangulated with quantitative data collected in the program outcomes studies. Using 13 (of 58) items from the DAP survey, we created a measure of family and community support focused on youth perceptions of family and community help, safety, and trust. In all the YiA countries youth who reported high levels of this family and community support before the program also reported higher levels of financial literacy, internal assets (e.g. social competencies, positive values, and positive identity), and communication skills.

Youth who had strong family and community support before YiA also reported higher work readiness skill levels before YiA.

There was no meaningful relationship between pre-YiA levels of support and pre-YiA levels of literacy and numeracy. There are two related explanations for this finding. First, the early market assessments highlighted the low levels of literacy in the YiA communities. It is likely that family and community members did not feel comfortable supporting youth in their literacy and numeracy acquisition because of their own challenges with these skills. Second, the support measure in this secondary analysis referred to generic support, not specific skill-based support. Research from the global early grades reading movement highlights the importance of specific home/family literacy strategies in supporting literacy acquisition (Dowd et al., 2017). It is possible that if we looked at the relationship between a measure of literacy and numeracy skill support and these academic outcomes we would find a positive relationship.

Youth who had limited family and community support before YiA gained more work readiness skills over the program period.

Photo: Paul Bettings

Youth in rural Uganda present their business plans to a group of family members, community leaders, and local employers.

Levels of family and community support before YiA were negatively associated with gains in financial literacy, internal assets, and communication skills. This means that youth who had lower levels of family and community support prior to YiA were actually able to gain more in terms of work readiness skills through the program. If we view the levels of family and community support as an equity factor, this finding highlights the fact that skill building (except literacy and numeracy) in YiA worked best for the youth who needed it the most, the youth with the lowest levels of family and community support.

Increases in family and community support over program period was associated with larger gains in work readiness skills.

Lastly, gains in family and community support over the program period were positively associated with gains in financial literacy, internal assets, and communication skills. This could be a reflection of the "signaling effect" of participating in livelihood programs like YiA. Youth who participated in YiA sent a signal to their family and community that they were responsible and dedicated; this could have resulted in additional support for skill building during the program from family and community members.

Change in family and community support over program period, and beyond

The tracer studies provide a longer-term picture of youths' perspectives of how YiA increased family and community support. These studies were conducted with a representative sample of youth who had graduated from the program at least nine months ago, with the average youth having been out of the program for 20 months.

In terms of monetary support, in Egypt and Ethiopia one in four youth reported receiving money from their family before YiA to start or grow a business. Several months after graduating from YiA more than half the youth reported receiving some kind of monetary support from their families. In Burkina Faso and Uganda, however, the percent of youth who reported receiving money from their family to support their work remained unchanged. While the improvements in monetary support were mixed across the four tracer study countries, we found marked improvements in three other types of support: material and emotional support from family, and work support from a community mentor. These findings are illustrated in Figure 4 using effect size units (see Analysis sub section).

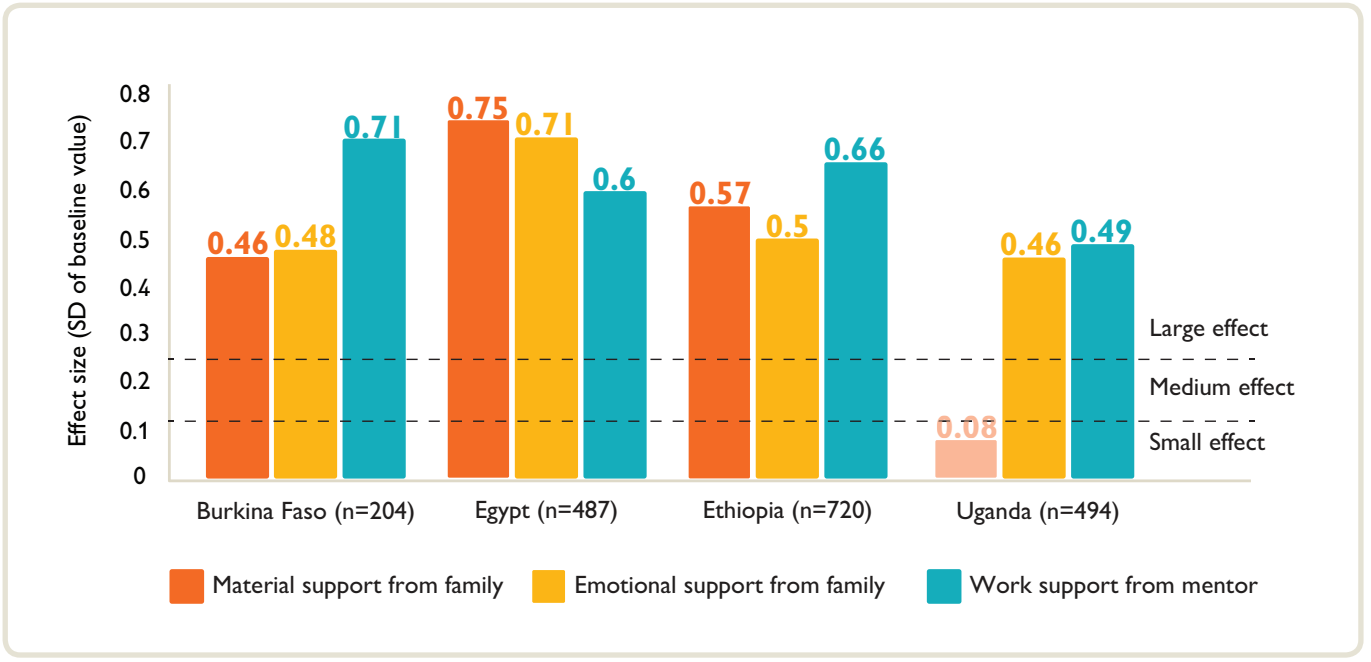


Figure 4. Effect sizes for gains in family material and emotional support, and mentor work support (lighter shades represent gains that are not statistically and practically meaningful)

Except for Uganda, youth in Burkina Faso, Egypt, and Ethiopia reported marked increases in their families' contribution of material supports – land, space, tools/materials, animals. The effect size of the gains was large, between 0.46-0.75. The average youth reported receiving 0.5-1 additional material supports from their family 20 months after graduating from YiA.

The same was true for emotional support. We asked youth whether their family helped them learn new skills, supported their work ideas, gave them sufficient time to finish their work, and helped them manage their business. In the tracer studies, the average youth reported substantive improvements 20 months after graduating from the program, as compared to their situation before YiA. The effect size of the gains in emotional support was also large, between 0.46-0.71, with the average youth reporting receiving 0.5-1 additional emotional supports from their family.

In the tracer studies, we also asked youth about support that they received from a community member who acted as a work/business mentor. YiA defined support as receiving information about market resources, emotional support through work challenges, help in building work confidence, instruction on new skills, and advice about work issues. Fourty-two percent of youth reported having a mentor before starting YiA. At least nine months after graduating from the program, almost 80 percent of youth still had a business mentor. Additionally, in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda youth reported an increase of 1-1.5 support behaviors from their mentor, a large effect size of 0.49-0.71 (see Figure 4).

Though YiA, Khaled began a micro-enterprise working with livestock. He invested his profits in a motorized tricycle and started a delivery business in Assiut Governorate, Upper Egypt.

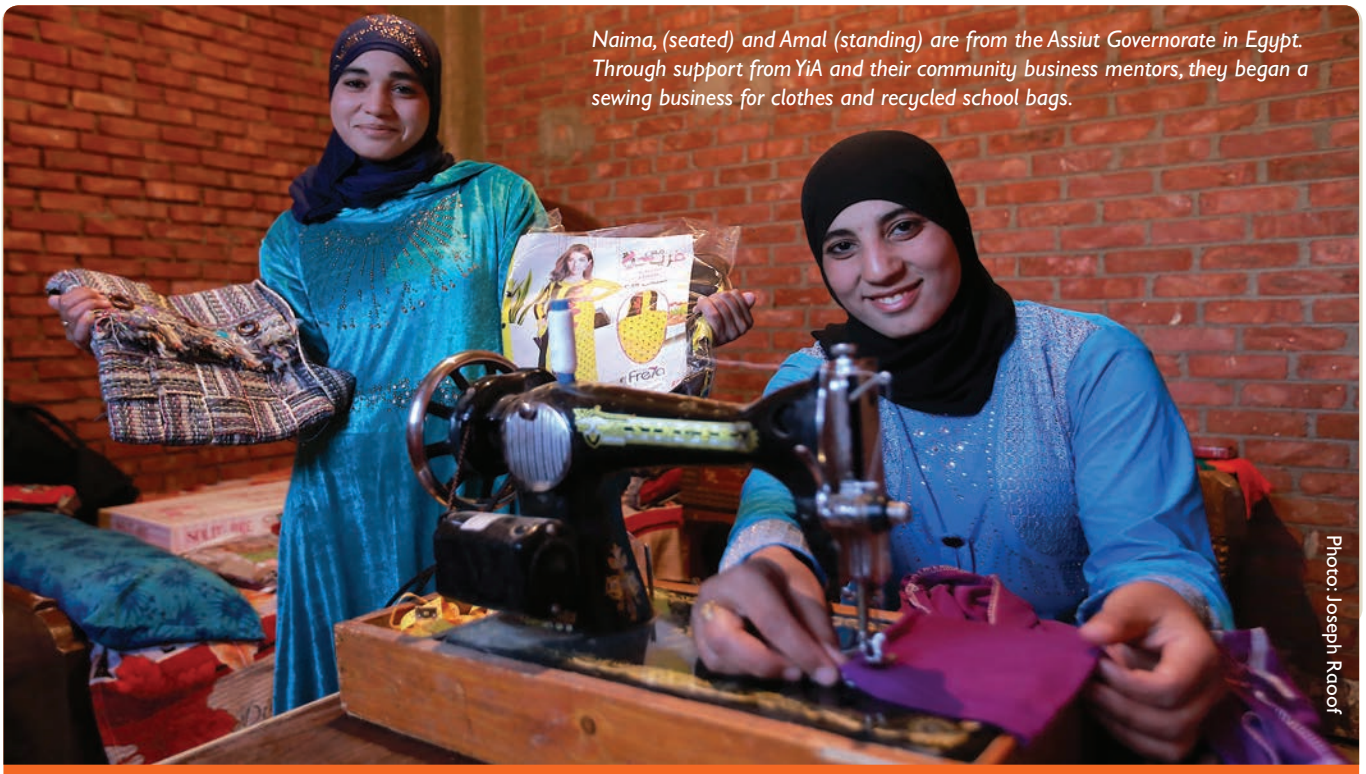
Gendered barriers in the enabling environment

In the data from the tracer studies, male and female youth in all the YiA countries reported approximately equivalent amounts of support from family members and their community. However, the findings from the tracer studies mask gendered differences in the kinds of support that youth received.

In three different studies – family support, gender sensitive programming, and rapid gender assessments – family and community members noted that they were more likely to financially support male youth with larger monetary transfers, a difference that they explained by referencing gender norms in their community. For example, in Burkina Faso and Egypt parents noted that male youth were expected to earn wages; they were viewed as the long-term breadwinners for their families. On the other hand, female youth were expected to get married and join someone else's family; financially investing in the livelihood development of female youth was viewed as having a smaller payout for the family. While there were no meaningful differences in the number of male and female youth who received financial support from their families, the qualitative data suggests that there were marked differences in the amount of financial support that male and female youth received.

Additionally, youth reported gendered differences in the types of material and emotional support that they received from family members. For example, in Malawi, family members noted more enthusiasm and excitement for the business ventures of male youth as compared to female youth. This translated into families reporting more active ways of supporting male youths' economic activities. With female youth, families tended toward moral support and advice; tangible physical support for female youth was only focused on home-based micro-enterprises that another family member could take up if the daughter married and left the home.

Gendered barriers related to mobility and safety affected the support for home-based micro-enterprise among female youth. Parents and community members who participated in the rapid gender assessments explained that the mobility of female youth was often restricted to ensure their safety. Female youth regularly had to ask for permission from an older male to work outside the home, travel at night, or stay late to complete work, especially in Burkina Faso and Egypt. The interrelated gendered barriers of mobility and safety did not affect only youth; they also affected the community facilitators and mentors who supported youth, as highlighted in the mentorship studies. Since both female youth and female mentors were more likely to stay close to their homes due to security concerns, it was often difficult for female youth to meet with their mentors. Mountainous places like Ntoroko in Uganda, Gidan and Gubalafto in Ethiopia, and Ntchichi in Malawi were especially affected by this female mentor mobility issue. Thus, most female youth were left with the option of working with male mentors who were mobile. However, the mentorship study in Uganda found that community members had negative perceptions of cross-gender mentoring relationships. Parents and spouses of female youth were more comfortable with their children or wives working with female mentors. Where this was not possible, most of the female youth ended the mentorship relationships.



Naima, (seated) and Amal (standing) are from the Assiut Governorate in Egypt. Through support from YiA and their community business mentors, they began a sewing business for clothes and recycled school bags.

Photo: Joseph Raoof

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT FOR FEMALE YOUTH: EGYPT

In the family support study and rapid gender assessment, families in Egypt provided examples of how engagement with YiA helped change their perceptions of support for the livelihood development of female youth. Parents explained that prior to YiA they were more likely to consider getting their daughters married as early as possible to reduce the number of dependents at home. However, as female youth began to set up viable micro-enterprises in and around the home, parents started to perceive these female youth as an asset to the family. One father in Al Sharqia asserted: "Our girls turned from takers to givers." This perception change was accompanied by a reported change in the kinds of material and emotional support family members provided to female youth in Egypt. Female family members were more likely to take on additional household tasks for female youth participating in YiA or those trying to start a business, as compared to male youth. Additionally, adults or siblings reported taking on additional income generating activities to replace lost income during the youths' participation in YiA or in the period where they were still trying to establish their micro-enterprise.

This support extended beyond the family to the community as well. Youth and parents from Egypt described how community members had become more supportive of female enterprises after YiA entered their community. Community members were noted as actively helping female youth start and expand a small business. For example, in Al Sharqia, a female youth explained: "…neighbors are the ones who suggested that [the female youth] start a cleaning supplies business because it is something that is not available in the neighborhood." Community members would become clients for these female youth businesses as long as their prices were competitive. Community support for female youths' micro-enterprises helped to elevate the status of female youth in the community.

Nevertheless, the support from families and communities was mediated by the restrictions on mobility for female youth. A trend in the caregiver's description was that they provided more defined physical and emotional support to female youth in setting up a home-based business and support to male youth for an out-of-home business. They justified this difference by explaining that unlike a male youth who is able to find work outside the home, a female youth may have a harder time working outside the home due to mobility limitations. In order to assist their daughters' micro-enterprises, families volunteered space in their homes, labor support in the home, and reduction of chores.

Bottom line: Leverage the enabling environment explicitly and strategically to support youth

In the rural contexts where YiA was implemented, parents and community members are the gatekeepers for youth building labor market skills, finding decent work, or starting a business. The important mechanism here is that of reputation; youth are constantly negotiating their reputation in their community for being hard working and responsible, a reputation that is linked to family and community members supporting youth livelihood development. One way in which youth can build this reputation is by participating in programs like YiA. Indeed, the reputation of the program in which youth are participating signals to family and community members the change in reputation for the youth. Hence, it is critical for programs to engage early with communities to build a strong reputation as being a valuable program for youth that can reliably support their development. In all the YiA countries youth who participated in YiA reported increased support from their family for livelihood development in the form of space for a business, land, tools, and/or emotional support.

There are three key research lessons from these findings:

1. YiA was able to generate considerable evidence on the effect of family and community support on skill building for youth. However, the program still does not have information on the moderating effect that family and community support plays in the relationship between skill-building and socioeconomic success for youth. As a field, we need further exploration into the role that support plays in the black box of youth livelihood development.
2. The focus on the proximal enabling environment in YiA emerged because of formative research conducted early in the program. Future livelihood development programs in similar contexts need to incorporate a more strategic and explicit focus on family and community engagement, demonstration, and reflection, a focus that can be built into an impact evaluation to understand the value add of the proximal enabling environment over the long term.
3. Collecting quantitative survey data on the level of family and community support can mask the gendered differences in the types and kinds of support that youth receive. Future research should design more mixed methods approaches to collect information on the levels of and kinds of support that youth receive, and how these change because of involvement with a program like YiA.

Photo: Harrison Thane

Azmera from Raya Kobo Woreda, Ethiopia had planned to travel to the Middle East for work, when YiA came to her village. Her father encouraged her to enroll in the program, and soon she developed a successful weaving business, working with a mentor and her father.

After conducting a market assessment, Norhan discovered a need for school backpacks, pencil cases, and handbags in her community in Assiut Governorate, Upper Egypt. She used social media to market her products and create new designs.

Photo: Joseph Raot

WHAT WAS THE LONGER-TERM PERCEIVED SOCIOECONOMIC EFFECT OF YIA?

When YiA first launched, youth could pick one of five pathways after they completed the first four months of learning: start a micro-enterprise, take up an apprenticeship, attend a technical training program, find decent employment, or return to school. The expectation was that there would be a mix of pathways in each country with youth opting for the pathway that best suited their needs. The early market assessments highlighted the viability of each pathway in each country.

Photo: Harrison Thane

Young mothers in rural areas of Burkina Faso are able to attend YiA with their children, overcoming the obstacle of finding childcare while they are in learning centers.

Unintended prioritization of self-employment in YiA

However, after the first few months of implementation, YiA found that a five-pathway model was not viable in all countries; there were few employment opportunities in the rural YiA communities and few skilled artisans/exerts who had the flexibility to take on youth for an apprenticeship. Additionally, attending vocational training centers often meant youth had to leave their villages; the prohibitive costs and requirements for minor youth to migrate within the country made this pathway restrictive. Youth perceived setting up a micro-enterprise as a rewarding and empowering livelihood opportunity since they got direct access to the cash disbursement from the program and had more agency in the decisions on how to spend that money. See Table 4 for the distribution of youth across the five pathways in each YiA country.

	Burkina Faso		Egypt		Ethiopia		Malawi		Uganda	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Self-employment	72%	74%	98%	97%	100%	100%	86%	79%	83%	69%
Apprenticeship	28%	26%	<1%	<1%	n/a		8%	13%	14%	26%
Vocational Training	n/a		<1%	<1%	n/a		6%	7%	<1%	1%
Return to School	n/a		<1%	<1%	n/a		<1%	<1%	3%	4%
Wage-employment	n/a		<1%	<1%	n/a		n/a		n/a	

Table 4. Distribution of YiA youth by pathway in each YiA country[15]

Model of guided sustained self-employment

Fifty-three percent of the population in low-income countries and 36 percent in middle-income countries are self-employed, mainly in agriculture (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Self-employment is a heterogeneous term defined as an own-account worker falling on a spectrum characterized by: 1) constrained self-employment (Fields, 2014), 2) sustained self-employment and 3) transformational entrepreneurship (Fields, 2014; World Bank, 2013). See Figure 5.

Photo: Joseph Raot

Dalia left school to help on her family's farm. She was able to continue her learning through YiA and her literacy and numeracy abilities improved, as did her desire to remain in school after graduating from the program.

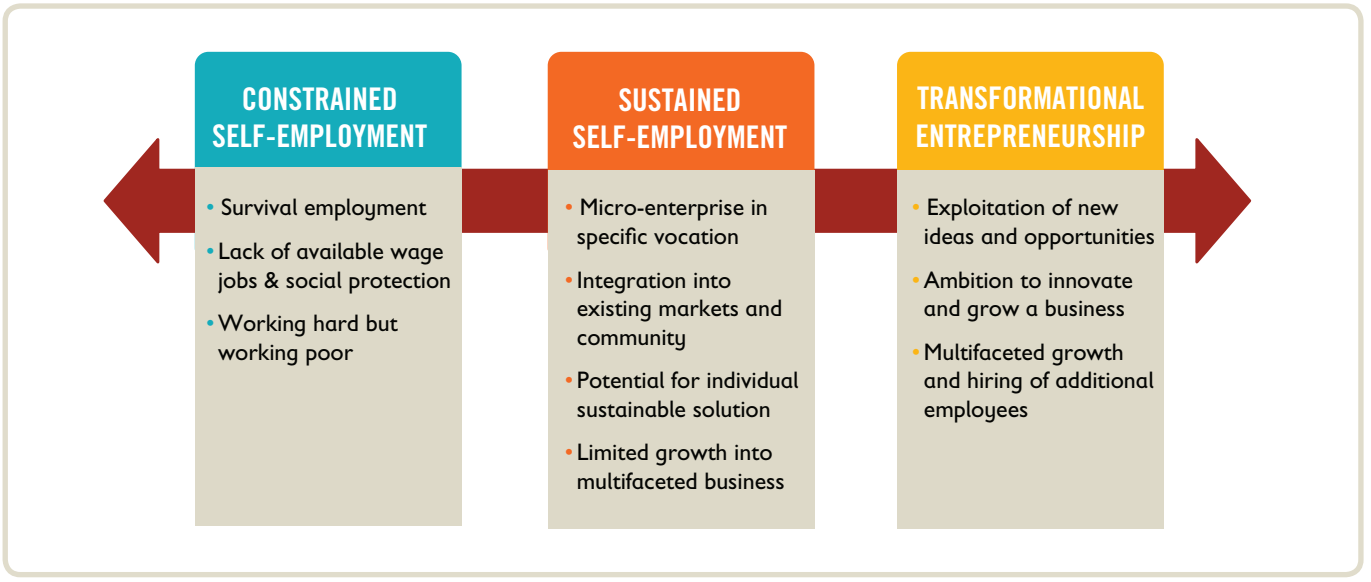


Figure 5. Spectrum of self-employment

While youth were still given the opportunity to select one of the other pathways, a major focus of YiA became supporting youth in setting up a micro-enterprise. YiA did not expect the average youth to attain transformational entrepreneurship through the program. The aim of building young people's self-employment capabilities in YiA was to support youth from situations of unemployment, underemployment, or constrained self-employment to move to integrated self-employment that could be sustained, thereby improving their socioeconomic status. YiA drew on the extant literature (Master, Schulker, Grimm, & Xenakis, 2017; Silander, Chavez-Reilly, & Weinstein, 2015; World Bank, 2013) around entrepreneurship education and training (EET) to design a model to guide youth toward sustained self-employment (see Figure 6).

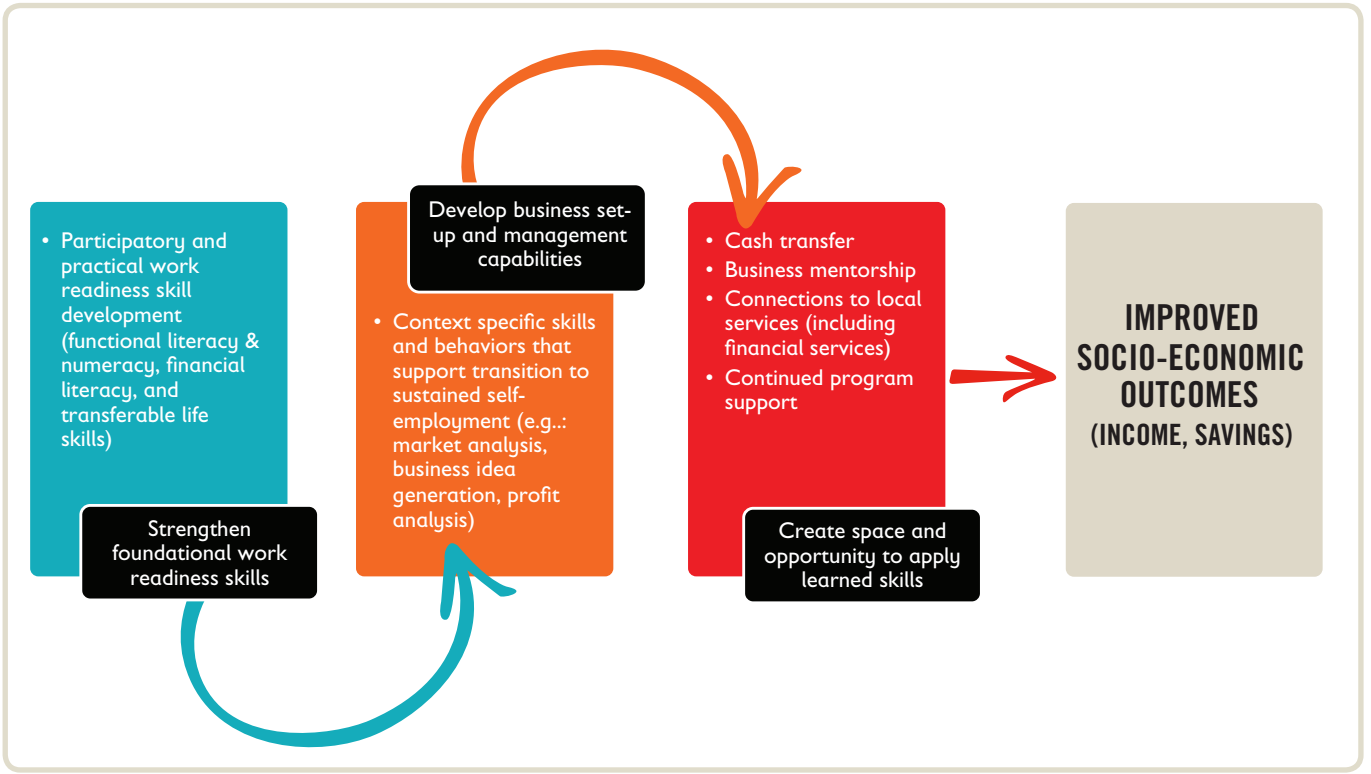


Figure 6. Phases of guided sustained self-employment promotion in YiA

Strengthen foundational work readiness skills

The first phase of supporting youth to move to sustained self-employment was to help youth strengthen some of the foundational work readiness skills that the program identified as important for youth livelihood development in YiA communities: functional literacy and numeracy, financial literacy, and transferable life skills. As we discussed in the chapter above, we found a meaningful improvement in these work readiness skills in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda, but not in Malawi.

Develop youth business planning and management capabilities

Another important aspect of supporting sustained self-employment was building youth capacity to plan and manage a micro-enterprise. Youth were introduced to diverse agricultural value chains, including non-farming opportunities. YiA developed a business planning and management overview for youth with capabilities[16] tailored to match the needs of youth starting a micro-enterprise (see Table 5).

Business planning and management capabilities	Description
Initiative & planning	Establish business and financial plans, manage time and money effectively, adapt plans to meet goals
Critical thinking & problem-solving	Synthesize/interpret information and draw conclusion, analyze and evaluate different points of view
Future orientation	Set goals for future, prioritize long-term success, plan for a time horizon greater than one year
Communication & collaboration	Articulate ideas effectively to individuals and groups, respect alternative points of view, work effectively in groups
Opportunity recognition	Assess market to identify opportunities, identify problems as opportunities
Creativity & innovation	Think of new ideas and solutions, try new ideas and experiment
Positive self-concept	Self-confidence and self-reflect, value self and work/business

Table 5. Illustrative business planning & management capabilities targeted in YiA

To understand whether and how youth were able to develop these capabilities, in the tracer studies we surveyed knowledge of and comfort with business planning and management. The average YiA youth in the four countries where we conducted the tracer studies reported comfort with about a third of the capabilities before YiA (see Figure 7). 20 months after graduating, the average YiA youth reported comfort with about 90 percent of the capabilities. This gain was statistically and practically meaningful.

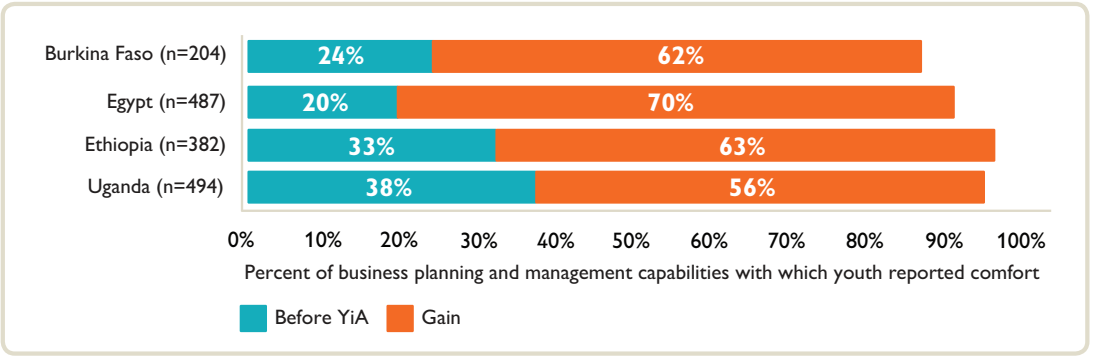


Figure 7. Gains in the percent of business planning and management capabilities with which youth reported comfort

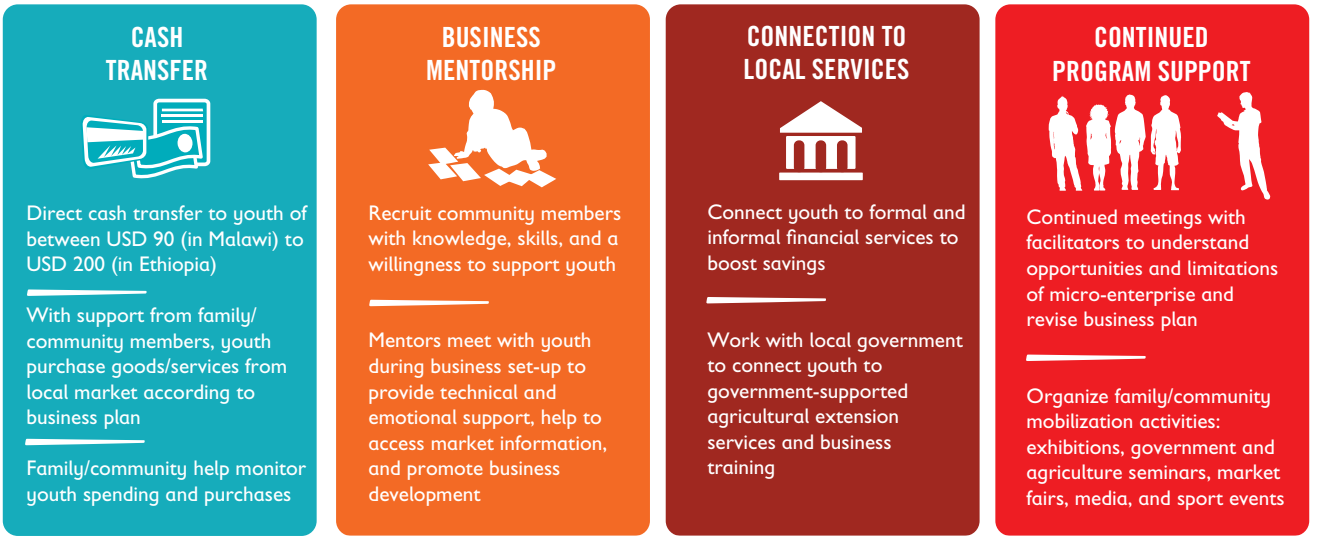


Figure 8. Activities to create space and opportunity for youth to apply skills in micro-enterprise

Create space and opportunity to apply learned skills

After strengthening work readiness skills and developing business planning and management capabilities, YiA provided youth with an opportunity to apply their skills in a micro-enterprise. This phase included several structured activities, as described in Figure 8.

To understand whether YiA was effective in creating a space and opportunity for youth to apply their skills, and thereby move toward sustained self-employment, we looked at the number of youth who had a micro-enterprise before and after their engagement with the program. However, these figures would be inflated by the fact that youth received significant support to begin a micro-enterprise during the program period. A more apt statistic would be to understand the number of youth who were still involved in a micro-enterprise at least nine months (average of 20 months) after graduating from YiA. Figure 9 presents the findings from the tracer study.

We found a marked decrease in the percent of unemployed and wage-employed youth at least nine months after YiA. However, there was a statistically and practically meaningful increase in the percent of youth who reported having a micro-enterprise. Overall, Figure 9 provides a compelling visual to demonstrate the marked increases in self-employment. The decrease in wage-employment may suggest less stability for some youth. However, in the program outcomes and tracer studies youth reported that their wage employment before YiA was primarily seasonal and temporary. This is why YiA views the move to sustained self-employment as progress toward decent work for youth in these communities.

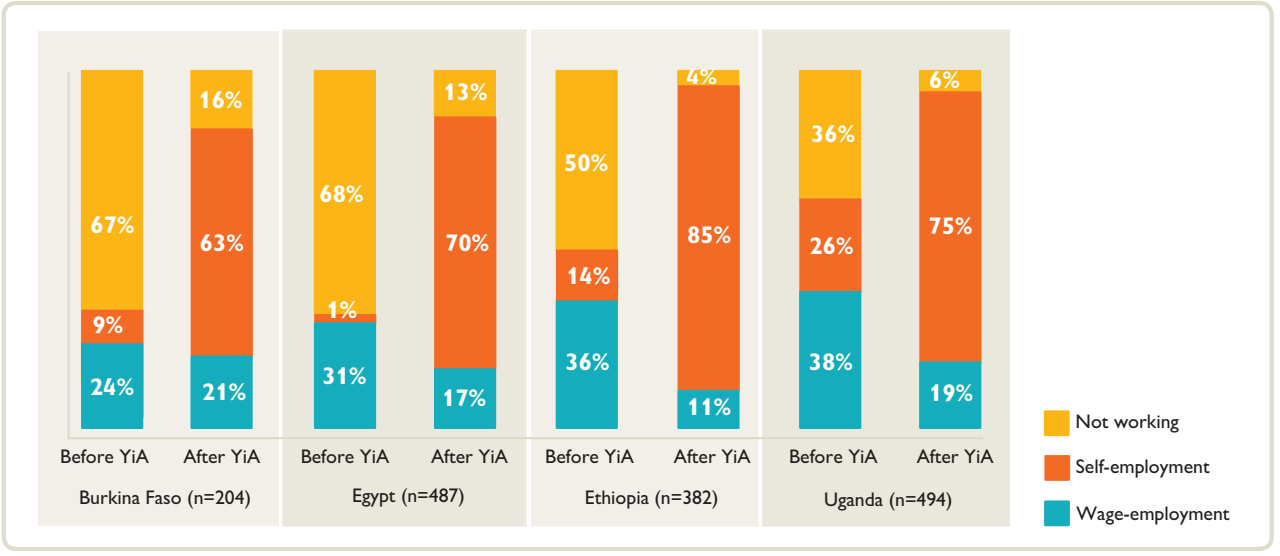


Figure 9. Percent of youth wage-employed, self-employed, or unemployed before and at least nine months after YiA

Evidence of improved socioeconomic outcomes

The secondary analysis highlighted the fact that the average YiA youth in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda was able to establish a micro-enterprise during their time in the program and sustain a micro-enterprise at least nine months after graduating from the program. This demonstrates how youth were shifting to more integrated and sustained self-employment through the program. We used the tracer study data to determine if there was an improvement in the socioeconomic status of the youth, specifically looking at income and savings.

Income

We needed an external barometer to understand if a youths' socioeconomic status had improved substantively. We used the international poverty line – USD 1.9/day (World Bank, 2015) – as a threshold. This poverty line does not account for the context in each country or the standard of living in the different YiA communities. However, this threshold does provide an internationally accepted marker by which to understand the change in income for the average youth in each country. Figure 10 illustrates the inflation-adjusted change in daily income for the average YiA youth; the dotted line represents the USD 1.9/day poverty line.

In all four tracer study countries, the individual earnings for the average youth was well below the international poverty line before YiA, with the average youth in Burkina Faso earning 18 cents a day while the average youth in Uganda earned close to one dollar a day. However, at least nine months after graduating YiA, the average youth in Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda reported earnings above the USD 1.9/day poverty line. These changes were both statistically and practically meaningful. While the average youth in Burkina Faso was not earning above USD 1.9/day after YiA, the gain in income was still statistically and practically meaningful and, in the context of the YiA communities in Burkina Faso, this 260 percent income gain likely had a substantive effect on the lives of the youth and their families.

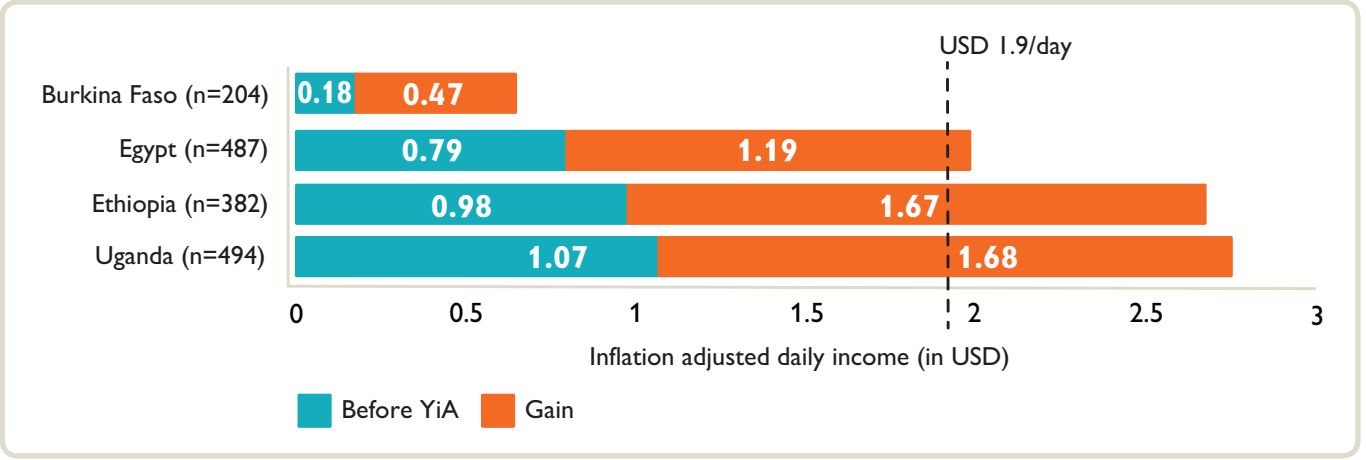


Figure 10. Inflation-adjusted daily income (in USD) for average youth before and at least nine months after YiA (dotted line=USD 1.9/day)

Because YiA did not have a control or comparison group, we needed to consider the fact that there was a maturation effect to these income improvements. To account for this maturation effect we included youth age in the income models that we fit in each country (along with gender, household wealth, and number of months since graduating YiA). There was no significant relationship between youth age and daily income before YiA. This suggests that it is unlikely that there was a large maturation effect that could explain the improvements in youth income.

Savings

A second socioeconomic outcome of interest for YiA was if youth were saving and if so, how much? In the tracer studies we asked youth about their savings behavior and how much they had saved before YiA and at least nine months after graduating. YiA defined saving as any money that youth put aside in a formal or informal financial institution, or money that youth saved by keeping it at home or with a friend/relative. As Figure 11 illustrates, half the youth in Burkina Faso and Uganda and a third of the youth in Egypt and Ethiopia said they saved before the program. When we followed up with youth at least nine months after they had graduated, about 70 percent of youth in Burkina Faso and Egypt, and 90 percent of youth in Ethiopia and Uganda reported saving. These changes were statistically and practically meaningful.

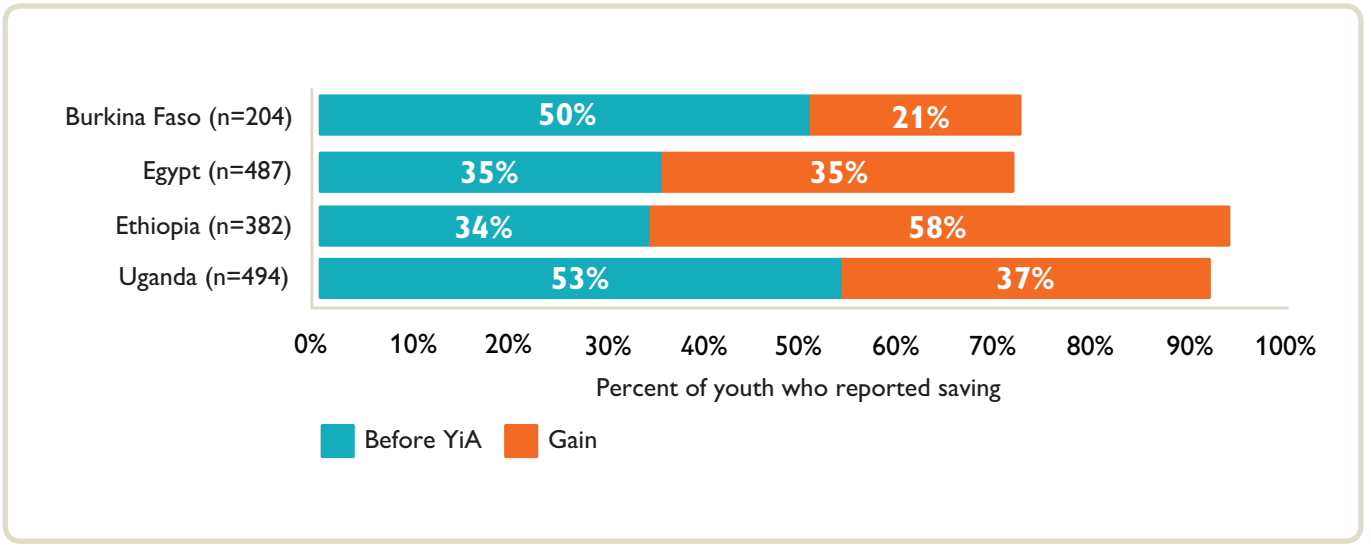


Figure 11. Percent of youth who reported saving money before and at least nine months after YiA

Beyond the act of saving, YiA was also interested in youths' estimates of how much they saved. While the amount youth saved differed by country, the change that youth reported in the savings amount at least nine months after YiA was statistically and practically meaningful. Youth reported an average savings increase of 384 percent (see Figure 12 for actual savings amounts), ranging from a 260 percent increase in Uganda to a 558 percent increase in Ethiopia. Because the tracer studies followed up with youth at least nine months (average of 20 months) after graduating YiA, it is unlikely that gains in savings amounts reflect the YiA cash transfer. The one exception is Ethiopia. Because of the access to formal savings accounts with ACSI, youth reported taking more of an initiative to save. While YiA did not have direct evidence of the amount of the cash transfer that Ethiopian youth saved, the marked gain – USD 103 – for the average youth suggests that some youth saved part of their cash transfer in the formal savings account.

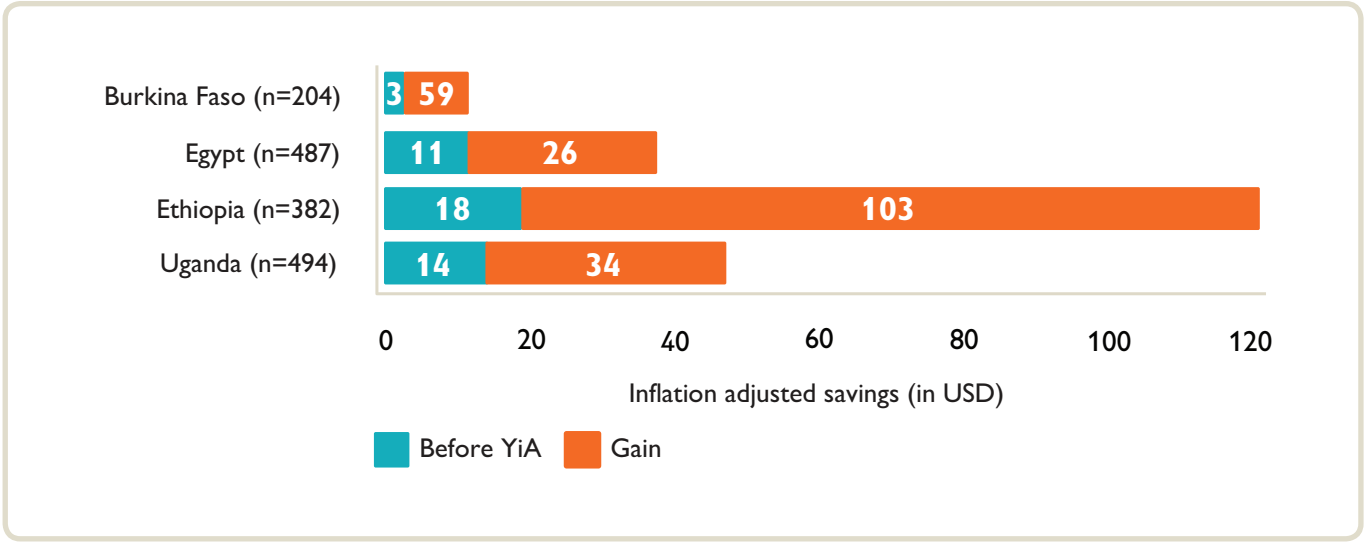


Figure 12. Inflation-adjusted savings (in USD) for average youth before and at least nine months after YiA

Similar to the income results, we tested whether youths' increased age affected their savings. There was no age difference in savings amount before youth started YiA. This would suggest that there is a limited maturation effect at play when it comes to savings amount for youth in YiA communities.

Gender differences in socioeconomic outcomes

Overall, there were very few statistically and practically meaningful differences in income and savings between male and female youth before YiA or at least nine months after graduation. While we did record marked socioeconomic growth across the board, male and female youth entered the program with approximately the same socioeconomic status and several months after the program had a similarly high socioeconomic status.

The one distinction was Egypt; female youth reported a markedly lower level of income generating activities before they started the program and had a lower level of income and savings as compared to their male peers. While a similar number of male and female youth were working at least nine months after graduating, male youth reported income gains of about USD 0.60 greater than female youth. Male youth also reported greater gains in savings, by about USD 12. The gap between male and female youth in income and savings amount was smaller at least nine months after the program as compared to before YiA. However, there was still a gap, with male youth reporting a more advantageous socioeconomic situation.

One explanation for this gender difference in Egypt was the types of family support reported by Egyptian youth. While this differential family support did mean that female youth had more options and opportunities for livelihood development than before YiA, mobility was still a challenge. Female youth in the family support study indicated that nearly all the enterprises owned by female graduates were home-based due to restrictions on their movement. Limited mobility meant fewer avenues to raise capital and access resources to support their home-based business. This may explain why, while the percent of female youth who reported income-generating activities was equivalent to their male counterparts, female youth reported lower levels of actual income and savings before and after the program.

Bottom line: Sustained self-employment can be a viable pathway for rural youth

Since a majority of youth in all five countries chose to start a micro-enterprise through YiA, the program adapted to include a more robust focus on this pathway. In doing so, YiA developed an internal logic model that assumed that strengthening work readiness skills, developing business management capabilities, and providing youth with an opportunity to apply the skills they had learned would lead to more sustainable self-employment among YiA youth, inevitably supporting better socioeconomic outcomes.

We found consistent evidence to support this logic model. Youth were able to strengthen their work readiness skills over the program period and develop new business planning and management capabilities. A majority of YiA youth continued with a micro-enterprise several months after graduating from the program, saving about 350 percent more than they did before YiA. Additionally, in Egypt, Ethiopia, and Uganda, youth were able to establish work that allowed them to earn more than the USD 1.90/day international poverty line, effectively improving their socioeconomic status.

A lynchpin in the sustained self-employment hypothesis articulated above is the guided nature of the phases that youth went through. Rather than simply being taught skills in a classroom setting, youth were given several opportunities to practice their work readiness and business skills in a relatively low-risk endeavor. Cash transfers, business mentorship, connections to local services, and continued reflection-based facilitation were key in guiding youth toward sustained self-employment that they could sustain, on average, 20 months after leaving YiA.

Photo: Paul Bettings

Sam, from Kasese, Uganda, apprenticed with a carpenter through YiA and set up a successful carpentry business in his village

CONCLUSION

Next steps: Research

While we have offered evidence-focused lessons at the end of each chapter, there are holistic research learnings that can help direct future studies on programs like YiA.

Experimental proof of concept

This report provides a non-experimental proof of concept for the YiA Theory of Change. The fact that there were few formal services, alternative programs, or labor market opportunities for youth in most of the YiA communities before and during the program suggests that YiA played an important role in the skill building and socioeconomic outcomes described in this report. However, larger national and geographic trends (like inflation or flooding) could have affected the livelihood development of the larger youth cohort from which YiA youth were drawn. Hence, we cannot attribute all the positive gains in this report wholly to YiA. The next step is to establish experimental proof of concept for YiA by establishing the counterfactual with a control group. This would allow YiA to parse out any external effects on the development of the larger youth cohort.

Longer-term follow-up with youth

One of the strengths of the research in YiA was the tracer studies: a retrospective study that followed up with youth at least nine months after they had graduated from the program. The use of anchoring items, time references, and clear definitions allowed YiA to collect quality information from the youth. However, the studies were still retrospective, asking youth to recall what their life was like before attending YiA. To deal with recall bias, future research should focus on a prospective tracer study that follows youth from the start of the program to their socioeconomic development several years after the program.

Multi-modal focus on gender norms

The next round of research needs to move beyond simply disaggregating data by gender; disaggregation may mask significant gendered barriers that do not always show up in quantitative outcomes and monitoring data. We can address this by collecting robust qualitative data (as was done in YiA) and collecting more detailed outcomes data that focuses on gender norms among youth, in their families, and in their community. Collecting gender norms data (see Mackie, Moneti, Shakya, & Denny, 2015) can allow us to better disaggregate outcome data to understand if there are differences between male and female youth based on their interpretation of the norms in their communities.

Next steps: Programming

While Hana was waiting to receive her passport, she heard community leaders talking about Save the Children's YiA program. Hana decided to register for YiA and was an active participant. Hana now runs a grocery store from her house, in space that her family carved out for her by reorganizing their courtyard. Hana explained that her relationship with her mother changed for the better once she started participating in YiA and developed a plan for her future. She is the first businessperson in her community to sell menstrual hygiene items for girls and women. As Hana explained, "Before I started selling menstrual hygiene products, women used pieces of cloth as menstrual pads; this meant that many girls missed school during menstruation or quit school because they had missed too many lessons to catch up. I am a girl and I know what is needed in my community. I learned how to be innovative in my business." Hana is now making sufficient income to support herself, her family, and to save to expand her business. Hana adds, "Before YiA, I felt like I was missing an important part of my life, which is education. I hated the fact that I started to forget how to read and write. YiA made it up for me. I got my education back, but in a useful way that will benefit me forever."

Hana's experience is one of several experiences from YiA youth in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda that this report attempted to capture through a secondary analysis of 32 studies. YiA did not have a control or comparison group; we cannot definitively attribute to the program all the positive work readiness and socioeconomic changes that are noted in this report. Additionally, the program did not test individual activities or modalities to understand their individual benefit. However, the preponderance of multi-modal, triangulated evidence from 32 studies across five countries over 5.5 years does provide strong support for the overall YiA Theory of Change.

A focused, participatory, and activity-based accelerated curriculum can support out-of-school youth from rural contexts build key work readiness skills. Guidance and support – like cash transfers, business mentorship, connections to local services, and business development support – can help youth use the work readiness skills and go through the trial-and-error of starting a micro-enterprise, working with a local artisan, or starting a technical training program. However, to effectively support the translation of work readiness skills into socioeconomic success, we have to complement skill building and guided work/business training with a strategic and explicit focus on the proximal enabling environment through engagement, demonstration, and reflection strategies. This holistic model, when targeted to marginalized youth who have limited access to resources and services, can boost their income earning potential as well as their ability to save for their future.

One important addition to the Theory of Change is the equity-focused lessons from YiA. Programs like YiA can help close the gap for female youth, like in Egypt and Burkina Faso, helping them build work readiness skills on par with their male counterparts. Additionally, for youth who have limited support from their family and community, programs like YiA can help not only leverage more support, but also build work readiness skills on par with youth who have considerable support from outside the program. In other words, targeted youth livelihood programs can act as the support system that some youth need to build key skills before entering the labor market.

Ephel lives in a small village in Ntchisi, Malawi. She became pregnant at 16 and dropped out of school. She viewed YiA as a second chance to improve her skills. Upon completion of her vocational training in sewing, she started her own tailoring micro-enterprise.

Photo: Harrison Thane

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Endnotes

1 The program implementation and operational learnings are beyond the scope of this report. Those learnings will be highlighted in an accompanying implementation guide.

2 Cells without gender breakdown represent differences between male and female youth that were not statistically and practically meaningful.

3 Partial data for Uganda accounting for about half the selection events

4 Studies organized by frequency of use of data in the secondary analysis for this report, with most frequently used studies at the top of the table.

5 BF: Burkina Faso, EG: Egypt, ET: Ethiopia, MA: Malawi, UG: Uganda.

6 Representative sample: Participants randomly chosen from sampling frame to increase probability that sample represents population.

7 Purposive sample: Participants selected to maximize variation across key characteristics/criteria that are being studied.

8 Convenience sample: Participants selected based on availability.

9 Snowball sample: Participants provide references for next round of participants to include in the study.

10 In most of the studies the ratio of female to male participants were approximately equivalent. In studies that involved data collection with employers, parents, and community members, the ratio of male to female participants were 2:1 or 3:1.

11 YiA did not conduct a tracer study in Malawi because (a) the program did not expect to see marked long-term socioeconomic gains since there were limited gains in work readiness skills over program period, and (b) operational challenges in tracking youth who had been out of the program for several months made the study resource-prohibitive.

12 The family support and enterprise development studies were conducted simultaneously in each country with the same sample

13 YiA chose grade 3 because of the strong association between comprehension (reading and understanding sentences in work related documents) and labor market opportunities for youth (RTI International, 2017). In the rural YiA context, this labor market comprehension threshold was assumed to be at an early grade reading level – grade 3.

14 Level of internal strengths and external assets that met an adequacy threshold that was developed in prior international work (Scales, Roehlkepartain, & Shramko, 2016). Youth who "meet DAP threshold" have been shown to have adequate academic, psychological, social-emotional, and behavioral well-being, whereas youth only approaching or below the DAP threshold level have been shown to have significantly worse well-being outcomes.

15 n/a signifies pathway not offered in country YiA program after first few months of implementation

16 Adapted from the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship's Entrepreneurial Mindset framework: https://www.nfte.com/entrepreneurial-mindset/

Photo: Harrison Thane

Youth participate in a facilitated session in rural Uganda to identify potential business opportunities in their local market.

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