

Participation of Youth in Community Development Programs in Uganda. A Comparative Study of Naads and HPI Programs in Bungokho Subcounty, Mbale District, Uganda

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Abstract The youth, especially in developing countries have not been successfully integrated into civil society, decision-making frameworks and the general development process, which affect their present and future livelihoods. Youth in Uganda continue to dominate ranks of most vulnerable and most powerless groups in the labour market and decision making spheres. It is therefore imperative to explore the dynamics of youth's involvement in the development process. The study evaluated participation of the youth aged 15-30 years in community development programs in Uganda by comparing NAADS and HPI programs in Mbale district. The study used sample survey design to collect data from 165 individual households and 20 key informant interviews and 4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with female and male youth were conducted. Quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for social Scientist (SPSS) version 18. Qualitative data was analysed according to themes and sub themes of the study. The information gathered was utilized in identifying the level of youth involvement, benefits that accrue to youth through participation and the challenges associated with participation of youth in community development programs. Findings indicated limited involvement of youth in development process at all stages, save for implementation stage where 83% confirmed that they are involved. Through participation in community development programs, youth benefit from direct and indirect employment, acquisition of knowledge and skills, increased incomes, increased ownership of household assets/resources and improved family nutrition. The challenges for youth participation in community development (both NAADS and HPI) programs included lack of leadership and management skills among the youth, group regulatory barriers and impediments, development programs not targeting youth, irregular involvement of the youth, lack of information about development programs, youth holding negative attitude about the development programs, design and implementation challenges. There is a weakness in the lack of a comprehensive and consistence framework by both NAADS and HPI to ensure effective participation of youth at various levels of development process. It is therefore important for development actors to design youth engagement approaches and strategies to integrate youth in the development process right from program design stage. Also NAADS and HPI need to design special packages i.e. consider youth development needs and interests separate from the general community development needs and interests to attract youth to effectively participate in the process.

Keywords: Participation, youth, community development, Mbale district, Uganda

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

Young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are almost 1.2 billion, implying 18 per cent of the global population [1,2]. Over 3 billion people, nearly half of the world's

populations are under the age of 25, and the youth population is projected to peak up to approximately 1.5 billion in 2035 [3]. This population is likely to increase most rapidly in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and South East Asia by 26 percent and 20 percent respectively by 2035 [4]. This youth protrusion has far reaching consequences in terms of development, growth and good governance.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the most youthful region in the world with 28 per cent of its population ranging from 12

to 24 years old [5]. Unemployment and poverty are key challenges facing the youth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region. Youth unemployment and poverty are a widespread problem in Africa stemming from the general lack of employment opportunity, high population growth and low literacy rates, poor quality education, and skills mismatch [6]. The number of young people aged 15 to 24 seeking jobs in SSA continues to outpace the number of new jobs being created in the region [7]. While the youth labour force in SSA grew by 29.8 per cent, youth unemployment grew by 34.2 per cent in the region in the last ten years. More so, hundreds of million are stuck in working poverty, living on less than US\$2 per day. It is estimated that 209 million young people or 18 percent of all youth, live on less than one US dollar a day, and 515 million young people, or nearly 45 percent live on less than (1\$2) US dollar per day [8]. The regional figures follow the global trend in which the number of unemployed youth has continued to rise year after year.

Uganda has the world's youngest population with over 78 percent of its population below the age of 30 years. With just under eight million youth aged 15-30, the country also has one of the highest youth unemployment rates of 68 percent in SSA. Although Uganda is making strides economically, it faces significant challenges in meeting its young people's needs today and their challenges tomorrow as its population continues to grow at a rate of 3.2 percent annually [9]. In 2010, Uganda was ranked second in youth unemployment globally. Urban youth unemployment was 12 per cent about seven times the rural rate of 1.7 per cent [10]. Therefore the country needs to design sound policies that will ensure effective integration of young people in development and governance processes.

Despite their majority representation on the population structure, there is no single agreed definition of youths across the world. Different countries world over define youths differently according to age bracket and other sets of characteristics. The UN official definition of youth refers to people in the age bracket 15-24 years [11]. While the African Youth Charter promulgated in 2006 by the African Union considers that youth as people/persons between 15 – 35 years of age. In Uganda, youth are defined as all young persons between the ages of 18 –30 years [12]. This study considered youth (men and women) aged between 15 to 30 years. This is because the majority of young people in this age bracket are still dependent on their parents, worst hit by unemployment and poverty, most of them do not own any productive resources, 2/3 of the population in low income countries are under the age of 25 years, they are looked at as too young to make any meaningful decisions, among others.

Since the 1990s youth participation has become increasingly popular. Youth participation refers to the involvement of youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs, with opportunities for planning and decision-making affecting others in an activity whose impact or consequence is extended to others [13]. This recognizes and nurtures the strengths, interests and abilities of young people through the provision of real opportunities to become involved in decisions that affect them at individual and systemic levels.

Youth participation can take many forms, from encouraging youth volunteering in community

development projects, to empowering young people to offer their perspectives on world issues, to having youth serve as members of advisory boards, become peer mentors, and lead development programs, non-profit organizations and small businesses. However, what is most important is that in all these cases, attention is paid to the quality of this participation - to ensure that young people are not just token figures, but that they are meaningfully engaged in ways that strengthen their problem-solving, decision-making and leadership skills [14]. This prepares and engages young people today to actively build both a better future and a better present. It also illustrates one of the most effective forms of sustainable development- achieved only when the processes cultivated today last for generations to come.

Community development is facilitated by the ability of local people to mobilize resources to address local needs. Youth are in a position to be among the stable and long-term contributors that help guide this process. Youth represent a vast and often untapped resource for immediate and long-term community development efforts. They also provide an invaluable resource for program planning and effective evaluation of both Government and NGOs programs. As youth are brought into and connected with organizations and civic roles that they have traditionally been excluded from, they can participate in active and equal decision-making at multiple levels. As youth engage in more sustained positive relationships with adults, other youth, and community organizations, they will learn that they are valued citizens of their communities. Such collaborations will lead to skill enhancement and confidence-building traits, which will help prepare them for navigating toward adulthood [15]. The general overview is that development objectives cannot be met if young people are not involved and taken into account.

The government of Uganda has established policies that seek to integrate youth in development programs. In addition to NAADS program and the 2001 National Youth Policy, which encourages youth involvement in the development process, other policies promote universal education, integration of gender into all aspects of development, Entandikwa scheme and the rights of youth to HIV counselling and testing. However, besides such good plans and intentions to increase youth access to socio-economic services, there is no preparation to empower young people through their meaningful participation in the planning and execution of these services either by Government or NGOs.

In addition to the government interventions, a number of interventions by non-state actors have also been implemented in the country. These range from livelihood improvement and humanitarian interventions mainly provided by international agencies such as Heifer Project International (HPI), UNDP, World vision, Red Cross Society, among others targeted to meet the needs of youths to development interventions. This study used HPI and NAADS as case studies representing NGOs and Government sectors respectively.

1.1.1. Background to NAADS and Heifer Project International (HPI)

National Agriculture Advisory Services (NAADS) is a program of the government of Uganda put in place to

increase the efficiency and effectiveness of agricultural extension service. It is a semi-autonomous body formed under NAADS Act of June 2001 with a mandate to develop a demand driven, farmer-led agricultural service delivery system targeting the poor subsistence farmers, with emphasis to women, youth and people with disabilities. The program is currently in its Phase II of implementation under the Agricultural Technology and Agribusiness Advisory Services (ATAAS) Project set up to support and strengthens implementation and collaboration between the full national programs of National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO) and NAADS [16].

The NAADS Program aims at increasing farmer access to information, knowledge and technology for profitable agricultural production, using a farmer owned and demand-driven approach [16]. The philosophical underpinning for the NAADS design is the need to empower farmers—particularly the poor and women—to demand and control agricultural advisory services. In addition, it is grounded into the overarching government policies of decentralization, liberalization, privatization and increased participation of the people in decision making.

NAADS became operational in 2001 and is an innovative public-private extension service delivery approach. NAADS was initiated in 2001 in six trailblazing districts (Arua, Kabale, Kibaale, Mukono, Soroti and Tororo), within which the NAADS program began working in 24 sub-counties. NAADS rolled out in 2002/03 into ten new districts (Bushenyi, Busia, Iganga, Kabarole, Kapchorwa, Kitgum, Lira, Luwero, Mbarara and Wakiso), in which it covered 46 sub-counties; it also expanded to 54 additional sub-counties in the trailblazing districts [17]. In 2003/2004 to 2004/2005, NAADS expanded into 13 new districts (Hoima, Kamuli, Mbale, Nakapiripit, Rakai, Apac, Kanungu, Kumi, Masaka, Moyo, Rukungiri, Yumbe and Bugiri), bringing NAADS coverage to a total of 29 districts and 280 sub-counties [18]. However, by 2011 the NAADS program had covered all the districts in the country.

NAADS implementation guidelines have over the years shifted from providing agricultural extension due to decrees and proclamations that have altered NAADS act creating conflict of roles [19]. Currently, NAADS has its own structures up to the Sub County level. The government wants to harmonise NAADS with the district extension staff to become one single unit to ensure effective service delivery [20].

On the other hand, Heifer Project International (HPI) is an International Non-profit Organization founded in 1944 and assists resource poor households to build their communities to work towards ending hunger, poverty and to care for the earth through sharing of livestock and knowledge. The mission of HPI is to work with families and communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth. Since its inception in Uganda in 1982, HPI-U main focus has been to assist needy families improve their nutrition status and income through training and provision of various species of livestock and other agricultural inputs like improved seeds and seedlings depending on suitability and capacity to profitably manage the enterprise [21].

HPI-U strategy is strongly anchored on Heifer's unique "Twelve cornerstones for just and sustainable development", denoted by the acronym; PASSING on the GIFTS. Passing on the gifts mechanism has a greater multiplier

effect and allows sharing of resources amongst community members, greater cohesion and participation. Heifer Uganda also stresses skills development of both staff and partners [21]. HPI trains a wide range of participants in Heifer's 12 Cornerstones for Sustainable Development, gender equity, HIV/AIDS, organizational development, values-based planning, sustainable agriculture and agro-ecology. Lessons on diversification, enterprise development, and instructions for cooperative bulking and marketing surplus aimed at improved incomes.

HPI has implemented various projects such as dairy cattle projects, dairy goat projects and animal traction projects in the Eastern region. In all its' activities, HPI is committed to improving nutrition and food security, ensuring increased crop yields from better agro-ecological practices and diversifying livestock raising with other enterprises. Further, there is improved access to vegetables from kitchen gardens, sharing integrated livestock and environmental conservation skills with fellow farmers, increased awareness of HIV/AIDS through educational project activities and more harmonious relationships within families from gender and family trainings.

However, there is insufficient information relating to the benefits of such interventions on the youths, let alone the levels of youth participation in these interventions as well as the challenges of participation. Gaps in youth participation in governance and development interventions have been noted across different societies. This study identified the benefits accrued to youth through participation in community development and the level of youth participation. In addition, the challenges associated with youth participation in community development programs were also identified.

1.1.2. Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of involvement of the youth in NAADS and HPI programs
2. To identify the benefits of youths' participation in NAADS and HPI programs
3. To identify the challenges associated with the participation of the youth in NAADS and HPI programs

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design, Area and Population of the Study

The research design was cross-sectional in nature. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection were used. The qualitative methods employed included the following:

- Documentary review; Secondary data relevant to the study subject was collected prior to the field visit. The documentary materials that were reviewed include; textbooks, journals, magazines, articles, newsletters, project reports, annual reports and newspapers.
- Key informant interviews with local leaders and other stakeholders at different levels.
- Focus Group Discussions with youth between 15-30 years (those who did not participate in quantitative interview)

The quantitative approach involved a household survey among the youth in selected sub counties.

The study was conducted in greater Bungokho Sub-county (Bungokho main and Bumbobi Sub counties), Mbale district. Mbale District is located in the Eastern Region of Uganda. The study population comprised of 165 youth aged 15-30 years, and 20 key Informants. The key informants included; Sub county chiefs, Sub county NAADS coordinators, community development officers, youth councillors, community elders/opinion leaders, HPI extension workers.

2.2. Sample Size and Selection Procedure

The researcher used the individual youth as a sample unit from greater Bungokho Sub County, Mbale district. The study used simple random sampling because random sampling is done without the personal bias of the researcher. Through collaboration with local leaders, a list of youth participating in community development programs was generated. This list acted as the sampling frame. Using the sampling frame, a random selection included a total of 165 youth aged between 15-30 years. Those youth that were not considered for quantitative part of the study were reserved for participation in FGDs. Purposive sampling was also used to select key informants who seemed to be more knowledgeable on the study like community workers, elders and youth leaders. The total qualitative sample was 20 key informants.

2.3. Data Management and Analysis

Quantitative data analysis: The household survey data was analyzed using the computer statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 18.0. The format of the outputs is mainly in the form of frequencies as well as

tabulations with proportions [percentages] displayed – as deemed appropriate. Graphic representation was also used.

Qualitative data analysis: Qualitative data was analysed according to themes and sub themes of the study. These were continuously analysed before, during and after data collection. In this case, thematic analysis of responses from the FGDs and key informant interviews were clearly done in order to clean code and analyse for better results. This was followed by identification of the possible code categories.

2.4. Ethical Consideration

While in the field, the rights of individual were respected throughout the process of data collection. Consent was sought from selected respondents before interviewing them. For the respondents below the age of 18 years, permission to interview them was first sought from their parents and guardians. The respondents were informed of their rights to or not to participate in the study. Also respondents were assured of confidentiality for the information given, and that it would not be used for anything else other than this study.

3. Results

To get a better understanding of all the background characteristics, the researcher computed ages of the respondents, gender of the respondents, education levels, and marital status of the respondents, sources of income/occupation for the youth and household composition of the survey respondents that were interviewed (Table 1). The study respondents were drawn from two community development programs i.e. NAADS and HPI programs respectively.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	NAADS		HPI		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Age						
15- 20 years	33	20.0	13	7.8	46	27.8
21-25 years	19	11.5	23	13.9	42	25.4
26-30 years	31	18.7	46	28.4	77	46.6
Total	83	50.2	82	49.8	165	100.0
Gender						
Male	32	19.4	28	17.0	60	36.4
Female	51	30.9	54	32.7	105	63.6
Total	83	50.3	82	49.7	165	100.0
Education						
Illiterate	2	1.2	2	1.2	4	2.4
Primary	32	19.4	46	27.9	78	47.3
Secondary	40	24.2	27	16.4	67	40.6
Tertiary	9	5.5	7	4.2	16	9.7
Total	83	50.3	82	49.7	165	100.0
Marital Status						
Single	38	23.0	21	12.7	59	35.8
Married	37	22.4	56	33.9	93	56.4
Divorced	8	4.8	5	3.0	13	7.9
Total	83	50.3	82	49.7	165	100.0
Persons Living in a Household						
1-4	0	-	6	3.6	6	3.6
5-8	25	15.2	20	12.1	45	27.3
9-12	34	20.6	41	24.8	75	45.5
Over 13	24	14.5	15	9.1	39	23.6
Total	83	50.3	82	49.7	165	100.0
Occupation						
Peasant farmer	51	30.9	52	31.5	103	62.4
Small scale businesses	2	1.2	7	4.2	9	5.5
Others	30	18.2	23	13.9	53	32.1
Total	83	50.3	82	49.7	165	100.0

The majority of study respondents under NAADS program were aged between 15-20 years, followed by those in the age bracket of 26-30 years and 21-25 years respectively. Whereas the majority of study respondents under HPI programs were sampled from the age group of 26-30 years, followed by the age group of 21-25 years and 15-20 respectively. In all, the majority of the study respondents who participated in this study were between 26-30 years. This was followed by the study respondents aged between 15-20 years and 21-25 years respectively. This indicates that the aged people of the age that are regarded as youth (that is 15-30 years) in this study participate in NAADS and HPI programs.

The study both male and females respondents were selected and interviewed in this study. The study respondents selected and interviewed were mainly females. This therefore implies that more females were studied in this study than males. This further implies that there is no gender bias in the community development programs once gender has their own quota in the development process. This also means that there are more females participating in community development programs.

Once more, results indicated that the respondents' education status varies from primary school education to tertiary level as type of formal education. The majority of study respondents selected from NAADS program have attained secondary level education as compared to those selected from HPI programs where few have attained secondary education. On the other hand, the majority of study respondents under HPI program have attained primary level education as compared to NAADS program. In addition, few respondents under both NAADS and HPI programs have attained tertiary level of education. In all, almost all the study respondents have attained some level of education at the time of interview. The majority of study respondents have attained primary education level, followed by secondary education level and tertiary education level respectively at the time of interview. This study registered very few respondents that were illiterate at the time of interview. This implies that most of the youth in the study area can read and write in their dialect Rumasaba. From key informant interviews and FGDs, the increase in the number of people attaining primary and secondary education was attributed to the introduction of Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education respectively. It is important to note that the education levels are likely to significantly influence community's capacity to appreciate, make informed decisions and effectively participate in the development process.

The majority of the study respondents in NAADS program were single as compared to HPI where the majority were married at the time of interview. This means that NAADS programs integrate youth in its operations than HPI program. Furthermore, few of the study respondents in NAADS and HPI programs were divorced at the time of interview. Over all, the majority of the respondents were married at the time of the interview. This implies that youth marry very early. This agreed with the findings of [22] as reported that factors that constrain youth participation in community development youth work long hours during peak season and unemployed during the slack period and also they marry very early mostly on the choice of their parents. This however, was a good indicator for the development process as married

people are more settled and could sustain their participation in community development process as a way of improving the livelihoods of their families. Furthermore, some of the study respondents were single while very few divorced at the time of interview. This once again is a good attribute for the participation of youth in the community development programs. It indicates that the study target population i.e. youth aged 15-30 years are involved in the development process at one level or the other. In all, it should be noted that all categories of people were represented in the sample and that they all do take part in the development process. This is good as the development process is embracing regardless of one's marital status.

The majority of the respondents under NAADS and HPI programs who participated in the study have a household occupancy of between 9-12 persons. This was followed by the respondents who have a household occupancy of between 5-8 persons and 1-4 persons respectively. Also extreme cases of over 13 persons in a household were registered under both NAADS and HPI programs. The population size at household level has a bearing on effective participation in the development process. The household size can act as an impediment for one to engage in the community development process.

The majority of study respondents under NAADS derive their livelihoods from peasant farming, followed by other occupations like brick laying, construction, fetching water, exchange of labour etc. and small scale businesses respectively. Also the majority of study respondents under HPI programs derive their livelihoods from peasant farming, followed by other occupations like brick laying, construction, fetching water, exchange of labour etc. and small scale businesses respectively. Overall, the majority of the respondents who participated in this study derive their livelihood/income from peasant farming. This means that tillage of the land is the main occupation of the majority of the study respondents. This further implies that an agricultural related community development project would be the best option for this particular community. However, we are yet to find out whether NAADS and HPI programs (both agriculture related programs) are well embraced by the community that derived its livelihood from farming.

Results revealed that participation of in the community development programs is in form of carrying out a number of program related activities (Figure 1).

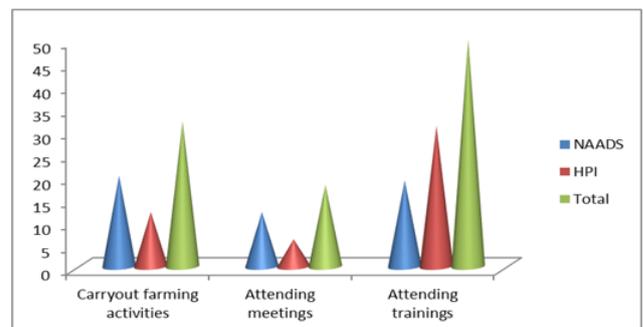


Figure 1. Forms of youth participation in community development programs

This study investigated forms in which the youth participate in community development programs. It was

revealed that participation of youth in the community development programs is in form of carrying out a number of program related activities. As observed from Figure 2, the majority of study respondents under NAADS program participate in the development process by carrying out farming activities promoted by the program, this was followed by those study respondents who participate in the program by attending program trainings and program related meetings respectively. However, the majority of study respondents under HPI programs participate in development process by attending program trainings, followed by those who participate by carrying out farming activities and attending program related meetings respectively.

From Figure 2, half of the study respondents reported that they participate in community development programs by attending trainings organized by program technical staff, followed by those who participate in the program by carrying out farming activities (basis of being farmers) and attending program related meetings respectively. The program meetings identified here include; village planning meetings, especially under NAADS program and Project Self-review and planning meetings (PSRPs) under HPI Program. This form of participation does not promote ownership of the programs, a factor that affects youth to effectively participate in the community development programs.

From key informant interviews and FGDs, it was revealed there are no clearly defined identification criteria for youth to participate in the community development process. However, to be eligible to participate in either

NAADS or HPI programs, one must either be a member of farmers' group, an orphan/OVC or a member of TASO especially for those participating in HPI/TASO project. It was further revealed that identification criteria have an implication on the participation of youth in the community development programs:

The chairperson moves around identifying people to benefit in the program. And to be selected, one must be a group member, an orphan or vulnerable child and or a person living with HIV/AIDS. It becomes more difficulty for youth to participate in the development program when the key requirement is to be a member of a farmers' group. For us youth here in Bungokho, we are not united, there is no any youth group to mobilise us to participate in the program. There is no youth representative on the group leadership committees and the views of the youth are not represented anywhere on the groups' agendas. Also groups set hard conditions, for instance, to join a group, one must be aged 18 years and above. (FGD Participant in Bungokho main sub county).

All those issues combined, the youth automatically find it harder to effectively participate in community development program.

Results obtained from youth participation in community development programs according to different stages of the development process. The levels of the development process analysed are needs assessment level, program design/planning level, program implementation level, program routine monitoring and evaluation level (Table 2).

Table 2. Levels of youth Involvement in Community Development Programs

Levels of participation	NAADS		HPI		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Needs assessment level						
Involved	29	57	22	43	51	100
Not involved	54	47	60	53	114	100
Design/planning level						
Involved	65	82	14	18	79	100
Not involved	18	21	68	79	86	100
Implementation level						
Involved	68	50	69	50	137	100
Not involved	15	54	13	46	28	100
Routine monitoring level						
Involved	11	73	4	27	15	100
Not involved	72	48	78	52	150	100
Evaluation level						
Involved	19	25	56	75	75	100
Not involved	64	71	26	29	90	100

As illustrated on Table 2, there is limited participation of youth in community development programs at the needs assessment level. Generally, few of the respondents under the NAADS and HPI programs respectively reported that they are involved in the programs at needs assessment level. Meanwhile, majority of respondents under NAADS and HPI programs respectively reported that they are not involved in community development programs at the needs assessment level. The reality is that the majority of the youth do not participate in the development process at the level of needs assessment. The findings show that there is no much difference between NAADS and HPI programs as regards involvement of youth at needs assessment level. In other words, there is

limited involvement of youth by both programs at the needs assessment level. This implies that the young people are not prepared right from the initial stages of the development process to make independent development decisions. Also there will be limited ownership of the development program by the youth since they were not brought on board at an early stage.

From key informant interviews and FGD, it was found out that there is no meaningful participation of youth at the needs assessment level by both NAADS and HPI programs. NAADS program as well as HPI program conduct needs assessment/Sustainable Livelihoods Assessments (SLA) with community members before the commencement of the program/project, but at this level

the youths only participate as data collectors. This means that very few youth who are paid to do the work are involved in the exercise. Also the youths are used to collect data not because it is a way of integrating them into the program, rather they are young and energetic hence able to move from home to home collecting data.

This study also analysed participation of youth in community development programs at the program design/planning level. As indicated on Table 2, majority of study respondent in NAADS programs reported that they participate in community development programs at program design/planning stage as compared to few respondents in HPI program. Therefore NAADS is doing better than HPI in terms of integrating youth in the development process at the planning level. In all, slightly below average of the study respondents reported that they are involved in the development process at the program planning level. While slightly above average of the study respondents reported that they are not involved in the development process at the program planning level. However, it was revealed that participation of respondent in community development programs at planning stage is limited to attending village planning meetings.

On contrary, interviews with key informants and FGDs found out that there is no active involvement of youths at the program design/planning stage by both NAADS and HPI programs. Real planning is done at the upper levels/secretariat, and what happens at the community is more of selling the ideas. One of the key informants said;

Only few community members especially old men and women who seem to have knowledge about a particular community's norms and culture are consulted at this level. At this level, the views of community members are collected through participatory village meetings. In some cases, their views are incorporated in the program design depending on the availability of funds. In some other instances their views are left out reason being that they are consulted when the program is already designed. In other word, they are consulted at the implementation stage.

Also, it was revealed that very few youths participate in enterprises selection meetings under NAADS program, for example, only 40 youths (in the age bracket of 18-30) in the entire sub county of Bungokho, Mbale district participated in enterprise selection meetings in the financial year 2012/2013. These were the youth who were considered to have some piece of land.

Interviews with key informants further revealed that HPI project design/planning process is more of a top-bottom approach in that people in the office come up with an idea and design the program, the community come on board at the implementation level, and in most cases, they participate as beneficiaries. *In fact some community members said they never asked for the oxen they were give* (KII with one of HPI extension worker). This means that the community was never consulted on which resources to give them. The KII with HPI extension workers further revealed that the baseline surveys were done when the program/project was already on-going/at implementation stage. In fact the baseline survey was carried out even after the project extension workers had already been recruited; he was one of the staff that participated in data collection. The majority of the youths thus fail even to make their voices heard and represented in the program

design and this further undermines the opportunities for connecting development plans to the specific needs of youths.

NAADS planning process is more participatory than HPI right from the village level. The youth are mobilised to participate but few show up in the village planning meetings. The NAADS implementation guidelines allow youth participate in enterprise selection meetings that are usually organised at the village. It is in these meetings that different choices on enterprise e.g. goats rearing, poultry, crop farming, etc. are made depending on one's preference. HPI does not have this provision, if the project is for dairy goats; everyone who participates in that project is obliged to go with that. This limits the chances of holding village planning meetings under HPI programs. Generally, whether NAADS or HPI, the planning is usually not specific for the youth rather the general community much as youth are encouraged to participate. As such youth shy away from meaningful participation as they are not recognised in the community.

This study also assessed the participation of youth in community development programs at the program implementation level. The study found out that the youth were involved at the implementation level of the development process than any other level. As indicated on Table 2, majority of study respondent in NAADS programs reported that they participate in community development programs at program implementation stage. Also under HPI program, the majority of study respondents reported that they participate in community development programs at program implementation stage. In total, more than three quarters of the study respondents reported that they are involved in the development process at the implementation level. Whereas less than a quarter of the total survey respondents reported that they are not involved in the development process at the implementation level.

The participation of youth in the development programs (both NAADS and HPI) at the implementation level involve carrying out a number of project related activities. These activities include; attending trainings, distribution of the project resources, participate in the procurement process, exchange visits, management of project resources, marketing and promotion of the biogas technology, construction of the biogas (biogas masons), training other farmers and farming (livestock and crop farming).

It was revealed that HPI program integrate youth at the program implementation level, but their integration depend on the willingness of the parents to register their children as direct project beneficiaries. This has an implication on effective participation of youth in the program in that it was not their individual independent choice. Also none registered children find it hard to fully participate in the activities of the program.

It was further revealed that HPI implementation process is guided by the twelve principles normally referred to as HPI cornerstones for a just and sustainable development. One of these cornerstones is full participation. The cornerstone of full participation has greater implication on the participation of youth in the development program at implementation level.

When HPI enters a home, it encourages everybody in that family to fully participate in project activities and management of the project resources. This practice has

seen more young people, even those below the age of 15 years getting involved in the development programs". Said Chairperson NACWOLA Dairy Goats Project.

However, NAADS program do not allow parents to register their children to participate and benefit from the program. It is believed that parents have ownership and control right over productive resources such as land so they should be the ones registered to participate and benefit from the program. This practice has negatively affected the participation of youth in the program. The youth are rarely registered as beneficiaries and as such they show little interest in participating in the program. One of the key informants said;

NAADS is all about who you are in the community, yet the youth are not known in the community. True, the NAADS implementation guidelines emphasises the involvement of youth in the age group of 18-30 years, but the practice on the ground is different, youth are not participating, not because they do not want rather they are discriminated against, they are not selected at all. Youth do not own any productive resources especially land, so they do not automatically qualify to directly participate and benefit from an agricultural related program like NAADS. Youth are considered to be unserious and not interested in farming. Youth especially boys are always lousing in the trading centres. As such nobody selects them to benefit from the program.

This attitude has a close relationship with limited participation of youth in the community development programs especially at the implementation level.

This study further examined the participation of youth in community development programs at the program monitoring (routine monitoring) level. It was discovered that there is limited involvement of youth in the development process at program monitoring level. As shown on Table 2, very few of study respondents in NAADS and HPI programs reported that they participate in community development programs at program monitoring stage. Whereas the majority of the study respondents in NAADS and HPI programs reported that they are not involved in the development process at program monitoring level. In all, less than a quarter of the total study respondents reported that they participate in development program at routine monitoring level. While more than three quarters of the total study respondents reported that they are not involved in the development process at program routine monitoring level. The participation of youth in program monitoring is limited to field visits to assess program performance.

This study further revealed that there are no supportive systems in place to enable youth participate in the development process at the program routine monitoring level. Both NAADS and HPI do not have structures in place to support participation of youth in the community development programs. In the words of one of HPI extension worker;

Monitoring is a challenging issue for HPI programs. Monitoring is done by the group leadership and technical staff from HPI and not by farmers themselves. The youth are not on the farmers' leadership, there is no farmers monitoring committee which probably would include a youth representative.

This therefore makes it hard for youth to participate in the development program at this level. On the other hand, under NAADS, monitoring is the role of Community Based Facilitators (CBFs), farmer fora, sub county technical staff and the political wing. It is only the political wing that has two youth councillors as youth representatives on the monitoring committee.

This study also analysed the participation of youth in the development process at the program evaluation level. As shown on Table 2, few of study respondents in NAADS programs reported that they participate in community development programs at program evaluation stage as compared to HPI program where majority reported that they participate in the program and vice-versa. Overall, about two quarters of the total study respondents reported that they participate in the development programs at evaluation level. While more than two quarters of the total study respondents reported that they are not involved in the development process at program evaluation level.

It was revealed the participation of youth in program evaluation is limited to program review meetings/ project self-review and planning meetings to assess program outcomes. "In some instances, the few youth that had directly benefited from the program only participate in the project self-review and planning meetings that take place once a year" (key informant from Bumbobi).

Generally, the youth are more involved in the community development programs at the implementation level. It is imperative that youth participate actively in the development process at all levels right from needs assessment to program evaluation. Active participation of youth in the development process affects their lives today and has implications for their future. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account.

As far as the benefits associated with youth participation in the community development programs are concerned, Figure 2 presents the results as follows:

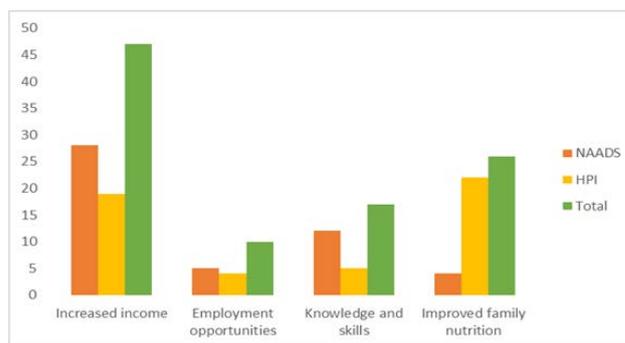


Figure 2. Benefits Associated with Youth Participation in Community development programs

As illustrated on Figure 2, more than two quarters of study respondent in NAADS programs reported increased income as benefit associated with youths' participation in community development programs as compared to less than two quarters of respondents in HPI programs. Whereas less than a quarter of the study respondents in NAADS and HPI programs respectively reported employment opportunities as benefit associated with youths' participation in community development

programs. In addition, about a quarter of study respondent in NAADS programs reported knowledge and skills as benefit associated with youths' participation in community development programs as compared to far less than a quarter of respondents in HPI programs. While far less than a quarter of study respondents in NAADS programs reported improved family nutrition as benefit associated with youths' participation in community development programs as compared to about two quarters of respondents in HPI programs. Overall, the majority of the study respondents asserted increased income as the benefits that accrue to youth through participation in community development programs. This was followed by those respondents who mentioned improved family nutrition, knowledge and skills and employment opportunity respectively as benefits associated with youth participation in community development programs.

Qualitative data showed that through participation in community development programs, youth register

increased income to be able to support themselves hence reduces dependency on their parents. The researcher was interested in finding out how the income of the youth can be increased through participation in either NAADS or HPI programs. It was revealed that increased income is as a result of increased productivity due to use of organic manure, sale of farm produce (crop and animal offspring and milk) and offering services such training other farmers and offering extension services among others. *“Those youth who were given rice seeds and planted them were able to harvest, sold and got some money. Some have even bought motorcycles, but some few youth sold the seeds on their way back home”*. Said Youth councillor from Bungokho.

The researcher was interested in finding out how the youth utilize the incomes realized through participation in community development programs. It was revealed that the youth use the incomes to acquire household resources and assets. This is indicated in [Table 3](#) below.

Table 3. Household Resources and Assets Acquired or Owned by the Study Respondents

Resource/asset acquired or owned	NAADS		HPI		Total (n=165)	
	Present (percent)	Absent (percent)	Present (percent)	Absent (percent)	Present (percent)	Absent (percent)
Communication items						
Radio	45	5	46	4	91	9
TV	8	42	15	35	23	77
Phone	44	6	48	2	92	8
Transport facility						
Motor vehicle	2	48	1	49	3	97
Motor cycle	9	42	8	41	17	83
Bicycle	40	11	33	16	73	27
Animal resources						
Cow	36	15	31	18	67	33
Goat	38	12	40	10	78	22
Chicken	48	2	48	2	96	4
Pig	16	34	14	36	30	70

The ownership and accessibility of households' assets and resources was partly attributed to individuals' participation in NAADS and HPI programs. It was revealed that through participation, youth registered increased incomes that enabled them acquire household assets like radios, cell phones, bicycles, animals and others ([Table 3](#)). Also some of the assets/resources especially animal resources were direct benefits from the programs. This is due to the fact that NAADS and HPI programs are directly involved in distribution of livestock resources to the programs' participants.

This study found out that through participation in the community development programs, the youths are direct and indirect employed. One of the key informants said;

Those who offer extension services, biogas promoters and marketers, biogas masons, among others are directly employed while those who support other community members for instance to construct animal sheds or establish pastures gardens for a pay are indirectly employed.

In addition, it was revealed that majority of the biogas masons, promoters and marketers in Bungokho Sub County are youth. This confirms the view that youth are not interested in participating either in NAADS Program or HPI programs, because these programs are more of agriculture programs yet youth do not want to engage in agricultural activities. They rather want to engage in

activities that bring quick returns to them. Another key informant said; *“Youth cry of unemployment and poverty every day, their participation in NAADS and HPI programs is one way to get employed and generate income for themselves”*. This implies that there is a close relationship between employment, income generation and participation of youth in community development programs.

This study further found out that participation of youth in the development process is the first step to acquire practical knowledge and skills for a better living. This study established the types of knowledge and skills youth acquire from participating in NAADS and HPI programs. It was revealed that youth acquire knowledge and skills on managing income generating activities, improved farming methods, enterprise selection and development, Leadership skills, decision making skills and business development skills among others. It is important to note that participation of youth in the development programs is one way to empower and prepare them to live independent lives. One of the key informants said; *“if youth actively participate in the development programs, they acquire skills, knowledge, they are able to make their own development decisions and can start living on their own”*. This reduces over dependency on parents”. In this case participation in development program is one way to fight dependency syndrome among the youth.

This study established that participation of youth in community development programs not only benefits individual youth but the entire family in terms of improved family nutrition. Improved family nutrition was equated to consumption of milk, green vegetable from backyard vegetable gardens and fruits among others. *“The community development programs help provide youth with a more diverse diet to improve family nutrition and will also open up new economic opportunities as they can receive training and sell excess vegetables and vegetable products to earn income”*. Key informant from Bumbobi.

Other benefits that accrue to youth through participation in community development programs include; increased acquisition and ownership of household resources and assets, empowered to make independent decisions, exposure visits and learn about other communities, get known to the local government officials, improved household food security, social capital, reputation and respect and youth can be given the leadership position either in the program or local government.

The results further indicated that there are numerous challenges associated with participation of youth in NAADS and HPI programs (Figure 3).

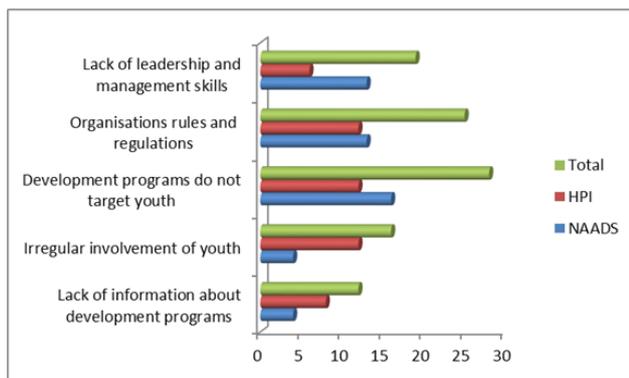


Figure 3. Challenges for Youth Participation in Community Development Programs

The study respondents identified five major challenges (Figure 3) for youth participation in community development programs. The challenges identified include: lack of leadership and management skills, organisations rules and regulations, development programs do not target youth, irregular involvement of youth and lack of information about development programs.

In all, the majority of respondents described lack of leadership and management skills as one of the challenges associated with participation of youth in community development programs. Those respondents who mentioned that development programs do not target youth and organisational rules and regulations as challenges associated with participation of youth in community development programs constituted a quarter of the study respondents. Finally, less than a quarter of the respondents mentioned lack of information about development programs and partial involvement of youth in the development process as challenges associated with participation of youth in community development programs.

FGDs confirmed that there is a gap in information flow regarding the selection criteria; this undermines equitable

distribution of opportunities for youths to participate in the development process.

For us youth, we do not receive any information about the program, sometimes you see vehicles moving around the villages, you see people getting goats, cows etc. when you are not even aware where these are coming from, and even you do not know who is supposed to get what. For us we are left in darkness. (One FGD participant with Bumasekye Youth; 20-25years).

Findings from KIIs revealed that programs design and implementation do not focus on youth engagement processes. As such youth do not attach value to the benefits and resources from such programs. *“It is not a surprise that some of the youth who received rice seeds from NAADS sold them on their way home”*. (Sub county NAADS coordinator).

It was established that youth hold negative attitudes about the development programs. In fact one of the key informants said;

The youth think the program will take long to generate benefits, Youth want quick benefits yet government programs such as NAADS take long to generate such gains. They take themselves to be busy to engage in such a program that will take centuries to generate gains. Also they feel they will not be considered to participate and benefit from such a program.

As such the youth show low morale to participate in the community development programs. Relatedly, adults also are biased towards youth participation in the development process. Youth are looked at as people who are not settled to effectively participate in the program. As such they are left out during the selection process.

The study also found out that lack of land ownership and control rights negatively affects the participation of youth in NAADS and HPI programs. The community development officer, bungokho Sub County said, *“Most youth do not own any piece of land. NAADS is all about agriculture (crop farming and livestock keeping) and Agriculture requires land”*. Land is such an important resource for the youth to participate and benefit from any agriculture related programs like NAADS and HPI.

This study further found out that the participation of youth in the development process is indirect. Youth participate mainly through their parents. This practice is common with HPI program where parents register their children as beneficiaries. This means that the youth are not allowed to make their own independent decisions but to go by the decisions of their parents. In addition, it was revealed that the program design leaves out the specific needs of the youth.

The design does not also give youth a chance to make decisions. There are no options to choose from especially with the HPI program for example if it's a dairy goats' project, one have to go with that. Alternatively under the NAADS program, there are few options to take but still they are limited to crop farming or livestock farming. (Said Sub county chief, Bumbobi Sub County).

Other challenges associated with youth participation in community development programs identified include; Dependency on parents, some youth take themselves to be still young to live independent lives. So they see no reason why to engage in development programs yet their parents

still provide for them, mobilisation is not done well; not targeting the youth, sometimes the youth do not get information about the development programs, selection process is biased. With NAADS program, selection is about numbers and in most cases, the youth are very few in numbers during the selection meetings. As such they cannot gang together and gather support for their fellow youth, and age restriction; Under the NAADS program, the youth below 18 years old are considered too young to make any meaningful decisions and to own any resources and they are automatically left out.

The researcher tried to find out how the above challenges have been managed or can be managed. The study revealed that under NAADS program, the youth are encouraged to take on livestock farming as opposed to crop farming. This is so because NAADS implementation guidelines do not require one to have land for pasture growing among others and the beneficiary is expected to keep the animal under zero grazing system of management. However, this is not the case with HPI, in HPI program; the arrangement is that one to benefit from any animal must first of all dedicate about 1-2 acres of land to pasture growing.

Farmer groups have been encouraged to work with youth especially those who are under 18 years old. The implementation guidelines for NAADS have changed from time to time to allow the inclusion of youth on the lead committee. This is one way to pull the youth to participate in the program. However, this has remained on the paper and what is happening on the ground is different.

Relatedly, the HPI implementation principles normally referred to as HPI twelve cornerstones emphasises the inclusion of all categories of people; youth inclusive. In this case, special reference is on three cornerstones, namely; genuine need and justice, full participation and gender and family focus. These cornerstones are very much emphasised during the project implementation process. But the expectation of bringing youth on board is still much far to be realised.

NAADS from time to time has encouraged the formation of youth group so as to participate and benefit from the program. But still the formation of youth groups is yet to be realised. In fact the researcher did not find any active youth group in Bungokho main sub county or Bumbobi Sub County at the time of research.

The NAADS technical team in Bungokho main Sub County has introduced a special package for the youth. Under this package, the youth were singled out and given rice seeds. Unfortunately, some of the youth sold the seeds on their way home.

4. Discussion

The participation of youth in NAADS and HPI programs varies across the different stages of the development process with the majority of respondents reported to participate in the programs at the implementation stage. The varying degrees of youth participation in NAADS and HPI programs is well explained by the 'Ladder of Youth Involvement' as a model that demonstrates the degrees to which young people can be involved in organisations, with the bottom three rungs (Manipulation, Decoration and Tokenism)

referring to non- or low involvement and steps four to nine representing increasing degrees of youth participation, where youth initiate ideas and share decisions with adults [23,24,25]. The model makes it clear that youth can be involved in many different ways within programs and organisations.

Involvement of youth at the early stage of the development process empowers them to make independent development decisions and follow-up development issues affecting them [26,27]. The study noted that there is limited involvement of youth at the needs assessment level by both NAADS and HPI programs. Overall, about three quarters of the total respondents reported that they are not involved in community development programs at the needs assessment level. To make the matters worse, the participation of youth in the development process at this level is limited to data collection.

The participation of youth in the development process as data collectors does not empower them to make any meaningful decision. In fact, this form of youth participation in the development process is termed as manipulation of the youth [23]. Manipulation of the youth consists of children being consulted but given no feedback on the use of the ideas they put forth. Youth are used as a diversion through performance; thus, providing visual evidence that they are involved in the service or project, or they are invited to serve as representatives [23]. This leaves youth with no appreciation of the issues and hence, youth do not understand how their actions are affecting their community. Also, with this kind of participation youth are given no opportunity to create ideas on the subject of discussion. The limited involvement of youth at needs assessment level has serious implications as far as the participation of youth in the development process is concerned. First, their most pressing development needs are likely to be left out in the program design. And once their needs are left out in the planning, then, it becomes very challenging for them to participate effectively in the program at a later stage.

Community development programs design and planning is such a critical stage of the development process that requires active involvement of different stakeholders; youth inclusive. Being the majority on Uganda's population structure, the youth are important stakeholders in planning processes and should be included in every stage of the development process. From the results of the study, about half of the study respondents reported that they participate in community development programs at the planning level. This is promising as more youth are involved in the development process at the planning level. This also implies that the specific needs of the youth would be catered for in the planning process. In addition, youth gain valuable skills from being included in the program planning process. However, the involvement is limited to participating in village planning meetings especially under NAADS program.

The participation of youth in community development programs by only attending village planning meeting only provides visual evidence that youth are involved. But it leaves youth with no appreciation of how they are influencing the development process. This form of participation is what termed as decoration, where adults decide what to do and children take part by participating

in the project in some way or form [24]. In addition, this form of youth participation is described as the lowest factor in youth participation and called it Ad Hoc Input, when youth have a low level of input [25].

The study results showed that youth have an important part to play in the implementation of community development programmes and initiatives. Youth can participate in trainings as trainers and trainees, manage program resources, distribute program resources, and promote the program objectives, among others. Youth taking part in the development process at program implementation level can dramatically improve their own lives, for example through developing skills to increase employability. This study noted that the majority of the study respondents participate in community development programs at the program implementation level. The increasing number of youth participating in the development process at the program implementation level is an indication that youth participation is in terms of implementation rather than input in form of ideas and decisions. The increased number of youth participating in NAADS and HPI programs is well reflected by steps four to nine of the 'Ladder of Youth Involvement' as a model demonstrates the degrees to which young people can be involved in organisations [23,24,25]. Steps four to nine of the Ladder of Youth Involvement represent increasing degrees of youth participation in the development process. Furthermore, youth involvement in development program monitoring and evaluation is critical for the success of such programs. In fact, noted that having youth participate in program monitoring and evaluation is not just a good idea, it is an essential ingredient for success [14]. Unfortunately, this study noted limited involvement of youth in development programs at monitoring and evaluation level. It was further noted that participation of youth in the development process at monitoring and evaluation level is limited to only field visits and attending program reviews/Project self-reviews and planning meetings. This leaves youth with no appreciation of the effects of their participation in the development process. This form of youth participation is best described by pre-participation category of participation which indicates that adults rule kindly. Adults make all the decision and youth are told what to do and are given cause and clarification for what the group is doing. In addition, adults decide what to do and ask youth if they agree. However, the youth are pressured to agree. Furthermore, adults decide what to do and youth take part by participating in the project in some way or form. And finally, adults decide what to do and youth are allowed to make a decision or suggestions on minor facets of the project at a later time [24]. This form of participation leaves the youth disempowered and demoralised to continue participating in the development process.

The analysis of results indicated that through participation in community development programs, youth register increased income to be able to support themselves hence reduces dependency on their parents. This means that participation in the development process is an important and dynamic livelihood option for the youth. The increased income for the sampled individuals were associated with increased milk sales, crop and vegetable sales after application of manure, and in some cases sales of other livestock (poultry, goats) and through offering

extension services to other farmers. Income generated from the milk sales, vegetables and crop produce enabled participating youth to diversify their income sources which has further contributed to increased incomes among the youth. This implies that participation of youth in community development programs is a means of improving their standards of living through increased incomes.

Results from this study further indicated that respondents acquired and owned different assets and resources that would enable them participate in community development programs. The increased acquisition and ownership of resources and assets by respondents was greatly attributed to participation in the two development programs studied. Through participation in NAADS and HPI programs, youth were able to register increase in income which enabled them acquire household resources. In addition, some of the household resources owned especially animal resources were direct benefits from the programs. This was due to the fact that both NAADS and HPI programs are directly involved in livestock placement amongst programs' participants. These assets and resources included; communication related assets, transport related assets and agriculture related assets/resources. The communication related assets enabled households to access information related to community development programs, transport related assets helped the community to move from one place to another to engage in the development process whereas agriculture related assets and resources enabled households to engage in farming as a way of earning a living. Communication related items assessed at each household were radio, television and cell phones. The transport related assets assessed were bicycles, motor vehicles and motorcycles while agriculture related resources assessed included farming tools and livestock.

The results from this study also indicated that only less than a quarter of the study respondents owned functional Television (TV) and the rest of the respondents did not own a television (TV). From the study, it was observed that few individuals own television, meaning that the majority do not access the information related to community development programs that is relayed through this media to community. It is therefore important to design programs after understanding the communication channels- media common to a wide range of people. However, this communication gap is addressed by using other forms of communication channels such as radio messages since this study found out that almost all the study respondent owned a radio and cell phones. This implies that to reach a wider coverage with information related to development programs, it is better to use either radio or cell phones as means of communication. This also allows those individuals with cell phones and radios to mobilize and organize themselves for community development programs' activities such as village planning meetings and trainings. However, this might have not been the case with the group without mobile phones or radios hence they are likely to be left out in the development process.

The majority of the respondents owned bicycles as a means of transport. It is important to note that transport facility matters a lot as regards to one's participation in the development process. The individuals in rural households

far from the main places where for instance development planning meetings take place have transport problem or else, were facilitated by bicycles to access such places. These findings compliment on the findings from a case study done on intermediate means of transport (IMT) where the bicycle was found to be the most common IMT in SSA, and it is used to improve the efficiency of productive tasks, and to serve as a link between farms and villages, nearby road networks, and market towns [28]. The same case study further revealed that the use of bicycles in eastern Uganda where they are a means of generating income for rural traders and for urban poor who work as bicycle riders. In general, bicycles are the common modes of transport for the deep rural communities to access many rural towns or trading centres and main road networks.

The animal resources assessed and owned by respondents at the time of interview included: cattle (local or improved breeds), goats, chicken and pigs. It is important to note that all the study respondents owned either a cow, a goat, a chicken or a pig at the time of interview. Overall, about three quarters of the respondents owned at least one cow and more than three quarters owned at least a goat at the time of interview. Almost all respondents owned chicken whereas more than a quarter owned at least one pig at the time of interview. The ownership of animal resources by study respondents was greatly attributed to NAADS and HPI programs implemented in the area. This is so because the two development programs were directly involved in livestock distribution especially cows and goats (both local and improved breeds). Further, these development programs do not stop at only giving animals to beneficiaries, they go further to encourage communities to diversify their enterprises. As such, the study respondents were able to diversify their enterprises to pigs and poultry rearing among others.

The big number of respondents (youth) that own animal resources is a good indicator for development and poverty eradication programs. Animals (livestock) contribute directly to human nutrition and well-being by providing high-quality protein and fibre and indirectly through draft power for crops and transportation as well as manure for soil improvement. Animals have potential for profitability to provide long-term economic security for education, health care, and housing, while serving as a living savings account for emergencies. In all, a family that owns an animal is better off than family that does not own any animal resources.

This study noted that participation of youth in the development process is the first step to acquire practical knowledge and skills for a better living. Through participation, youth acquire knowledge and skills on managing income generating activities, improved farming methods, enterprise selection and development, Leadership skills, decision making skills and business development skills among others. These findings are comparable with other studies done earlier which indicated that youth participation in development processes provide opportunities for them to develop leadership skills, emotional skills, learn to work with others, and increase their social competencies. Youth identify and acquire skills that will help them direct their attention and effort over time towards a challenging goal.

At the individual level, youth often report improved confidence, self-esteem, and sense of purpose. Youth participation can also provide youth with opportunities to acquire new skills, such as public speaking or fundraising [29,30,31,32].

Therefore, youths' participation in the development process is akin to kill two birds with one stone; whereby it gives more benefit in a community development. This theory is detected by Moser in Asnarulkhadi [33] of the benefits of participation where the first effect is meant for achieving development. Secondly, the participation's goal is to bring changes and gives priority to the direct participation of the togetherness in community, while forming the desired development. On that note therefore, participation is not only able to achieve goals in community development, but it also serves as a tool to enhance the ability of affected individuals through the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

The study further indicated that participation of youth in community development programs is one way to create employment opportunities for the growing population of the youth. The World Bank in its 2008 report reported that Uganda has the highest youth unemployment rate and the youngest population in the world. This has resulted into poverty, early marriages among female youth, cross sexual generation, exploitation of the young generation, high crime rate and insecurity in some parts of the country. In addition, the number of young people aged 15 to 24 seeking jobs in SSA continues to outpace the number of new jobs being created in the region [7]. This therefore calls for the governments to committee a reasonable amount of resources to the cause of the youth. In situations where the governments may not prioritize the agenda for the youth, then the only alternative is community development programs implemented by other development actors such NGOs. These programs put resources in the hands of the communities and can be targeted to build the assets and capacities of the youth. Community development programs offer a platform for promoting youth enterprises, which often include skills development for income generating activities among others. Community development programs are also an ideal channel for low skilled youth to gain short term job opportunities, build their work experiences and employability.

The study noted that participation of youth in community development programs play a central role in improving family nutrition. The analysis of results indicated that youth participation in community development programs enabled them receive dairy cattle and dairy goats. This has led to availability of milk at household level. Also adoption of sustainable agriculture practices especially vegetable growing has increased households' access to green vegetables. The availability of milk and green vegetables at household level is an important determinant for milk and green vegetable consumption by the households in rural areas. These families are better off from nutritional point of view as they take balanced diet because of both increase incomes and increased nutritional awareness by the programs about the benefits of balanced diet, consuming vegetables, milk and fruits.

Other than the benefits that accrue to youth through participation in community development programs, the

study noted that there are numerous challenges associated with participation of youth in NAADS and HPI programs. For instance, effective participation of youth in development programs requires access to information. However, this study found out that youth have limited access to information particularly regarding the development programs and the engagement criteria. Although it was discovered that the majority of the respondents owned/accessed radio and cell phones at the time of interview and these can play an effective role in disseminating development information. The reality is the situation on the ground as regards accessing development information is different.

The results from this study revealed design and implementation challenges facing community development programs pointing to the inadequate focus on youth engagement processes, which result in limited ownership of and benefits from development program interventions. It was established that due to inadequate engagement of youth at the program design level, youth do not at all attach any value in participating in the development programs, later alone on the benefits/resources received from these programs.

In addition, the program design tends to leave out the specific needs of the youth (programs do not target youth). The youth are not consulted at the program design level, as such their needs are not considered. This makes the program not attractive and responsive to youth needs, which results in low morale to engage in the program. It was revealed that youth want to participate in the programs that they find attractive and responsive to their specific needs. Unfortunately both NAADS and HPI programs are not sensitive to such needs of the youth. As a result the youth distance themselves from such programs.

Furthermore, this study noted that both adults and youth hold negative attitudes that militate against the participation of youth in community development programs. Attitude in the case of this study was defined as a tendency to respondent either positively or negatively towards participation of youth in community development programs. It is important to note that attitude influences one's choice of action and responses to challenges, incentives and rewards among others. It was revealed that youth want to participate in programs that bring quick gains as opposed to community development programs which will take long to generate benefits. And because of this youth show little interest to take part in the development process. Also, the attitude of adults is often an impediment to the participation of youth in the development processes.

Adults are biased towards youth engagement in the development process and think that youth are not settled to effectively participate in the program. These findings compliment to other studies done earlier [31,32] which noted that many adults believe that youth are not competent to participate in governance issues or make decisions. They believe that youth are too immature and inexperienced to offer valuable ideas and opinions. Second, adults often see youth involvement in governance or decision-making as a threat to their own power. As a result, many adults resist the idea of increased youth participation. Finally some adults have unrealistic expectations regarding the behaviour and motivations of youth engagement in development processes. They expect

youth to be involved for purely altruistic reasons, and are disappointed if young people's reasons for participating appear to be selfish. They then sometimes discount or even ignore the youth.

5. Conclusion

The success of Uganda's current community development processes will therefore be hinged on the effectiveness of the youth groups coupled with strong civil society to integrate participation of youth. The youth when empowered, are the pillar of citizen participation and engagement because they have the numbers, energy, intellect and mind-set which can be enhanced to accelerate development goals. Increased visibility and voices of the youth is therefore believed to be Uganda's biggest asset for socio-economic change. It is therefore, important to encourage participation of in the development process. The opportunities for participation that youth experience in their communities has the potential to influence their development and the kind of transitions they make to adulthoods. The behaviours and attitudes relating to participation in community development programs that youth adopt as young people predict their lifelong civil affiliation and perspectives.

Authors' Contributions

Anna Akandinda contributed to the design, data collection, drafting and writing of the manuscript. Clovice Kankya contributed to data collection, data analysis and drafting of the manuscript. Peter R. Atekyereza contributed to conception, design, supervision and drafting of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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