

# Youth Development Program, Uganda

Report about the Fourth Project Visit for the Jacobs Foundation  
As deliverable for the mandate  
"Evaluation of the new Livelihood program in W&E Africa mandate"

Submitted by  
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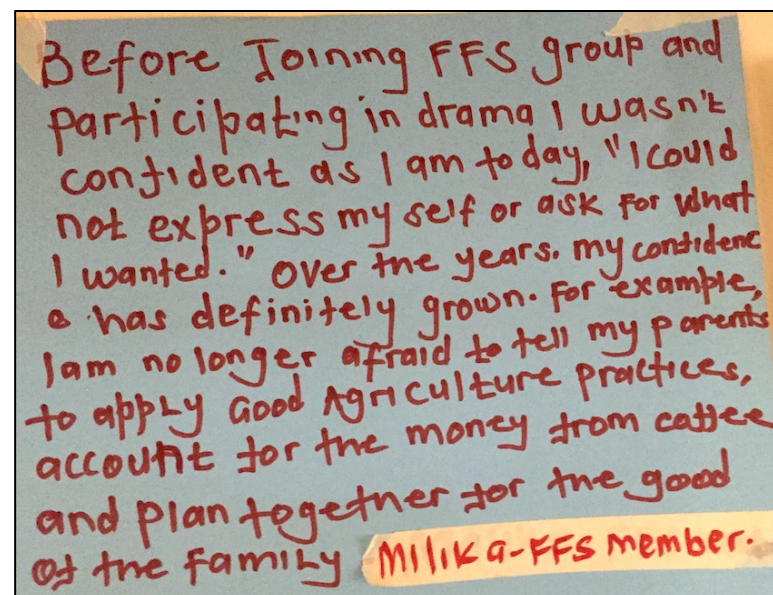
Zurich, March 7, 2017

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Attachment:

- Program of the visit



## List of Abbreviations

DC	Depot Committee
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GHA	Gender Household Approach
HRNS	Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
JF	Jacobs Foundation
MSC	Most Significant Change
VSLA	Village Saving & Loan Association
YDP	Youth Development Project
VTC	Vocational Training Center
YFFS	Youth Farmer Field School

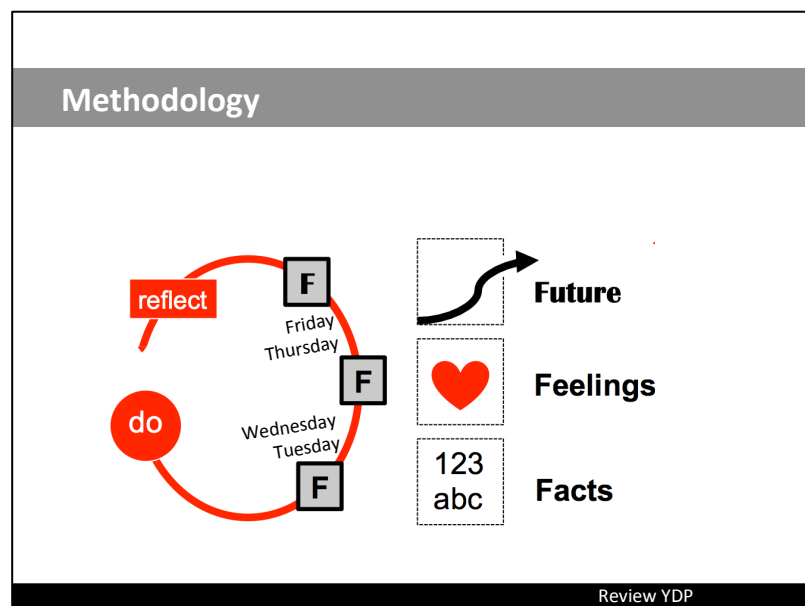
## 1. Introduction

This fourth project visit from February 6 – 11, 2016 was organized upon a request from Mrs. Gyde Feddersen from HRNS Hamburg at a relatively short notice and concludes the series of four project visits, originally agreed upon in the mandate of the Jacobs Foundation. The visit took place one month after the conclusion of the project and had the following purpose:

1. Take stock of the changes happened and achievements made
2. Assess them and reflect on the contribution of the Youth Development Project (YDP)
3. Bring about lessons learned and recommendations for similar undertakings

Before going to the details I would like to highlight two points:

1. This project started out as an education and employment project for youth in rural district of Mityana. It has gone far beyond that and has become an initiative that brought about significant unexpected changes in the livelihood of the target group, in the inter-generational relationships and the social fabric of the communities. These changes are most likely to sustain and further develop.
2. It took four visits until I was able to find the secret of this project. It popped up my mind in the last Focus Group Discussion with beneficiaries: It is the package consisting the YFFS, VSLA and GHA. In the YFFS the young farmers learn to **make money**, in the VSLA they practice how to **take care of the money** and the GHA helps them to **make better use of the money**.






With a duration three and a half days this mission was a very short one, indeed. Nevertheless it was highly productive, as this report will show. We followed as strictly as possible the approach F-F-F: Facts – Feelings – Future. We tried to establish the facts before assessing them and before drawing conclusions for the future.

The program consisted of one day in the office with the YDP project staff for getting together “numbers”, one day in Mityana for picking up a last round of feedback from the beneficiaries, and one and a half days of intensive reflection and discussions in a workshop with YDP project staff, HRNS Kampala and HRNS Hamburg. (For the detailed program and participation see attachment 1)

This report comments and elaborates on the PPT slides used and produced during the workshop. I passed the charts to slides. A color-coding is applied in order to distinguish between the three Fs: Facts in black, Feelings in red and Future in blue. In the text I explain further what was discussed and I allow myself to add some of my own observations and reflections.

Starting Point	Male and adult-dominated rural society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent small coffee farmer</li> <li>Villages with intact social cohesion</li> <li>Successful HRNS project with adult farmers: collective effort in bulk marketing and FFS</li> <li>The DCs asked for help for education &amp; employment of youth</li> <li>Availability of agricultural land</li> </ul>	<p><b>BUT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative perception of youth</li> <li>Dysfunctional family relations with much domestic violence</li> <li>Low appreciation for agriculture – especially among young people</li> <li>Youth without access to land</li> </ul>
Review YDP	

Facts & Feelings 1	
<p>88</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too early</li> <li>Trades desirable but not all feasible at village level</li> <li>Selection bias towards community leaders</li> </ul> <p><b>Employment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bricklaying &amp; tailoring ✓</li> <li>Carpentry &amp; motorbike ✗</li> <li>Catering ?</li> <li>VT in agriculture or related technology (irrigation systems)</li> </ul>
<p>1600</p> <p>ONE package</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p>  <p>start 2014</p>  <p>start mid 2014</p>	<p>88 ✓</p> <p>80 FFS groups → 1735 (-88) direct beneficiaries ✓ + other youth and parents</p> <p>78 FFS groups = ~1700 persons ✓</p> <p>Gender seminar: 68 FFS groups ✓ Change Agents: 164 couples ✓</p>
Review YDP	

## 2. Facts and Feelings

### A male dominated rural society

Out of the eight participants of the review workshop only Stefan Cognigni and I myself have been with the project since the beginning. Therefore it was necessary to recall the initial situation. This could also help to more accurately appraise the significance of the changes, which YDP has contributed to.

Starting point were favorable conditions. The communities in four sub counties of Mityana district had an intact social fabric, were inhabited by independent small coffee farmers, who through their collective action – supported by HRNS - had improved coffee production (Farmer Field Schools) and created Depot Committees for the bulk marketing of their main produce – coffee.

But although land was there, it was not made available to the youth due to mistrust and a very negative picture of their willingness to take up farming and to live a rural life. Men dominated family life. At household level violence was a common pattern of dealing with conflict.

Trusting in the capacity of HRNS – based on the positive experience - the DCs approached HRNS to do something for and with their youth.

### More persons reached and more intensively involved

In terms of numbers of beneficiaries YDP has achieved the targets. As planned 88 persons were trained at VTC St. Theresa. Although at the beginning the risk was discussed that after the completion of the training they would leave for Kampala or Entebbe, according to the tracer study at the end of 2015 the graduates stayed in the district Mityana. With very few exceptions (for instance further studies) all of them also attended the YFFS sessions and now are involved in agriculture (of course, to different degrees).

Regarding expected outcome of the vocational training – wage or self-employment - the results are mixed. Most of the bricklayers and tailors found a job or could set up a business themselves. The situation is different in carpentry and motorbike repair: Only few have found a job related to their training. Again another case is catering, because where there are no restaurants or food stores, there are also no permanent jobs. In rural Mityana catering is needed in special occasions like weddings or funerals only.

80 YFFS groups with a total of 1735 (-88 from VT) persons were active and as such direct beneficiaries of YDP. An undetermined number of other youth and

parents can be considered indirect beneficiaries. The success of the young women and men in their gardens drew a lot of attention and interest in the GAP taught and practiced.

Despite all efforts to get them on board the microfinance institutions stayed away. Giving loans to poor rural youth seems to be too risky. The youth solved the problem of missing financial services by themselves. 78 out of 80 YFFS groups formed a so-called Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA). They adopted the model used by the adult FFS. YDP staff helped them to adapt the regulations to their specific situation.

The VSLAs certainly further reinforced and strengthened the cohesion of the YFFS groups. To put the money into a common box for the purpose of saving and getting the money from the peers for a productive investment requires trust in each other and at the same time generates trust. Remarkable were the statements of several women and men in the FGDs that saving was at least as important loans, because waiting for the money gave them time to plan, how to make best use of it. Unsurprisingly the money was used for different purposes – and not only for increasing agricultural production.

The implementation of the Gender Household Approach was also not part of the initial planning. The main message of the GHA is joint planning and decision making at household level. At a very early stage HRNS realized that the approach that had been successfully tested in the earlier project with the adults, might a very appropriate add-on. In 68 groups gender seminar were organized. 164 couples have reached the level of “Change Agents” – “certified” role models who are entitled to coach other couples.

The positive influence of the GHA became apparent in some of the Most-Significant-Change stories as well as in the FGD. Asking for the most important project component (or the one that by no means should not be dropped) men were quite clear that learning of GAP was crucial whereas many women had an inclination towards the GHA.

Talking about success factors, it is time to highlight the role of YDP staff. The team was highly respected by the youth due to its professional competence, dedication and ability to establish positive relationship with young people.

Facts and Feelings 2		Attitude towards agriculture remains highly positive							
Statements on attitudes towards Agriculture	Project Area				Control Area				
	Baseline	2013	2014	2015	Baseline	2013	2014	2015	
I am proud of being a farmer	8.3	8.2	8.3	9.0	6.0	6.7	8.4	6.5	
I am proud of being a coffee farmer	8.8	7.8	8.4	8.4	6.4	5.9	7.4	5.1	
Farming gives us a decent living	8.3	7.8	8.1	8.3	6.6	6.9	7.7	6.2	
One or more of my children should become farmers	6.4	6.4	6.8	7.6	3.9	6.0	7.3	4.5	
Intelligent people stay on their farms	7.9	7.3	7.6	7.7	5.6	6.2	7.5	5.7	
People who understand agriculture are successful	8.8	8.0	8.4	8.0	7.0	7.1	8.4	5.8	

Similar values were reported for the year 2016.

- Crop selection: Early success with follow up and feedback
- Realistic demonstration plots, within the means of farmers, external admiration reinforces success
- Hands-on, practical applicability, peer-peer, collective activities
- Method in all activities: SEE, DO, EXCHANGE

Review YDP

## Attitudes towards agriculture remains highly positive

Although in the result chain the statement “improved attitudes towards agriculture” was placed only at the immediate outcome level, right from the beginning HRNS identified it as the most important change to happen. Due to an error in the surveying, the high values of the baseline study indicated rather the high expectation of the youth towards the project than their attitude towards agriculture. Therefore the challenge was to keep the values at this high level and to meet these expectations.

Comparing the treatment and control groups we see a considerable and quite stable difference between the two groups. Interestingly in 2014 the values of the control group were the highest and not far below the treatment group. Two possible causes are:

- It was a year with high yields and therefore with an optimistic perspective for everyone.
- Problems with the collaboration of the control group in the survey: It was reported that youth of the neighboring districts who were left out by the project, felt some resentment about fact.

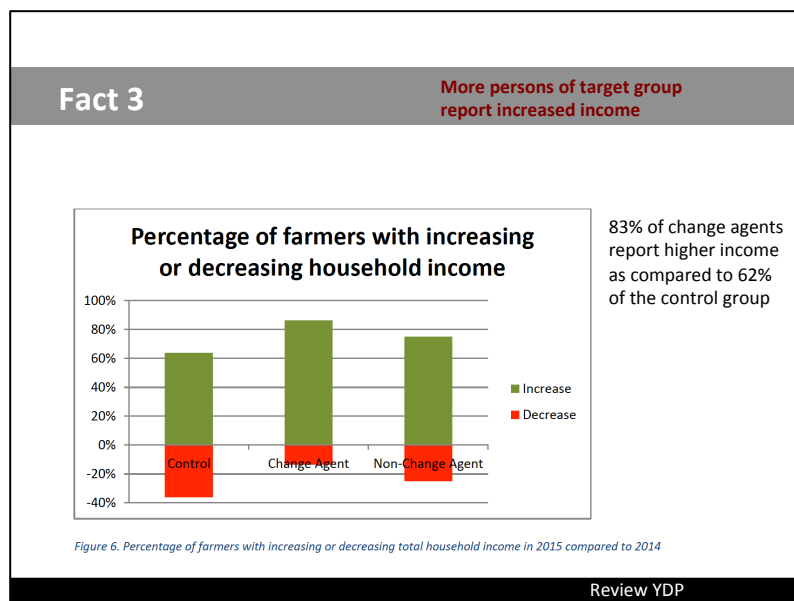
What might have been factors that triggered this remarkable result?

First of all it was the selection of the crops. Within a few months the young people got their first harvest and money. Thanks to improved seeds, the use of fertilizers and the introduction of GAP the yields of the youth were very high as compared to their parents.

Moreover the whole set-up of the demonstration plots was realistic. It was based on what average farmers can afford. No fancy or costly technology was introduced in the area.

And last but not least, YFFS provided a hands-on experience and organized a collective effort in the group with lot of peer-to-peer learning. People who passed by and praised the young people for their nice crops reinforced positive feelings about what they have done.

The very same practice-based approach was used in all other activities as well: DO - SEE – EXCHANGE/REFLECT is the classical cycle of experiential learning.



**Facts & Feelings 3 –outside partners**

**Training of trainers for business development:** finance, insurance, marketing etc. ✓

- Profitability
- Entrepreneurial thinking

**Life skill** ✓

- Leadership
- Conflict resolution teamwork

**HIV/Aids** ✓

- Because at this age a very relevant topic

**ADULT Education:** Principles and PRACTICE in all training activities

Build on existing skills & knowledge  
To broaden understanding and vision

Make use of external expertise

Review YDP

### Concerning tangible assets we see considerable improvements

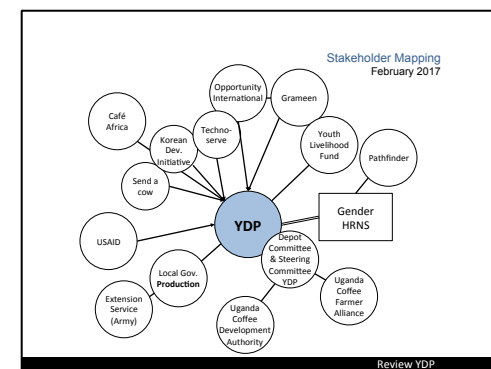
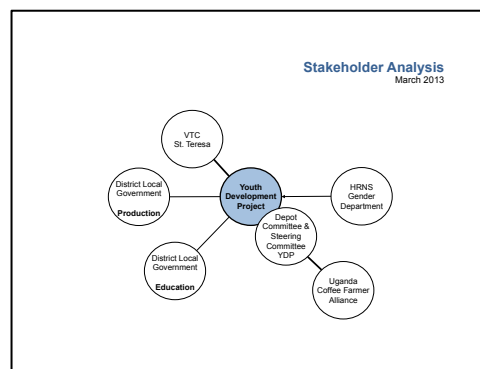
The monitoring system - set up under my supervision - did not bring about data sufficiently reliable for establishing causal relationships. Yet, some data can be taken as evidence for remarkable changes:

**Income:** Comparing the years 2014 and 2015 more members of the treatment group reported an increase in income than of the control group. The effect was even stronger in the case of the change agents.

**Land ownership:** In the same years land ownership has increased and working on parents' land decreased. Why did land ownership increase: Marriages, increased trust by parents or acquisition of land by youth. The change agents have again the highest values. (By definition they are married couples).

**Housing:** Even more remarkable are changes regarding in house ownership. In the treatment group it went up from 44% (2013) to 66% (2016) compared to 28% and 36% in the control group. Also regarding the quality of housing we see remarkable improvements both in the treatment and the control group. From the beginning the latter had higher values in all dimensions.

### YDP became an attractive entry point to the communities



Already at the beginning we expected that YDP had the potential to become an entry point for other development organization. Some of them approached YDP; others were called in on purpose to complement the project activities with their specific expertise. During the four years we did three stakeholder mappings. The two images above depict the situation at the beginning and the



Facts 5 – unexpected positive side effects	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ More marriages</li> <li>✓ More children go to school all year round</li> <li>✓ Men have changed, women feel more responsibility for family</li> <li>✓ Empowerment: Women gained space, feel less dependent</li> <li>✓ More self-confident to speak in public, in business and giving feedback</li> <li>✓ Less domestic violence</li> <li>✓ More social interaction among youth and peer-to-peer support</li> <li>✓ Literacy training in small group</li> <li>✓ Better intergenerational relationship. Trust of parents: handing over of land to children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Young people started to grow coffee</li> <li>✓ Barren land in use for production</li> <li>✓ Youth ventured into business-minded diversification of agriculture – including animals and in some cases off-farm income</li> <li>✓ Uganda Coffee Development Agencies trainer coffee specialist in prune and spraying and financed two demo plots.</li> <li>✓ YFFS are entry point for services of other organizations</li> <li>✓ Establishment of Association of Facilitators (CBO)</li> <li>✓ Close cooperation with local government increases political support and visibility</li> </ul>
Review YDP	

end of the project.

These collaborations were of great significance. The training of trainers for business development helped the facilitators to introduce and strengthen in the YFFS an entrepreneurial thinking looking for opportunities and increasing profitability of their agricultural production.

For young people sex and subsequently HIV/aids are highly relevant topics. The same is true for the area of the so-called life skills. Teamwork and dealing with conflicts in a constructive way are as important as the increase of self-esteem through the training of leadership skills.

A challenge is ensuring that these external partners work according to the principles of adult education and do not repeat the well-known pattern of school-like teaching. They should teach less top-down, but by facilitating exchange. They should connect to and build upon the existing knowledge.

### Unexpected positive effects – Maybe the most significant changes!

Although the list of unexpected positive side effects at the left is long, it is not all conclusive. Only those effects are listed that either can be generalized and/or concern rather spectacular changes at household level or in the social fabric on the communities. Others indicate how youth have started to look at agriculture from a business perspective and are ready to venture into it. A third group points at sustainability issues – the continuation after YDP ends.

At family level wives and husbands alike report that relations between them have changed for the better. Domestic violence has decreased. Women feel less dependent, have gained space, but now also are ready to assume more responsibilities for the wellbeing of their family. More children go to school all year round, because the families can afford the school fees. In a FGD the participants explained why in these four years many young people have got married: “Now there is money to look around for a skirt”.


Youth also reports that they feel more confident to speak in public or when doing business. Social interaction among youth and support to each other has increased and leads to empowering women and men alike.

They have started doing sports together. Of course, they have fun in the music, dance and drama groups, but first of all these are great opportunities for reflecting and discussing traditions and family relations. In humorous ways taboos can be addressed and more constructive behaviors acted out. Based

## Feeling 5 – Social Cohesion

Music, dance, drama and sports are more than nice add-ons

Drama, music and dance were a heredity of the adult FFS and reinforced the feeling of belonging together.



theme  
topic

+

script  
roles

>

Same  
message  
different  
plays

YDP      Youth group

- ✓ Joyful cooperation fosters social cohesion
- ✓ An inoffensive way of addressing taboos and voicing criticism
- ✓ Performing in public helps to build confidence
- ✓ Empowers men and women

→ Use even in non-project area

Review YDP

## Facts 5 – (unexpected) negative side effects

- ✧ Development of an attitude of entitlement: The project should do ..., the project should provide ....
- ✧ Some disappointment from youth outside the project (who were used as control group)
- ✧ disappointment from youth inside the project due to non-selection for VT at St. Theresa
- ✧ Participants become middlemen: Taking advantage of farmers?
- ✧ Land has been getting scarce

Review YDP

on the topics or themes proposed by YDP the groups themselves wrote the screenplays of the dramas, distributed the roles, prepared the stage settings and costumes and rehearsed it for the public performance.

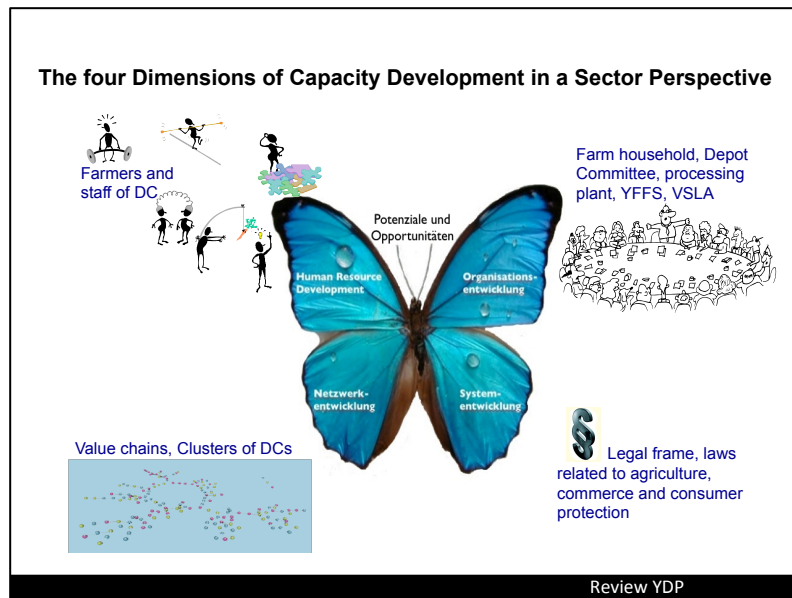
Small self-help groups for literacy classes are another amazing initiative.

Complaints about the youth have totally disappeared. Instead young farmers have made their way into the boards of the DC. Maybe the best signal for the change in the relationship between the generations is the increase in handing over of farmland to the children. In return they started to grow coffee and by doing so they reveal their determination to stay. The use of land for agriculture has increased to a level that land became scarce and some of the youth have moved out to neighboring districts. They pursue agriculture with a stronger business-oriented approach than their parents.

Who had thought that the 16 facilitators would found a Community-Based Organization called Mityana Youth Farmer Field School Facilitators Support Organisation? Their plan is to continue with YFFS and establish new ones with successful “pupils”. More over they are a suitable entrance door for other organizations and their services. In the last season they already played an important role in the collection and bulking of coffee through the DCs. The future will show how they position themselves along the DCs. They might become a driving force for the DCs, but there is also a certain risk that they become a competitor or even a rival.

Of course, there are some unwanted or undesirable effects, but they seem not to be of paramount relevance. A project has to define the area of intervention and will have to leave out some people, who might feel unhappy about this. It is understandable that they are not very interested in serving as “control group” and being interviewed from time to time. It is no big surprise that the increase of the profitability of the agriculture sector gradually reduces the availability of land and increases its value. Interestingly some of the youth use their loans from the VSLA to buy and store the maize and beans of other farmers for selling it off-season for a better price. Now they have started to play the role of middlemen, about whom a few years ago we could hear so many complaints. From an optimistic angle, we could interpret it as desirable business-oriented behavior.





### Successful projects develop capacities – in all dimensions

By definition successful projects change the behavior of individuals and organizations. This implies modifications in brain structures, social structures and very often also infrastructures. Capacities are developed. At Nadel we use the image of the butterfly to illustrate the concept of capacity development:

- It comprises changes in four dimensions: human resources, organizations, cooperation systems and legal frameworks.
- The four wings are interconnected: Activities that focus on one wing might call for interventions in the other three wings

YDP has done a lot of training and coaching of individuals. It brought about changes in organizations – most noticeably in households – and created new structures like VSLAs and YFFS. First effects we see also in the DCs. Today youth are well-accepted members, and even members of the Boards. Sooner or later the DCs will have to react on the problem of fake agro-chemicals. Hopefully the DCs will expand their services. They also could miss this opportunity or on purpose give the CBO a chance to venture into this business – eventually in combination with other services like pruning and spraying.

As soon as the coffee gardens of the young, business-minded farmers will be in full production and yields achieve certain levels, we can expect increasing pressure on the performance of the DCs. They are a key link in the coffee value chain from the farmer to the consumer. The call for processing plants that we heard several times, signals their aspiration of becoming more than just coffee producers.

It would be unrealistically overambitious to expect that a project of the size of YDP caused changes in the legal framework of a country. However, YDP was able to establish good relations to the district authorities and to get their moral support. Considering the potentially obtrusive power of administrations, we can regard this as an achievement for the future.

This brief analysis indicates that YDP has contributed to a balanced development of the four wings, especially of the upper two. It also reveals opportunities for the DCs. The biggest opportunity is to consider youth no longer as junior farmers but as dynamic adults. For many of them agriculture has become a viable and desirable livelihood option.

## Future 1 – Pre-conditions for up-scaling (HRNS)

In the case of HRNS, the existence of a strong DC and adult FFS is a pre-condition:

- Organized structures
- Consent of elders
- Reputation, trust, conducive environment
- Support from DC

} save time

→ ONE member of the DC Board is responsible for youth affairs.

Project without DC and adult structure:

- It takes longer due to more intensive sensitization and mobilization
- More input (staff) required, because of lack of supervision and support by DC

Review YDP

## Future 2

1. Secure support from adult farmers (DC)

2. Begin with YFFS\*

- practical
- hands-on
- peer-peer learning
- means of people
- early success

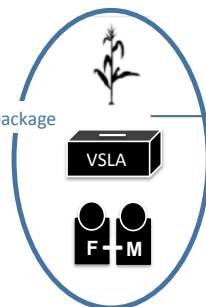
*Intervention at individual and community level*

3. Go on introducing either VSLA or/and GHA

- close to the first harvest
- according to demand
- joint setting of priorities
- sharing resources

*Intervention at household level: parents and children*

ONE package



\* Without prior gender sensitization, at the beginning mainly male youth might attend. Start with sensitizing the leadership of the DC!

Review YDP

## 3. Future

Successful projects call for up-scaling and/or transfer to other regions. HRNS works in many other coffee regions with farmers and DCs, where it applies the same FFS approach. The existence of a strong and committed DC is seen as an essential pre-condition for a youth project, because it saves time and money. Well performing DCs like the one in Nabumbugu are characterized by their response to request and the turn out of people in meetings. Well-organized FFS can serve as model for the youth. Often they are farer away from towns and have established stable linkages to external organizations.

Where HRNS cannot build upon such an adult structure, it takes longer to get the consent of the village and to sensitize and mobilize young people. Moreover, additional project staff is needed for project implementation, if nobody is there to supervise and support the activities.

For successful a youth project, the DC Board MUST nominate a committed member to be in charge of youth affairs.

## YFFS, VSLA and GHA are ONE package

There is no doubt that the three components complement each other to a complete package for economic and social development:

- YFFS for making money through GAP
- VSLA for taking care of the money through saving and lending
- GHA for making better use of the money through joint decision making

After securing the support of the adult farmers and the DC as well as the selection of the facilitators and their initial training, a youth project should start off with YFFS. Prior gender sensitization – especially of the leadership of the DC – might help to reduce the initial bias towards male youth. The selection of crops should provide early success that youth can feel in their pockets. Essential are a hands-on, practical approach to learning and the use of means of average farms. Working together on the demonstration plots is important for the cohesion of the group and provides opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. As soon as the young people have established their own gardens, the peer-to-peer exchange can be intensified by regular visits to the gardens of the participants during YFFS lessons. The so-called “positive deviants”, farmers who apply on



their farm specific good practices and are willing to show them to the young people, are other suitable places to learn GAP. Until the first harvest the focus of the YFFS should be strictly limited to GAP. Other topics like marketing or HIV/aids can wait until there is a clear demand for them.

Whether the VSLA or the GHA is introduced next, depends on the specific situation and the demand of the groups. It is up to them to decide, because the VSLA is their financial self-help structure. The project team might give technical advice, especially for drafting the regulations. It might be that in the future micro-finance institutions discover young farmers as potential customers. Even in these cases the establishment of VSLAs is beneficial, because of the opportunity for saving and the social cohesion it helps to create.

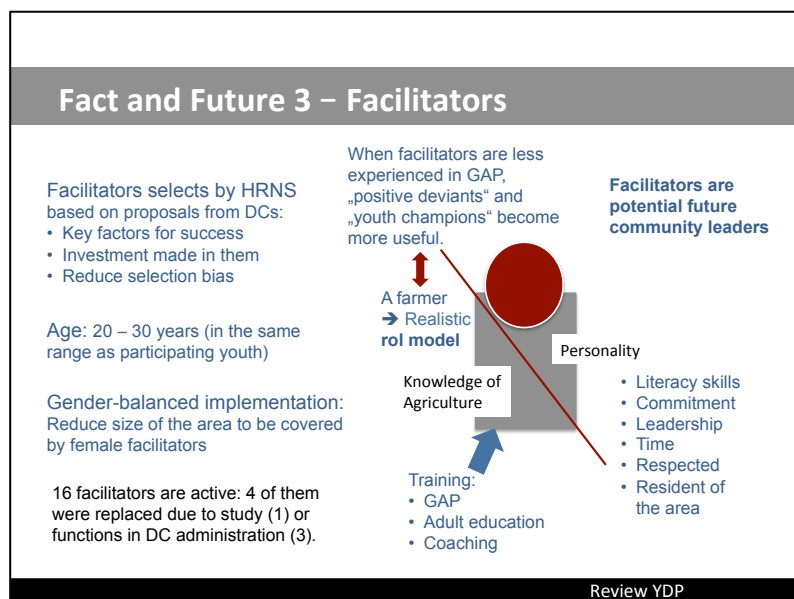
The GHA should not deviate from its main basic message: The couple (wife and husband) practices JOINT DECISION MAKING at household level. This positive approach to gender equity focuses on so-called “change agents”, couples who are willing to break with obsolete traditions. They themselves have to change their communication style and resource allocation before they can serve as role models and coaches.

### The facilitators are key driving forces

YDP worked with 16 active facilitators who were responsible for the 80 YFFS. Four facilitators had to be replaced, one because she went for further studies and three because they took up functions in the administration of their DC. On average they were considerably older and more experienced than their “learners”. There is great consensus that much depends on their quality.

As facilitators are potential future community leaders, the DCs have the right and obligation to propose suitable candidates, but in order to mitigate the risk of a biased selection, the final decision must be made by HRNS based on the criteria defined below. Another justification is the investment made in them. HRNS offers them different training and continuous coaching, and during project implementation pays for their services.

To serve as role models facilitator must be farmers and respected residents of the area. They must have a good level of literacy and numeracy skills, be committed and have enough time to work with up to five YFFS. Personality is more important than the knowledge of agriculture, because the latter can be learned in training courses, which are not only required for GAP but also in adult education, facilitation and coaching.




**Future 4 – Vocational Training: a nice to have**

HRNS – projects  
to include only when right conditions  
are given

If VT included, consider:

- Community based need analysis:  
Which trades are FEASIBLE and  
needed at village level?
- Select trades that are more closely related to agriculture: maintenance of irrigation  
systems, post harvest technology, etc.
- Start in the second year at earliest, because young people have a notion of GAP  
and its benefits for their future
- Avoid selection bias towards community leaders
- Suitable training center is not too far away
- Training Center and DC are committed to find employment and to support the  
creation of self-employment



Review YDP

In terms of age the facilitators should be in the same range as the participants – between 20 and 30 years. The same can be said regarding gender. As in rural Uganda young women have certain limitations regarding mobility, a reduction of the size of the area to cover and the number of YFFS groups per female facilitator must be considered.

A point to consider is the size of the groups of YFFS. 20 young people on one plot seem to be a big number – in some cases it maybe too big for an active involvement of all. On the other hand VSLAs need a minimum number of members in order to accumulate sufficient funds for the loans. If the number per YFFS is reduced, it is necessary to experiment how well VSLAs work that consist of members from different YFFS.

### **VET – nice but not necessarily part of the package**

At the outset of the project there was a loud call for vocational training. The belief was that VET would be much more attractive for the young people and would offer them a better future than agriculture. On the short run this expectation seems to be mistaken – or at least not correct for all of the youth trained at St. Teresa.

For such a youth project in a potentially prosperous area, VET is not vital, but it can be a complimentary measure when the conditions are right:

- A competent training provider is near by.
- The training provider AND the DC are committed to support the graduates in the transition from the world of training to the world of work.

The selection of the trades is crucial. The question is not what is most needed or liked by the youth or the elders, but what is needed and FEASIBLE at village level. Trades that are related to agriculture like the maintenance of irrigation systems or post harvest technology might be more appropriate than carpentry.

Postponing VET to the second year could help to reduce the selection bias. After one year in the YFFS young people might have more realistic ideas about their future and there is more time to select trades that will lead to (self-) employment opportunities.



## 4. Concluding Remarks

Looking at what has happened in Mityana over the last four years, we see impressive changes, which most people would consider true progress. When we reflect on these changes, we become aware that they are the logical outcomes of the activities implemented. However, at the end of the implementation of YDP is astonishing to see the positive results despite the far too simple and incomplete intervention logic and some wrong assumptions.

- a. The DCs had big hopes in VET as an alternative or complementing option to agriculture.
- b. HRNS had very high expectations regarding the collaboration with Opportunity International. This microfinance institution should have provided youth with the money for their investments in agriculture.
- c. Gender issues were largely ignored in project design. Considering the fact that youth is the age in which marriages are settled, it is difficult to find reasons for this omission.
- d. Last but not least, I myself adhered too much to the generic model of JF that attempted to depict three quite different projects in three countries.

At the time being, reality shows that it is the training on GAP that makes the difference in earnings and not VET.

The VSLAs turned out to be a most appropriate replacement of the micro-finance institutions. Small loans carry small risks. The loans could be used for agriculture related purposes as well as for other pressing needs like for instance health or school fees. Moreover, with the VSLA saving became a pre-condition for loans and regular part of the financial services. From the point of view of group dynamics the VSLAs were a mighty tool. Putting money into a common box (with three locks!) increased the social cohesion (trust and control) of the YFFS groups.

From the view point of project implementation it was right to introduce the GHA with a delay of one year, because it allowed to focus on GAP first and to prove that modern, business-minded agriculture works – also for youth.

These flaws in the initial planning were amended, because the HRNS team applied an unusually open and result-based approach to project management. Plans were plans were plans, taken seriously, but also changed when deemed necessary. I learned a lot about the value of adaptive project management that did not lose sight of the big picture. It did not only allow unexpected things to happen, but actively looked for opportunities and integrated them in the daily work.

With the Jacobs Foundation HRNS and the beneficiaries could count on a partner that was not only ready to come along this road under (re-) construction but also took active interest in it. In return, JF and HRNS get results that are far above the expectations described in the project document. Additionally the two partners get a number of validated lessons learned that are applicable elsewhere, too. I was pleased but not surprised to hear that the GHA already has made its way to the Ivory Coast. My promise: There is much more to learn from YDP than the GHA.

The initial planning of the mandate foresaw a fourth and last review mission two years after the completion of the project. As the duration of the project was increased from three to four years, it was appropriate to do my fourth mission now. For the purpose of learning, I recommend to keep this ex-post review on the agenda – at least as an internal review of HRNS and JF without external support. It would be a lost opportunity not to follow up on how things develop in the next years under normal conditions and without the further support of HRNS to the youth.

- What will happen with the YFFSs? How many will remain and how many new YFFS will come up?
- How will the livelihoods of the families further improve regarding housing, Production, land tenure and schooling of children?
- What will be the long-term effect on the family relations: husband – wife, parents - children?
- How will the DCs react on the increasing coffee production of their young members and their demands concerning new services?
- How will the new CBO as “unexpected baby” of the YDP grow and mature?

- What kind of external resources the DCs and the CBO will be able to bring in?
- To what extent the graduates of VTC St. Theresa will be able to offer their services in the communities?

Finally, I thank Jacobs Foundation and Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung for the opportunity to do this formative evaluation. During four years and in four visits I had the pleasure to accompany the implementation of the project. I feel that I was able to contribute to the development of YDP by serving as a sounding board and by bringing in some methodological input. I am grateful for the many hours with the team and with the farmers of the four subcounties in Mityana district. I got most interesting insights into one specific rural area of Uganda and could witness impressive and remarkable changes at community level and in individuals – men and women - whom I met several time.

The experience gained in this long-term assignment has been very valuable for my courses on Project Cycle Management at Nadel/ETHZ, too.

***Having a plan is good – even if it is far from perfect. Keeping in mind the purpose of the project and adapting the plan to the constantly changing realities is better. It is the key to successful project management.***

March 7, 2017 – RB-v3



**Program of the visit**

- Feb. 6 Travel
- Feb. 7 Meeting at HRNS office for taking stock of results with Farouk Ssemwanga and Fortunate Paska
- Feb. 8 Field visit to Mityana district (FS, FK, Sarah Nabulobi, Gyde Feddersen and Malisa Mukanga):
- Visit of CBO “Mityana Youth Farmer Field School Facilitators Support Organisation”
  - 6 focus group discussion at two places with beneficiaries
- Feb. 9 Review workshop with FS, FK, SH, GF, MM, Stefan Cognigni and Ghislaine Bongert
- Feb. 10 AM Continuation of review workshop (same participants plus Jorge Tiemeier)
- Feb. 10 PM Return travel

