

Findings from the Pre-Test Data Analysis in Uganda's Program Outcomes Study

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Background

About 89 million youth between the ages of 12-24 are part of a growing cohort of out-of-school youth, approximately half of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa². Youth in continental Africa and around the world have “**aspirations and dreams of who they want to be, how they will contribute to their communities and the work they would like to do**”³. However many out-of-school rural youth face limited formal socioeconomic opportunities, are often unable to access systems and structures (such as quality formal education or the formal economy)⁴, and lack foundational skills that could support them to pursue the futures they envisage for themselves⁵. In rural contexts, many young people have significant responsibilities in their homes, family farms, or family businesses; they may also move in and out of different informal experiences and seek income from a variety of sources. However, many of these youth are unable to find pathways out of poverty or are unable to explore social and economic opportunities to realize their goals⁶.

Youth under the age of 18 are especially vulnerable; being under the recognized age of majority in most countries, they are often at risk of being engaged in hazardous work⁷. However, this stage in life is typically decisive in how youth will transition from school to work and for the likelihood of transiting out of poverty. Many youth in the majority world are already out of school and are trying to provide for themselves and their families. Yet youth below 18 years of age are often excluded in the design or implementation of policies and programs supporting youth employment.

This situation is especially true for Uganda. With over 78% of the population below the age of 30⁸, Uganda has **the world’s youngest** population. The country also has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa at 83%⁹. Results of a USAID-funded¹⁰ assessment revealed that the main reasons for this high youth unemployment rate include misalignment of education with labor market needs, lack of access to skills training and enterprise development support, lack of access to land and markets, as well as nepotism and corruption in the labor market.

Youth in Action Program (YiA)

Youth in Action (YiA) is a six-year program implemented by Save the Children in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation. The goal of YiA is to improve the socioeconomic status of around 40,000 out-of-school young people (12-18 years), both girls and boys, in rural Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Uganda. The Theory of Change is **to achieve this by enhancing youths’ foundational skills and social assets, facilitating their action in livelihoods opportunities, and building key partnerships to remove barriers to youth’s participation in their economies and communities.**

YiA supports youth to identify and explore livelihood opportunities through a combination of non-formal education and practice-oriented learning experiences. For many youth, these livelihood opportunities are grounded in agricultural value chains or agri-business. While there is a wide array of programs focusing on education for out of school youth or on youth employment, very few incorporate employability, social assets, literacy, numeracy, financial literacy, and real-life experience. YiA integrates all of the above into a participatory

² Inoue, K., Di Gropello, E., Taylor, Y. S., & Gresham, J. (2015). *Out-of-school youth in Sub-Saharan Africa: A policy perspective*. World Bank Publications.

³ Lee, M. (2015). *Mixed livelihoods: A reality for youth in Africa*. The MasterCard Foundation: Toronto, Canada.

⁴ J-PAL. (2013). *J-PAL youth initiative review paper*. Cambridge, MA: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab.

⁵ UNESCO. (2012). *Youth and skills: Putting education to work*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

⁶ ILO. (2015). *Global employment trends for youth 2015*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization.

⁷ FAO (2016). *Global forum on food security and nutrition*. Discussion Paper No. 127.

⁸ Daumerie, B. & Madsen, E. L. (2010). *The effects of a very young age structure in Uganda: Country case study*. Washington, DC: Population Action International.

⁹ World Bank (2009). *Africa Development Indicators (ADI) 2008/09*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

¹⁰ USAID (2014). *Youth and agriculture in Uganda: An assessment*. Washington, DC: USAID.

learning cycle, designed to increase livelihoods opportunities through the acquisition of a broad spectrum of foundational and work-readiness skills.

In YiA there are four selection criteria that determine which youth can participate in the program:

1. Age: Between the ages of 12-18 years
2. School status: Out of school for at least five months
3. Program language: Has some spoken knowledge of the program language
4. SES: Comes from a family that is not in the top 10% or bottom 10% of the wealth index (described below)

Once youth are selected into YiA, there are two main phases of the Program that they attend: learning phase, and action phase. The *learning phase* takes ~5 months; on average; youth meet for 3 hours/day, 3 days/week. Youth are also exposed to livelihood opportunities in their communities through field trips, and through visits by guest speakers and YiA graduates. Towards the end of the learning phase, youth develop a pathway plan which they present to a local learning center committee/panel for evaluation and further guidance. A youth can select one of three pathways:

1. Training: Vocational/apprenticeship training
2. School: Return to formal education
3. Entrepreneurship: Starting a small business

After approval of the pathway plan, youth start the second stage of the program: the *action phase*. During the action phase, youth move out of the learning centers and are supported and mentored by facilitators, members of a community advisory committee, and a community member who is in their livelihood field. Approximately, 70% of youth in Uganda choose the entrepreneurship pathway. In this pathway, youth are supported with ~\$100 each, given to youth once they form groups of 5-10 youth. To disburse the money, youth are connected with a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA). Youth in the action phase and program graduates meet at least once every quarter in peer-to-peer meetings to share experiences and learning. Occasionally, local leaders are invited to the peer-to-peer meetings to speak about government programs for youth and connections to the private sector. YiA partners with the private sector to help train youth in specific livelihood areas.

Programs Outcomes Study

This report presents findings on the Youth in Action (YiA) program in Uganda. The baseline¹¹ data from this program Outcomes Study (POS) will be used for two purposes:

- Construct a profile of what youth work readiness and socioeconomic outcomes look like when youth enter YiA
- Understand the descriptive relationship between the work readiness skills, and between intermediate and socioeconomic outcomes at baseline.

The baseline data were collected between April-May 2016. These baseline data are collected before youth start their full engagement with YiA. The findings from the baseline study are presented descriptively to paint a picture of the demographic and socioeconomic conditions of the youth in the YiA program. At baseline, we are primarily working on descriptive statistics, not predictive relationships. This is an important distinction. A predictive relationship is when we look at the relationship between two or more variables in our sample and try and understand if we would observe this relationship if we kept drawing random samples from the population. In other words, a predictive relationship moves our understanding from the sample to the population. A descriptive relationship stays within the sample; it offers a description of what we can observe in our sample. After the endline

¹¹ We use the terms “baseline” and “endline” to reflect the waves of data collection. Baseline data for this study is collected at the start of a cohort’s engagement with YiA. Endline data is collected at the end of the cohort’s engagement with YiA. The terms “baseline” and “endline” do not reference the start and end of the actual project, but rather two waves of data collection for this study.

data collection in February 2017, the relationships between changes in work readiness skills and changes in socioeconomic outcomes for youth will be explored.

Program Outcomes Study indicators

Quality, meaningful data are foundational for planning, monitoring progress, and documenting results in working with young people. The surveys, on which the Program Outcomes Study is based, include a demographic survey, Literacy Assessment, Numeracy Assessment, Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) Survey, and Livelihood Survey.

- **Demographic Survey:** The survey provides background information on youth demographics, socioeconomic status (SES), and household information. We use an adapted version of the wealth questions from the Demographic and Household Survey (DHS) to understand the SES of youth.
- **Literacy Placement Tool:** Primarily designed as a tool to place youth in mixed-literacy groups, this tool also serves as an assessment of the youth's **foundational literacy**. **It provides information on a youth's** ability to identify letters, read with fluency & accuracy, and comprehension.
- **Numeracy Assessment:** This survey provides us with a picture of youths' foundational numeracy skills, especially their number identification, mathematical operations, and word problems. The word problems are designed to be practical market-based situations that youth may experience in their livelihood development.
- **DAP Survey:** The DAP Survey consists of 58 items that ask young people how often or how much they experience a variety of possible strengths in themselves, with their friends, and in their families, schools, and communities.
- **Livelihood Survey¹²:** Since YiA is focused on learning for livelihood readiness, an additional 27 items were administered at the same time as the DAP Survey. These items assess relevant work readiness learning, skills, and experiences. The Livelihood Survey also asks questions about employment and engagement with the labor market.

The purpose of the POS is to collect data on the primary outcomes of YiA that are part of the **program's Theory of Change and Learning Framework**. The study is designed to understand how youth work readiness might change for a sample of youth over the eight to ten month program period, and how those changes might impact socioeconomic outcomes. Table 1 is an overview of the intermediate work readiness outcomes and ultimate socioeconomic outcomes in the study.

¹² This survey was also referred to as the "Plus" section during data collection.

Table 1. Outcomes of the POS at two levels: intermediate and ultimate outcomes of

Work Readiness Outcomes	Socioeconomic Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Financial Literacy</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort managing money • Budgeting skills • Savings skills • <u>Work Support & Resources</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible assets • Family support for work development • Community support for work development • <u>Foundational Academic Skills</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy • Numeracy • <u>Transferable Skills</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental assets • Self-employment skills • Workplace teamwork and drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job/income earning status (if employed, descriptive type of work) • Daily income • Productive employment • Hazardous employment • Adequate savings • Adequate credit access

Research Design

The overall POS research questions aim to capture what we want to learn from the program over the eight to ten month period of youth engaging with the YiA learning and action phase as articulated in the Learning Framework. The research questions at endline further explore improvements in work readiness outcomes that we observe in youth who have been engaged in the YiA program model. This includes exploring how improvements in these intermediate skills might be related to improvements in youth socioeconomic outcomes. To establish a starting point and build an evidence base for measuring change brought about by the project over time, we ask the following research questions at baseline and endline.

Research Questions at Baseline

- RQ1. What levels of financial literacy, work support & resources, foundational academic skills, and transferable skills do youth have at baseline?
- RQ2. What levels of socioeconomic outcomes do youth have at baseline?
- RQ3. What is the relationship (correlation) among work readiness skills, and between work readiness skills and socioeconomic outcomes?
- RQ4. What is the relationship between gender and work readiness outcomes?

Research Questions at Endline

- RQ1. What is the relationship between baseline levels of work readiness skills and endline socioeconomic outcomes?
- RQ2. What is the relationship between the change in levels of work readiness skills and change in socioeconomic outcomes, from baseline to endline?

Sample

The aim of this study was not to offer a representative picture of all youth who go thorough YiA in Uganda over the six years of the project. Rather, the aim was to understand what changes we see in a sample of youth

who attend the program at a point in the project cycle when the YiA program in Uganda is functioning as the program designers intended.

Thus, in Uganda we picked Cohort 13 and 14 to include in this study. Within these two cohorts, the data collection team focused on two districts in Uganda: Kasese and Bundibugyo. We picked these two districts as the focus of our study because they are the districts in which YiA youth speak Lukhondo, one of three program languages in YiA Uganda. While we understand that the focus on youth who speak Lukhondo is a focus on the majority youth in the YiA communities, a focus on youth from minority communities who spoke the other two languages was beyond the scope of this study because:

- a) There are fewer youth who speak the other two languages and this raised issues of statistical power in our study design. In order to get the statistical power to compare youth across the three language groups we would have to extend this study across multiple cohorts and years.
- b) All the surveys in this study are assessed 1:1 with an assessor and youth, or as a group read-aloud in the case of the numeracy assessment. This means that working with multiple languages would require a process of translating, adapting, and contextualizing the tools to three different languages and then norming responses across all three languages to ensure that the results were comparable. We decided this was a resource intensive process that would push back the implementation of this study beyond a reasonable limit.

In the two districts, across the two cohorts, the data collection team visited all the learning centers where Lukhondo was the program language and attempted to collect data from all registered youth.

Baseline Findings

Demographic Characteristics

The sample for this study was 789 Ugandan youth from Kasese and Bundibugyo. Table 2, below, provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the sample of youth who consented to participate in this study. The average youth in our sample was 17 years old, with youth reporting being between 12-19 years of age. About 88% of participants reported being between the ages of 16-18.

58% of the participants were female, with the average youth living in a house with at least 7 other family members. When asked about the possessions (e.g.: television) and utilities (e.g.: water) that their family had, the average youth reported having only 35% of the 20 different wealth assets that we asked them about.

1 out of every 3 youth reported being a parent. However, this number could be underreported since only 28 males reported having a child as compared to 225 females. It is possible that the male youth in YiA underreported their status as a parent. Additionally, 63% of the youth in our sample were single or had never been married. There was no observable relationship between youth reporting being married and being a parent.

97% of the youth reported having been out of school for five months or more. 85% reported that the highest level of schooling they completed was either preschool or primary, and only 14% reported that they had completed secondary education. 3% of the sample reported having completed a non-standard curriculum and less than 1% of youth reported that they had never been to school.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the Ugandan youth (n=789) who were part of the POS baseline data collection

% female	FEMALE		58%
Average age	AGE		17
% who speak program language	PROGRAM LANGUAGE		95%
Average # of languages spoken or understood	LANGUAGES		3
% who last attended school >5 months ago	OUT OF SCHOOL		97%
Average # of household members	FAMILY		7
% of DHS possessions present for average youth	SES		35%
% who have a child	PARENT		34%
% who leave community for >1 month at a time	LEAVES COMMUNITY		9%
% who had job for longer than 1 month	JOB		30%

Profile of Intermediate Outcomes for Youth at Pre-test

This section focuses on two of the four baseline research questions:

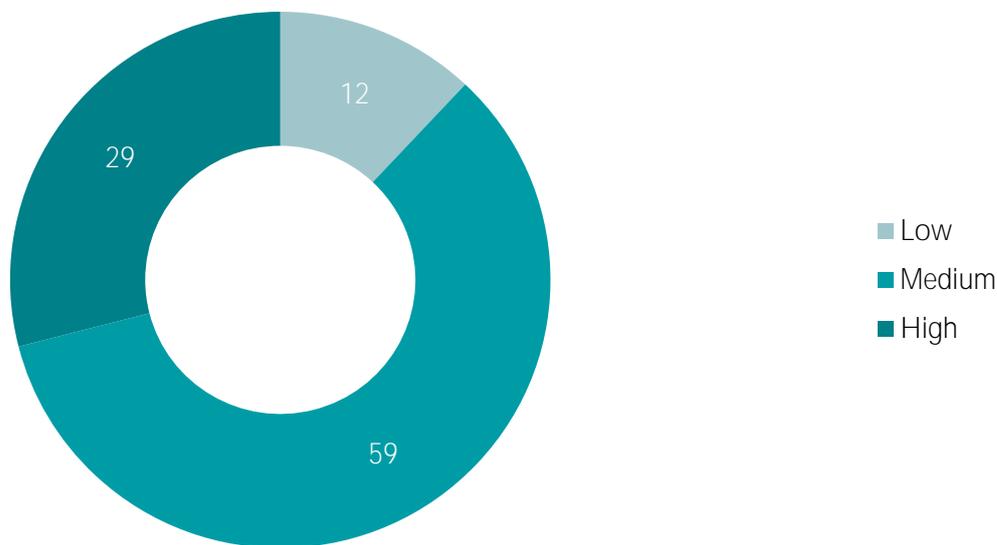
- RQ1: What levels of financial literacy, work support & resources, foundational academic skills, and transferable skills do youth have at baseline?
- RQ4: What is the relationship between gender and work readiness outcomes?

Financial Literacy

The financial literacy score gives an overall **sense of youths' comfort** managing money, and their perception of **their budgeting and saving skills**. The financial literacy score is the sum of youth's responses to five questions that focus on how youth budget their money, methods they use to save money and their overall comfort in managing their money (see Appendix A for a list of questions and the scoring criteria). A youth falls in the "Low" category if they scored 0 on all budgeting and savings skills items. The "Medium" category captures youth who scored high on one dimension but not the other, or those who have some of both budgeting and saving skills. Youth in the "High" category scored high on both dimensions of budgeting and saving. As shown in Figure 1 below, 12% of youth had a low financial literacy score, 59% had a medium financial literacy score and 29% had high financial literacy score. This suggests that a majority of the youth in our sample scored high on one dimension of budgeting

or savings skills, but not the other. When we look at financial literacy skills by gender we see a majority (57%) of 461 females and (62%) of 322 males were also in the Medium category. These slight differences by gender were not statistically or practically significant.

Figure 1. Percent of youth (n=784) reporting different levels of financial literacy skills



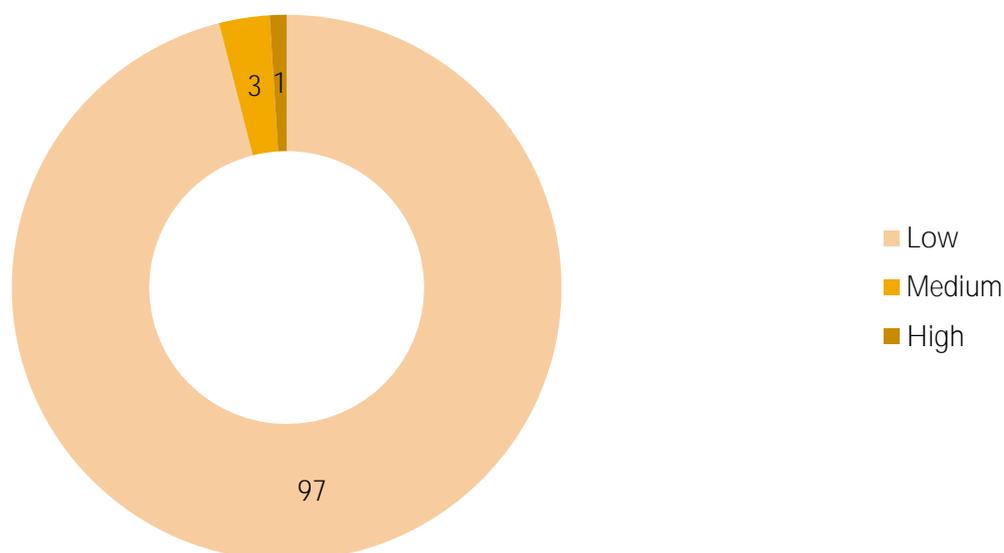
Work Supports and Resources

Work supports and resources reflect the encouragement and material assets youth can access to help them in pursuing different livelihoods. Figure 2, below, illustrates the distribution of youth by their access to material assets (see Appendix B for a list of questions and the scoring criteria). A majority (97%) of youth reported having very little in the way of material assets, such as access to land for farming.

Of the very small percentage (4%) of the sample youth who did report income generation in either cash or goods in the last year, just 3 in 10 of those youth reported that their families and communities were encouraging and helpful in their work development.

There were no statistically significant differences in self-reported work support and resources for boys and girls. We observed low levels of work supports and resources for both genders, where a majority of females (96%) and males (98%) reported low levels of access to material assets. Similarly, 73% of females and 69% of males reported a low level of family and community support for work.

Figure 2. Percent of youth (n=782) reporting different levels of access to material assets



Foundational Academic Skills

Before starting YiA, the program conducted a market assessment in each YiA country. This market assessment included conversations with youth, parents, community leaders, and local employers. This assessment brought to light the low levels of literacy and numeracy among youth in the YiA communities. This led to a focus on building the foundational academic skills, both literacy, and numeracy, of the youth in YiA.

Literacy

Youth in Action promotes the development of literacy skills for youth at all skill levels, supporting those at the lowest levels with targeted phonics and word-recognition activities, and embedding reading and writing into the duration of the learning sessions. Youth are encouraged to try to read and write, whether or not they have the full capacity, and to depict images in cases where they cannot yet write words. They are also encouraged to seek peer support as well as support from facilitators. Read-alouds and shared reading are regular activities during the learning phase, designed to both foster interests in reading and to allow for practice. In addition, youth have daily, free access to Book Banks: small libraries stocked with local and national language materials related to life skills and livelihoods and available for youth to borrow and take home. All literacy work is directly linked to the life skills and livelihoods work that form the foundation of the YiA learning phase.

In YiA all youth complete a literacy assessment when they first enter the program. The program uses this information to place youth into learning groups of mixed literacy levels. This supports the participatory learning nature of the YiA curriculum. This placement tool, which also serves as **an assessment of the change in youth's** literacy, measures four components:

- Letters: Number of letters the youth could correctly identify from a 20-letter grid
- Fluency: Number of words the youth read correctly from a passage within one minute
- Accuracy: Percent of reading passage that the youth read correctly
- Comprehension: Number of comprehension questions the youth answered correctly from a list of 5 literal questions

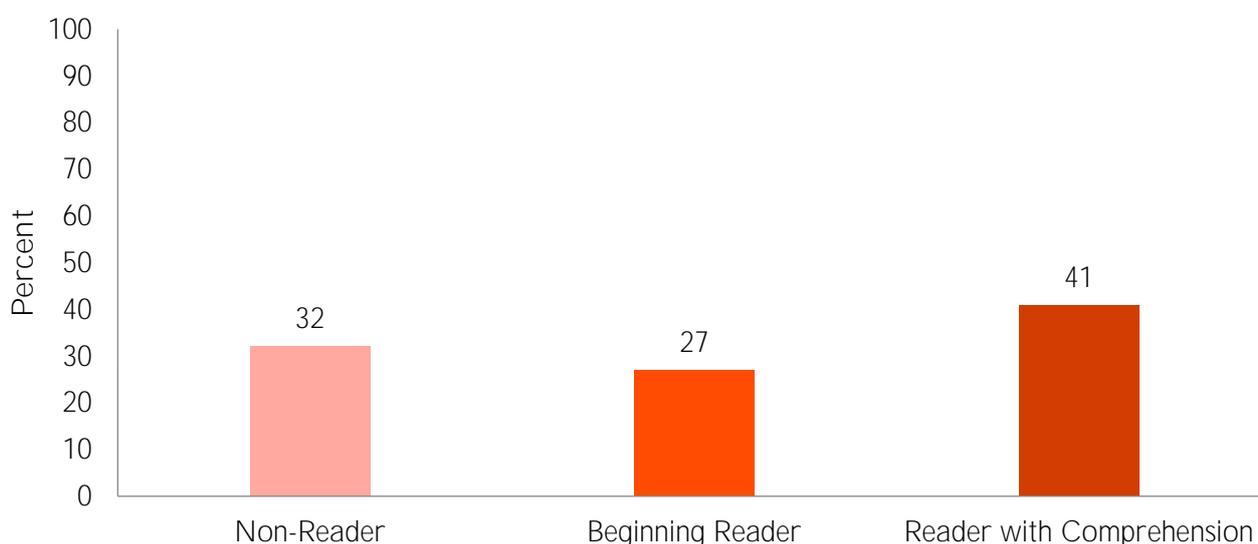
The average youth who participated in this study could identify 14 letters, read 22 words correctly in a minute, read 47% of the passage accurately when given additional time, and could answer 2.5 comprehension questions correctly.

We used this information to create tiers of youth literacy skills. These tiers allow us to better communicate about where youth are in their literacy development and follow practices that have been established over several years through **Save the Children's Literacy Boost program**.

1. A non-reader: Youth cannot identify more than 60% of letters and struggles to read the passage
2. A beginning reader: Youth can identify more than 60% of letters and can read through the passage, but only answers three of the five comprehension questions correctly
3. A reader with comprehension: Youth answers four or more of the comprehension questions correctly

In Figure 3, we present the distribution of youth in our sample across these three reading tiers. In the sample of POS youth in Uganda, 32% were non-readers at the start of the program. 27% of the youth had some basic literacy skills, while 41% could read with comprehension.

Figure 3. Percent of Ugandan youth (n=769) who were in the three literacy tiers at baseline



When comparing the literacy level of males versus females in our sample, we did not find any differences that were either statistically or practically significant.

Numeracy

Functional numeracy is an important component of the learning phase of YiA. Since financial literacy—namely budgeting and saving—are seen as important livelihood competencies for youth, building youth's **capacity to** conduct basic numeric functions is seen as a precursor to them keeping budgets and managing their own money. Through the curriculum, youth are helped in building their foundational numeracy skills—counting and numeric functions like addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Youth are given opportunities to use these skills through hypothetical and real examples that deal with market interactions and budgeting.

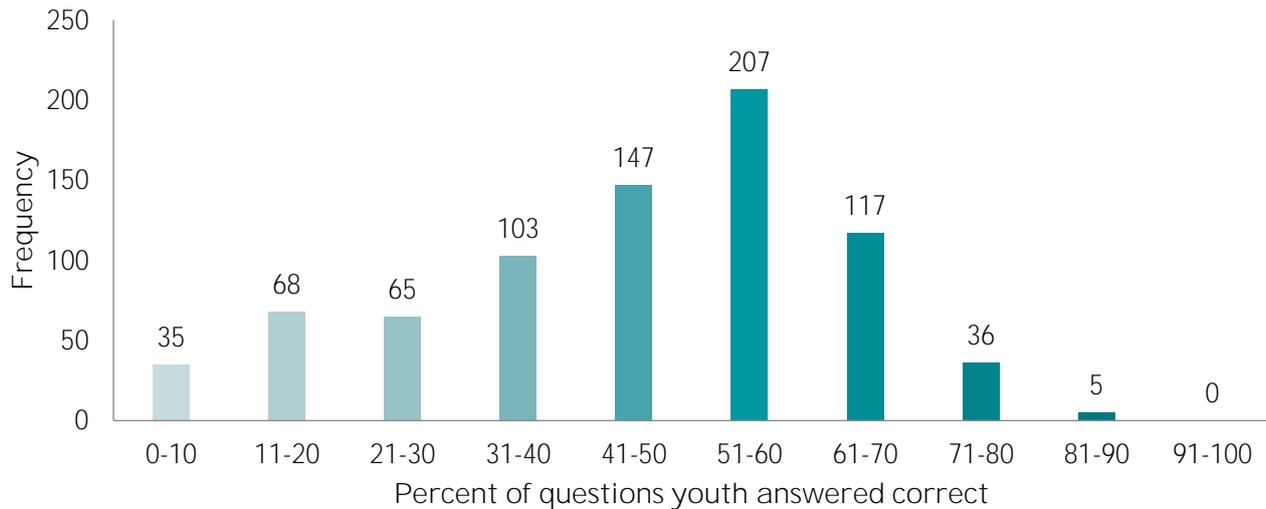
In the POS we assessed **youth's foundational numeracy** through an assessment that covered the following skills:

- Counting: Shown 6 numbers and asked to write down the number that comes before or after each number
- Oral Counting: Hear 6 numbers and asked to write down the number that comes before or after each number
- Operations: Given one minute to complete each set of 10 addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division questions

- Word Problems: 8 single- and multi-step problems that are phrased to reflect livelihood and budgeting issues that youth are likely to experience in the agricultural labor market

In Figure 4, we present the distribution of youth in our sample by the percent of questions they answered correctly on the numeracy assessment. The average youth in our sample was able to answer 46% of the numeracy questions correctly. Only 18 youth in our sample could answer 75% or more of the numeracy questions correctly. When comparing the numeracy level of males versus females in our sample, we did not find any differences that were either statistically or practically significant.

Figure 4. Frequency of Ugandan youth (n=783) by the percent of numeracy questions they answered correctly



Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are “higher-order cognitive and non-cognitive skills that individuals can use to be successful in different situations in work and in life”¹³ (p. 1). These skills are important across domains of a youth’s life (e.g.: academic, social, livelihood, etc.), and they can be transferred to a domain when learned in the context of another (e.g.: transferring skills learned in school to livelihood pursuits)¹⁴. Also, these skills are malleable and change over a time in an individual; they can be taught and learned.

YiA focuses on transferable skills in three ways. First, YiA focuses on developmental assets¹⁵: external (relationships, supports, and **opportunities, provided by people in the youth’s life**) and internal (**beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors** within a youth) strengths that are important for youth development. Second, the program assesses **a youth’s self-employment capabilities. These questions determine a youth’s self-concept and confidence for starting their own business; skills that can be transferred to a different domain of a youth’s life.** Lastly, we measure the workplace teamwork and drive that youth demonstrate, their motivation to work with others.

¹³ Brown, A., Rankin, K., Picon, M., & Cameron, D. (2015). *The state of evidence on the impact of transferable skills programming on youth in low- and middle-income countries*. New Delhi, India: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation.

¹⁴ Pellegrino, J. W., & Hilton, M. L. (2012). *Education for life and work: Developing transferable knowledge and skills in the 21st century*. Washington DC: National Research Council.

¹⁵ Scales, P. C., Shramko, M., & Ashburn, K. (2016). Developmental assets and sexual and reproductive health among 10-to 14-year-olds in northern Uganda. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 7(1), 45-64.

Scales, P. C., Roehlkepartain, E. C., & Fraher, K. (2012). *Do Developmental Assets make a difference in majority-world contexts? A preliminary study of the relationships between Developmental Assets and international development priorities*. Minneapolis: Search Institute, Report to U.S. Agency for International Development.

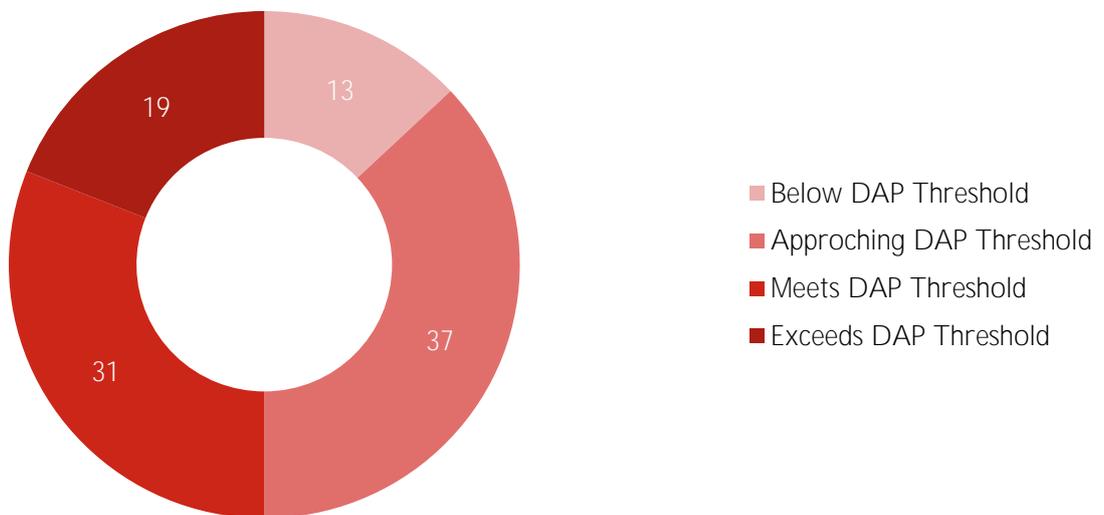
Developmental Assets Profile (DAP)

Developmental Assets are “**developmental vitamins**”: positive experiences and qualities identified by Search Institute as being essential to healthy psychological and social development in childhood and adolescence. The Developmental Assets framework, organized into eight categories, recognizes the importance of young people having both internal strengths (internal assets) and opportunities & guidance from family, school, peers, and community (external assets) (see Appendix C for a description of the items in the different asset categories). External assets are positive experiences, relationships, and encouragement and support young people receive from peers, parents, teachers, neighbors, and other adults in the community. They include positive role models, boundaries **and expectations, as well as young people’s constructive use of time.** Internal assets are characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive personal and psychological development in young people. They include strengths such as positive values, positive identity, social competencies, and commitment to learning. The DAP also shows youth perspectives of the support in the different settings in their lives: family, school, peers, and community. For example, young people with good social skills are more likely to have a strong web of supportive relationships. Similarly, if youth are part of effective, engaging, and safe schools, they are more likely to develop an internal commitment to learning.

The DAP score can be understood in terms of four levels of developmental assets:

1. Below DAP threshold (0-29)
2. Approaching DAP threshold (30-41)
3. Meets DAP threshold (42-51)
4. Exceeds DAP threshold(52-60)

Figure 5. Percent of Ugandan youth (n=789) with varying DAP levels at baseline



See Appendix C for a more detailed frame of reference for interpreting DAP scores and for the reliabilities of the sub-scales and total DAP scores. Each level has been shown to have a meaningful connection to differing levels of youth well-being. **Specifically, 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.**¹⁶

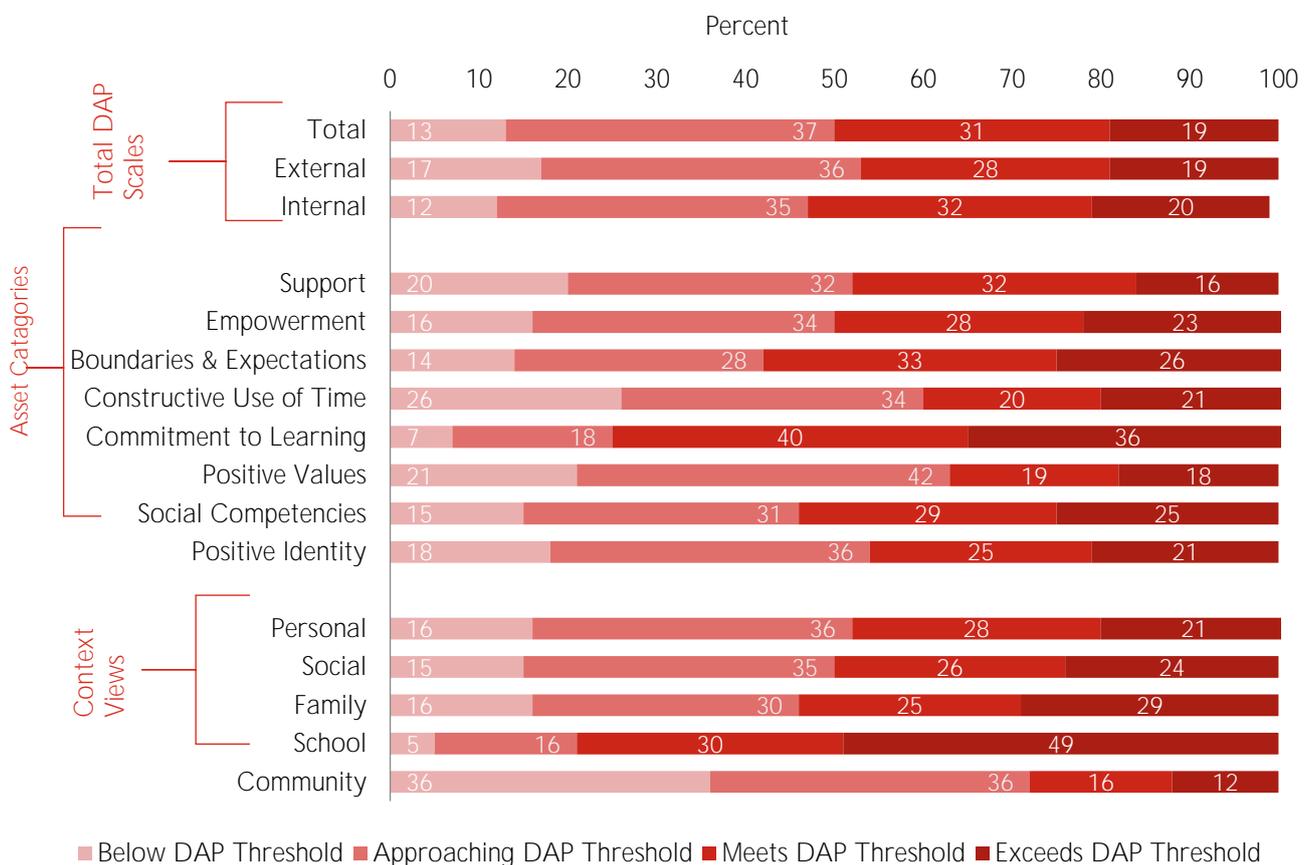
¹⁶ Scales, P.C., Roehlkepartain, E.C., & Shramko, M. (2016). Aligning youth development theory, measurement, and practice across cultures and contexts: Lessons from use of the Developmental Assets Profile. *Child Indicators Research*. DOI 10.1007/s12187-016-9395-x

Figure 5 summarizes the sample's total DAP scores categorized across the four levels. Nearly 68% of youth had scores in the two middle categories, approaching DAP threshold and meets DAP threshold. Relatively few youth (32%) scored either in the highest level or the lowest level of assets.

Total DAP levels by gender tell a similar story. Approximately 66% of the female participants and 71% of the male participants had scores in the two middle categories: approaching DAP threshold and meets DAP threshold. However, 22% of the female participants as compared to 14% of the male participants scored in the Exceeds DAP threshold category; this difference was statistically significant and suggests that female youth, on average, had a higher DAP score in the population. In other words, the female youth attending YiA demonstrate more internal and external assets than their male counterparts.

Figure 6 shows the percent of youth disaggregated by the sub-categories of DAP assets. Even in these measures of specific asset categories and asset-building contexts, most youth scored in the middle two categories of assets for most of the subscales. For the school context scale, which includes learning centers, almost half or more of youth scored in the top (exceeds DAP threshold) category. About 36% of the sample scored in the lowest level for the community context scale.

Figure 6. Percent of Ugandan youth (n=789) with varying levels of sub-scores on the DAP at baseline



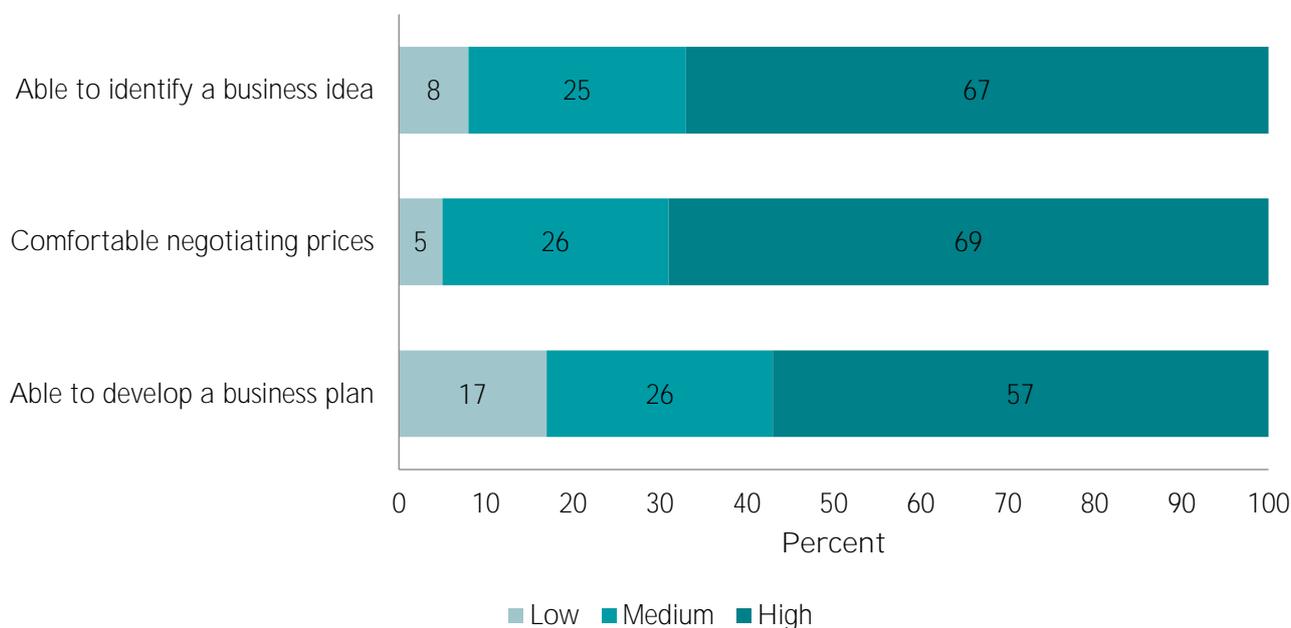
Self-Employment Skills

Self-employment skills is a summary of questions that asks youth about their perceptions in their ability to identify and develop a viable business plan, their comfort in business negotiations, and their confidence in being able to run a profitable business.

When combining all questions, approximately 63% of the youth in our sample reported having self-employment skills; this translates into an unexpectedly high level of comfort and confidence for self-employment endeavors.

See Appendix D for a list of the items and a description of how this composite was created. Additionally, Figure 7 describes the percent of youth who reported having low, medium, and high levels of the different self-employment items.

Figure 7. Percent of Ugandan youth (n=780) who reported different levels of self-employment sub-skills at baseline



When looking at reported self-employment skills by gender we found that 72% of females reported a high level of comfort with negotiating prices as compared to 65% of the male sample. Similarly, 70% of the female sample and 64% of the male sample reported a high level of comfort with identifying a business idea. More than half of both male and female youth reported a high level of comfort with developing a business plan. These slight differences by gender were not statistically significant.

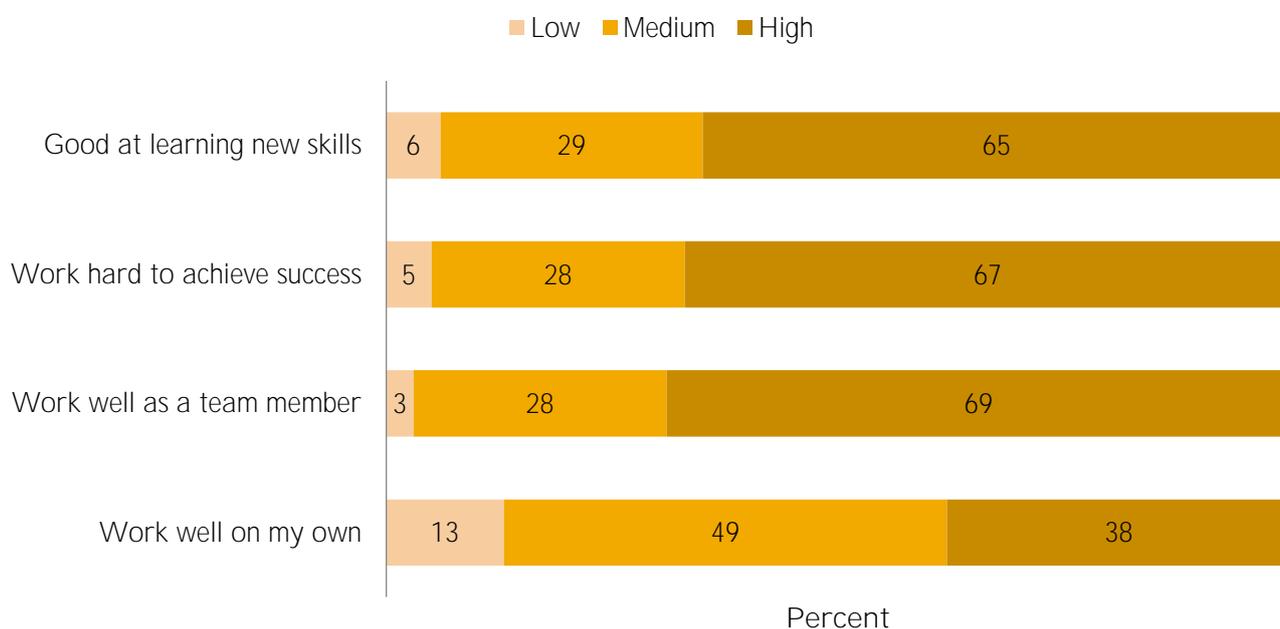
Workplace Teamwork and Drive

Workplace teamwork and drive specifically looks **at youth's report of motivation for working independently and ability to work well as part of a team. We also look at youth's' level of goal setting and interest in learning relevant or new skills.**

When combining all questions, approximately 70% of the sample reported having a high level of workplace teamwork and drive. This reflects **youths'** high level of motivation for work, learning, and working with others. See Appendix E for a list of the items and a description of how this composite was created. Additionally, Figure 8 describes the percent of youth who reported having low, medium, and high levels of the different workplace teamwork and drive items.

When looking at workplace teamwork and drive by gender we found that more than half of both females and males reported a high level of comfort working well as a team member, working hard to achieve success, and also report being good at learning new skills. There were no differences between males and females on this skill that were statistically or practically significant.

Figure 8. Percent of Ugandan youth (n=781) who reported different levels of workplace teamwork and drive sub-skills at baseline



Profile of Socioeconomic Outcomes for Youth at Pre-test

This section addresses one of the baseline research questions:

- o RQ2: What levels of socioeconomic outcomes do youth have at baseline?

There were two phases to the baseline data collection. The first round of baseline data collection was conducted during a selection event when youth and their families attended an information session about the program. Youth completed the Demographic Survey and Literacy Placement tool during this selection event. Once youth were selected into the program, 1-2 weeks after the start of the first session, we returned and collected data using the Numeracy Assessment, DAP Survey, and Livelihood Survey. Youth were asked questions about their involvement in an income generating activity (job) the difference is that the question about employment that we asked in the Demographic Survey was used for program planning purposes. The question about employment in the Livelihood Survey was followed by questions about daily income, productive employment, and hazardous employment, all of which are socioeconomic outcomes of this study.

In the sample of youth that we interviewed, 219 youth (30%) reported having a job during the last year in the Demographics Survey; however, only 33 youth (4%) reported having a job in the Livelihood Survey. In both surveys, we told **youth that** “A job is any work that you have done for family members or others for which you have been compensated with money, goods, or services. Remember, this can include work that you have done inside your home or for your immediate family.”

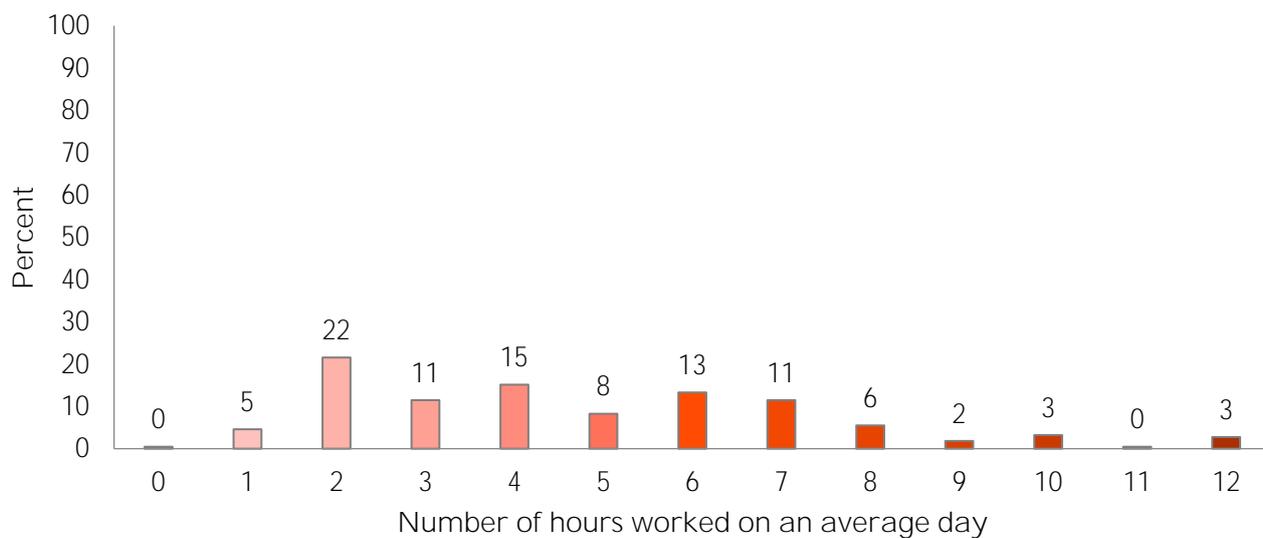
The discrepancy between the number of youth who reported having a job between the two surveys is a limitation of this study; we discuss this below. However, the fact that only 4% of youth reported having a job during the Livelihood Survey does mean that we do not have enough information on daily income, productive employment, and hazardous employment to perform a descriptive analysis. However, we have some information from the Demographic Survey to describe the employment profile of the average youth who started in YiA.

Job/Income Earning Status

Of the 219 youth who reported having had a job in the last year, 60% were females and 40% were males; this difference was not statistically significant but it has some practical significance. Markedly more females reported having a job as compared to their male peers.

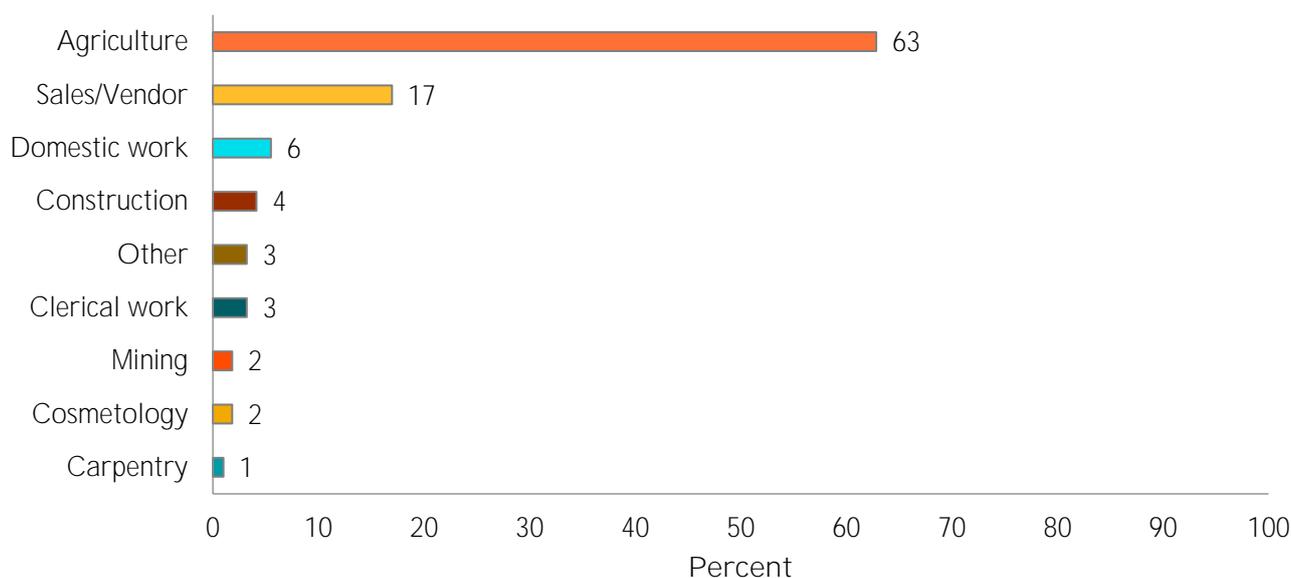
We also asked youth about the number of hours they worked on an average day. The average youth reported working 5 hours/day. Figure 9, below, presents the distribution of the number of hours youth reported working on an average day. The average male reported working 4.5 hours, while the average female worked 5 hours. However, this difference was not statistically significant in the population.

Figure 9. Percent of Ugandan youth (n=218) who reported different number of hours worked on an average day



Most youth who reported working said that they worked in the agricultural sector, growing or using agricultural products. 63% of the youth who reported having a job said that they worked in the agricultural sector. Figure 10, below, presents the percent of youth who reported different types of work. The fact that a majority of youth reported working in the agricultural sector is reflected in the fact that 80% of the youth reported that their work was temporary or seasonal.

Figure 10. Percent of Ugandan youth (n=218) who reported different types of work



Adequate Savings

Adequate savings measured youths' self-reported level of savings to cover basic expenses such as groceries, school supplies, clothes, and incidentals, as well as having startup capital to develop a business. Almost all the youth in our sample—99%—reported not having adequate savings.

Adequate Credit Access

Adequate credit access measured youths' ability to obtain adequate credit or loans from either formal or non-formal institutions to cover basic expenses and incidentals, or as startup capital to develop a business. Once again, 99% of the youth reported not having adequate access to credit.

Association among Intermediate and Socioeconomic Outcomes

In this section we report on the third research question:

- RQ3: What is the relationship (correlation) among work readiness skills, and between work readiness skills and socioeconomic outcomes?

In these baseline data from Uganda, we look at the associations between aggregate work readiness outcomes including financial literacy, work support & resources, literacy, numeracy, developmental assets, self-employment skills, and workplace teamwork & drive. We present these associations—correlations—in Table 3 below. Correlation matrices communicate two important pieces of information:

1. The strength of the relationship between two outcomes: The relationship between two variables is described using a number that ranges from -1 to +1, a correlation coefficient. Relationships that are between 0.5-1 (or -0.5 to -1) are generally considered to be stronger relationships. As a general rule, we use the following ranges to decide the strength of the relationship:
 - Strong: (0.5 to 1) or (-.5 to -1)
 - Important: (0.3 to 0.5) or (-0.3 to -0.5)
 - Notable: (0.12 to 0.3) or (-0.12 to -0.3)
 - Weak: (-0.12 to 0.12)

- The direction of the relationship between two outcomes: Relationships that have a “-” sign ahead of them suggest that the two outcomes are negatively associated with each other. This means that as the scores for one outcome increases, it is likely that the score for the other outcome would decrease. If there is a “+” sign in front of a relationship (or there is no sign) it means that the two outcomes are positively associated. This means that as the score for one outcome increases, it is likely that the score for the other outcome would increase as well.

We present the correlations matrix for the work readiness outcomes in Table 3, below. Within the transferable skills domain—DAP, self-employment skills, workplace teamwork & drive—the outcomes demonstrate a strong and positive relationship with each other. Since we defined all three types of skills under one domain—transferable skills—it is not surprising that these three outcomes have a strong relationship to each other. Additionally, there is a strong and positive relationship between a youth’s financial literacy and their transferable skills. This would suggest that the underlying skills that youth use to build financial literacy are similar to the underlying skills that youth use in the transferable skills domain.

On the other hand, we were surprised to find that the literacy and numeracy skills of youth were not strongly associated. Because of the close theoretical relationship between these foundational academic skills we assumed that they would have a strong relationship with each other. Additionally, work support & resources also demonstrated a weak relationship with all the other outcomes.

Table 3. Correlation matrix for the work readiness and socioeconomic outcomes

		Financial literacy	Work support & resources	Foundational academic skills		Transferable skills			Employment status
				Literacy	Numeracy	DAP	Self-employment skills	Workplace teamwork & drive	
Financial literacy		1							
Work support & resources		0.23	1						
Foundational academic skills	Literacy	0.10	0.02	1					
	Numeracy	0.01	0.00	0.03	1				
Transferable skills	DAP	0.55	0.20	0.10	-0.02	1			
	Self-employment skills	0.46	0.11	0.10	0.02	0.55	1		
	Workplace teamwork & drive	0.54	0.11	0.09	-0.01	0.67	0.52	1	
Employment status		0.02	-0.01	0.10	-0.06	0.18	0.15	0.05	1

The last row of Table 3 presents the correlations between the different work readiness outcomes and whether the youth reported having a job in the last year or not. Overall, the correlations between the work readiness

outcomes and this one socioeconomic outcome were weak, although the association between developmental assets and having a job, and between self-employment skills and having a job, were in the “notable” range.

Conclusion

In this report, we have described the initial levels of important work readiness skills that youth brought with them as they started the YiA program in Uganda.

There are some limitations in these data. Most notably, the number of youth who responded to having an income generating activity—a job—varied by the survey. As described above, 219 youth (30%) reported having a job during the last year in the Demographics Survey; however, only 33 youth (4%) reported having a job in the Livelihood Survey. Because of the 30% of the sample that actually reported having a job in the Demographic Survey, we know that youth underreported on having a job in the Livelihood Survey. This discrepancy means that we did not have enough information on daily income, productive employment, and hazardous employment: all important socioeconomic outcomes. Because we have such limited data on these socioeconomic outcomes at baseline we will not be able to analyze change between baseline and endline for these outcomes. For example, we will not be able to tell if a significant number of youth moved from hazardous to productive employment by endline. This limits the kind of analyses we can do at endline and the conclusions that we can make.

The actual reason for this underreporting has not been conclusively established. However, one hypothesis is related to youth and assessor fatigue. The DAP and Livelihood Survey are administered at the same time to youth. Since these surveys are administered 1:1 by an assessor, it can take ~50 minutes to get through the entire survey. This could have resulted in assessment fatigue for the youth as well as for the assessors (who were expected to complete ~5 assessments per day). Alternatively, the Demographics Survey is assessed 1:1 by an assessor and only takes ~15 minutes to complete. Fatigue, on the part of the youth and the assessors during the DAP and Livelihood Survey, could have resulted in human error or misunderstanding of questions. This could explain the marked underreporting we observed with the job questions on the Livelihood Survey.

A broader limitation is that, except for the Literacy and Numeracy assessments, all the other variables in the POS are self-reported by youth; that is, there are no objective indicators of those variables. The data might therefore not be fully accurate if youth responded either in an overly positive or overly negative way.

Finally, youth reported sufficiently high levels on some of the outcome variables (for example, self-employment skills), that there is a possible ceiling effect on what change could be seen at endline. That is, there is simply less room for growth on some of these variables, and so there is less chance to use changes in those variables as evidence for the impact of the YiA program

Nevertheless, these baseline POS data provide a reasonably clear picture of YiA youth. Overall, these youth had a high degree of confidence in their self-employment skills, and a moderately high degree of confidence in their financial literacy (budgeting and savings skills). However, only a little less than half had high levels of the foundational academic skills of literacy (readers with comprehension) and numeracy (giving the correct answer to at least 75% of number questions), and only half met or exceeded the threshold for developmental assets, the relationships, opportunities, and personal strengths that have been shown to help youth in low-resource countries succeed. In addition, almost none of these Ugandan youth reported having adequate levels of either the material or emotional support for workforce development or income-generation. Moreover, although the job/income-generation data have limitations as described earlier, even these limited data suggest that the great majority of these YiA youth were not engaging in income-generating activities as they began the program. Finally, work resources and support, transferable skills, and financial literacy seem to be meaningfully correlated with each other, and developmental assets and self-employment skills seem to have a notable correlation with employment status. There appear to be few if any meaningful differences between males and females in any of these patterns.

These results suggest several other conclusions. First, the YiA program appears to be selecting the intended youth into the program, youth, on average, who do not currently have the foundational academic skills, transferable skills, or work resources and support to generate adequate income. That is, the program is reaching its intended target group.

Second, although a few of the variables may have ceiling effects because these baseline levels were relatively high, most of the outcome variables of interest showed that half or more of youth were not at the level desired for effective employment or income generation. Thus, there is considerable room for YiA in Uganda to make an impact with these youth, which adds to the case for the potential value of the program.

Finally, the positive and meaningful correlations among the intermediate outcome variables suggest that success by the program in raising levels of one or more of those variables may well be accompanied by increases in the other outcomes too. That is, increases in any one of financial literacy, foundational academic skills, transferable skills, and work support & resources, are likely to be coupled with increases in the other three kinds of intermediate outcomes. This is especially important because it is likely that there is an additive effect on socioeconomic outcomes of all four of those outcome areas getting stronger, in that youth who improve on all four of financial literacy, foundational academic skills, transferable skills, and work support & resources are likely to improve their socioeconomic outcomes more than youth who improve in fewer areas. The fact of their meaningful correlation means that there is a greater chance of the YiA program positively affecting all four, and thus promoting this synergistic effect. In addition, the smaller but still notable correlation between experiencing developmental assets, and reporting self-employment skills, and reported employment status, suggests that improvements in those areas also may well be linked to improvements in socioeconomic outcomes. All of these intermediate outcome areas are potentially changeable through the YiA program activities, the web of supportive relationships the program creates for youth, and other YiA supports.

Overall then, these data suggest the underlying validity of the YiA theory of change, and the likelihood that **improving these youths' foundational academic skills**, financial literacy, transferable skills, and work resources and support will yield at POS endline an observable impact on their socioeconomic condition.

Appendix

Appendix A: Items and structure of “Financial Literacy” composite

Item	Question
C3.a	I can track how much money I have compared to what I'm spending and thus I can budget money to meet my needs
C3.b	I can decide what to do with the rest of money after paying my own expenses
C3.c	I feel comfortable in managing my own money
C4.	Over the past 12 months, did you provide any money (to put some money aside to cover future expenses)?
C5.a	Have you deposited any of your money in a formal financial institution (such as the regular bank or the microfinance bank)?
C5.b	Have you deposited any of your money in an informal financial institution (such as Saving and Credit Cooperatives and Village Savings & Loan Associations)?

The "Financial Literacy" scale is a summative scale consisting of Budgeting Skills (c3a, c3b) and Savings Skills (c4, c5a, c5b). The two budgeting skills items were coded with response options 1 through 3, while the three saving skills items were coded with response options 0 and 1. To create the Financial Literacy scale, the coding for the saving skills items were left as-is (0 and 1). We recoded the two budgeting skills items as 0 if survey participants responded with 'Does not resemble me' (1), and 1 if 'Resembles me a little' (2) or 'Resembles me a lot' (3). The five items were then added up to create the Financial Literacy Scale. To summarize, budgeting skills contribute 2 of the 5 Financial Literacy points; saving skills contribute the other 3 points. In other words, youth with budgeting but no saving skills can have a maximum of 2 points; youth with saving skills but no budgeting skills can have a maximum of 3 points.

Appendix B: Items and structure of “Work Supports & Resources” composite

Item	Question	
		<i>Tangible Assets</i>
C8	I am able to access land for the cultivation of food crops or for earning money	
C9	I am able to access a place to raise animals for getting food or for making money	
C10	I am able to access fishable areas to get food or earn money	
C11	I am able to get access to natural resources (such as Coal mines, stone-pits, marble quarry) which I can use to make money	
C12	I am able to get the tools or equipment I need to earn money	
C13	I am able to attain the raw materials or the substances I need to earn money and Credit Cooperatives and Village Savings & Loan Associations)	
		<i>Work Support and Resources</i>
C22	My family helps me to learn the skills and ideas that I can use in my work	
C23	My family supports my ideas to work or to earn money	
C24	My family helps me to see how the things that I am doing now will help me in the future	
C25	Others in my community help me learn the skills and ideas that I can use in my work	
C26	Other people in my community support my ideas for work or for earning money	
C27	Other people in my community help me to see how the things that I am doing now will help me in the future	

The “Work Support and Resources” scale was created combining two scales namely: “Tangible Assets” and “Support for Work Development” which looks at family and community support for work. “Tangible assets” is a summative scale of items c8 through c13. Youth who scored LOW have 2 or fewer tangible assets. Youth who scored MEDIUM have 3 or 4 tangible assets. Youth who scored HIGH have 5 or 6 tangible assets. The “Support for Work Development” scale is created using the six family support (c22 through c24) and community support (c25 through c27) items. We calculated a mean score from these six items: we considered youth with a mean score lower than 3 to have inadequate levels of support; youth with a mean score of 3 or greater have adequate levels of support.

Appendix C: Items and structure of Developmental Assets Profile (DAP): DAP Items

Description of Eight DAP categories

THE EIGHT CATEGORIES OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS	
External Assets	Internal Assets
 <p>SUPPORT Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.</p>	 <p>COMMITMENT TO LEARNING Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.</p>
 <p>EMPOWERMENT Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.</p>	 <p>POSITIVE VALUES Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy life choices.</p>
 <p>BOUDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.</p>	 <p>SOCIAL COMPETENCIES Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions, and to cope with new situations.</p>
 <p>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME Young people need opportunities—outside of school—to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.</p>	 <p>POSITIVE IDENTITY Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel that they have control over the things that happen to them.</p>

Description of Five Contexts for Building Developmental Assets

Context	Description	Examples of These Assets*
Personal assets	Internal strengths that shape the character of young people, including their self-concept, values, attitudes, and capabilities.	Honesty Restraint Planning and decision making A sense of purpose
Social assets	Social assets are experienced through personal relationships with others, particularly their friends.	Peaceful conflict resolution Positive peer influence Interpersonal competence Other adult relationships
Family assets	Assets experienced in the family	Family support Positive family communication Useful roles in the family Family boundaries
School assets	Assets experienced in school	Achievement motivation School engagement Caring school climate School boundaries
Community assets	Assets experienced in community settings other than school	Community values youth Youth programs Religious community

Internal Consistency Reliabilities for the DAP in Uganda POS Baseline

Alpha reliabilities of DAP scales, Uganda Baseline, n=789		
Asset Scale	Alpha Coefficient	Meaning
Total DAP	.96	Excellent
External Asset Scale	.91	Excellent
Internal Asset Scale	.94	Excellent
SUPPORT Young people need to be surrounded by people, who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.	.79	Acceptable
EMPOWERMENT Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.	.74	Acceptable
BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.	.80	Good
CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME Young people need opportunities—outside of school—to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.	.68	Promising
Internal Asset Scale	.81	Good
COMMITMENT TO LEARNING Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.	.77	Acceptable
POSITIVE VALUES Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy life choices, including responsibility, empathy, and self-control.	.79	Acceptable
SOCIAL COMPETENCIES Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions, and to cope with new situations.	.82	Good
POSITIVE IDENTITY Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel that they have control over the things that happen to them.	.76	Acceptable
PERSONAL CONTEXT	.86	Good
SOCIAL CONTEXT	.85	Good
FAMILY CONTEXT	.82	Good
SCHOOL CONTEXT	.86	Good
COMMUNITY CONTEXT	.86	Good
Notes. An alpha reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered acceptable; a coefficient of .60 and above is promising. Green shading indicates that revision might be necessary.		

Interpreting the DAP

Total DAP Score for youth and the percentage of your youth who fall into four levels based on their survey results are: Below DAP Threshold; Approaching DAP Threshold; Meets DAP Threshold; and Exceeds DAP Threshold. Quartile level scores for all DAP sub-scales are defined on a 0-30 scale. The total DAP score, however, is defined on a 0-60 scale. Table

below shows each quartile score definition. Brief description of the DAP interpretation (e.g.: below DAP threshold)

<i>Definition of DAP Score Quartiles, by Scale</i>		
	Total DAP Scale (out of 60)	DAP Asset Categories and Context View Scales (Out of 30)
Below DAP Threshold	0-29	0-15
Approaching DAP Threshold	30-41	16-20
Meets DAP Threshold	42-51	21-25
Exceeds DAP Threshold	52-60	26-30

Appendix D: Items and structure of “Self-Employment Skills” composite

Item	Question
C16.a	I am able to develop a business plan
C16.b	I am comfortable negotiating prices when buying or selling items
C16.c	I feel able to identify a business idea that is safe and through which you can make money
C16.d	I am confident that I have the skills to run a profitable business
<p>The “Self-employment Skills” scale is created using items c16a through c16d and then calculating the mean score of these four items. We considered youth with a mean score lower than 2.5 to have inadequate Self-employment Skills; youth with a mean score of 2.5 or greater have adequate self-employment skills</p>	

Appendix E: Items and structure of “Workplace Teamwork and Drive” composite

Item	Question
C2.a	I work well on my own without the need for someone to guide me on what I have to do
C2.b	I work well as a team member
C2.c	I work hard to achieve success and reach my goals
C2.d	I am good at learning new skills
<p>The “Workplace Teamwork and Drive” scale is created using items c2a through c2d and then calculating the mean score of these four items. We considered youth with a mean score lower than 2.5 to have inadequate Workplace Teamwork and Drive; youth with a mean score of 2.5 or greater have adequate Workplace Teamwork and Drive</p>	

Appendix F: Items and structure of “Adequate Savings & Adequate Credit Access” composite

Item	Question	
	<i>I have enough Savings to:</i>	<i>Adequate Savings</i>
C14.a	Support my family for one week	
C14.b	Buy the necessary materials to start or develop a business.	
C14.c	Pay expenses if one of my family members is affected by sudden illness	
C14.d	Pay for books or tools necessary for school	
C14.e	Buy suitable work clothes	
	<i>I can get a formal or informal loan to:</i>	<i>Adequate Credit</i>
	<i>Access</i>	
C15.a	Support my family for one week	

- C15.b Buy the necessary materials to start or develop a business.
- C1.c Pay expenses if one of my family members is affected by sudden illness
- C14.d Pay for books or tools necessary for school
- C14.e Buy suitable work clothes

"Adequate Savings" and "Adequate Credit Access" are both summative scales. Adequate Savings consists of items c14a through c14e; Adequate Credit Access consists of items c15a through c15e. In both measures, youth were considered to have LOW levels if they scored 2 or lower; MEDIUM levels if they scored 3 or 4; HIGH levels if they scored all 5 items.