UYONET
TOGETHER WE CAN

UGANDA YOUTH NETWORK

ARUA DISTRICT PERFORMANCE REPORT

Towards Better Youth Service Delivery in Community Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDD	Community Demand Development
CDO	Community Development Officer
DGF	Democracy Governance Facility
FY	Financial Year
GoU	Government of Uganda
LG	Local Government
LGSIP	Local Government Sector Investment Plan
MACCO	MAYANK Anti Corruption Coalition
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OPW	Operation Wealth Creation
PWD	Person(s) With Disability
UYONET	Uganda Youth Network

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief presents findings from performance monitoring audits of government programs in Arua district conducted by trained youth monitors. Arua district is one of the three focus districts of this project. The Uganda Youth Network (UYONET) in partnership with MACCO and funded by USAID GAPP, supported a team of trained Youth Councillors in Arua District to monitor and evaluate government programs in the district especially those with youth beneficiaries. With the aim of promoting social accountability at local government level in Arua District, project monitoring was conducted in 13 sub counties and the findings of these reports were discussed at management forums held at Sub County level. The findings were later validated at the district level.

The overall objective of the project was to assess the performance and progress of CDD programme implementation and use the findings to inform Arua District Local Government for appropriate actions to improve the government programs and create more meaningful impact for young people in the district. The initiative focused on identifying the gaps in government programs and recommending solutions to improve service delivery of CDD approach programs specifically; application process, enterprise selection, fund disbursement, enterprise management and sustainability, how it addresses youth challenges and challenges faced during the CDD implementation for community empowerment. It also looked at the role of CDD projects that are in place and helping in the empowerment of the young people in Arua District.

Under these government projects, groups of between 8 and 15 people were provided financial support to set up small businesses and agricultural enterprises. These funds were used to implement a number of income generating projects, which were monitoredincluding: jet car washing, piggery, goat rearing, poultry farming and carpentry among others.

Key activities carried out during the process included sourcing, reviewing and analysing relevant documents concerning CDD funding; using a developed tool to conduct field-monitoring visits and finally Local Government officials, beneficiaries and other community members were met and engaged in focused group discussions to evaluate the programs.

This policy briefing paper therefore synthesizes key emerging issues out of the findings from the CDD programme monitoring and evaluation to inform key stakeholders in Arua District Local Government including Local Government officials (both politicians and civil servants) and the general public.

The brief captures the challenges faced by beneficiaries in implementing programs as well as highlighting existing policy and implantation gaps that exist. Finally, this brief also offers a range of recommendations from young people on how to improve the government programs. This policy brief will therefore form the basis for young people's advocacy towards improved community services delivery that brings about sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The approach of the Government of Uganda to national planning has evolved over the last decade, with reforms of the country's public expenditure management resulting in new institutional arrangements for planning and budgeting. One critical component of these arrangements is the decentralization process, which gives Local Governments discretionary planning and budgeting powers in line with national policies and priorities.[1]

Local government in Uganda functions as the immediate point of service delivery for many key services including health, education, agricultural extension, and local infrastructural development. Similarly, it serves as the key access and implementation point for government's poverty eradication programs. Because of this, the budgeting process forms one of the core development and governance processes at the lower level that provides entry for realistic decision making at the district.

Budget monitoring and evaluation involves not only ensuring that the work plan is being followed, but also that value for money is being obtained. Currently, the role of evaluating government expenditure lies with the Office of the Auditor General that has the mandate to audit all government expenditure including within Local Governments.[2] However, gaps still exist in the legal framework as there is little room and opportunity for citizens to share feedback at a Local Government level on government programming with regard to how the projects were implemented and what areas can be improved for better service delivery. [3] This gap especially affects youth in Uganda who make up 78% of the National population[4] and are statistically worst hit by poverty and unemployment.

The National Youth Policy defines youth as all young persons, female and male aged 12 to 30 years. According to the National Youth Policy, analysis of the trends in involvement and participation in leadership and decision making since independence shows that youth were mostly marginalized and their involved primarily as beneficiaries of programs/services rather than as active participants in the development and decision making process. While the number of youth involved in political and decision making processes has increased in Uganda, much remains to be done to ensure that this participation is more meaningful in terms of increasing levels of informed engagement as well as ensuring that it is effectively translated into better service delivery for youth nationally. Youth views still need to be integrated into budget allocation, planning and monitoring processes.

A good example of this disconnect of youth engagement is the 44bn Youth Venture Capital Fund (YVCF) allocated to address youth unemployment in the Financial Year (FY) 2011/12

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1 The Local Government Act, Cap 243 provides the legal basis for local government budget process. The Act is supported by the Local Government Financial and Accounting Regulations 2007
2 The Auditor General receives his mandate from Article 163 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and the National Audit Act, 2008
3 According to the Local Government Act, budget evaluation is done quarterly by the Executive Committee against approved work plans and budgets.
4 2012, State of Uganda Population Report, UN Population Fund

budget through venture capital funding. While this was originally celebrated, it later resulted in a lot of disgruntlement as a large number of young people failed to meet the minimum requirements to access the money, a problem that could have been solved if there had been more youth consultation integrated in the planning phase.[5] There have been a number of other youth focused budget allocations such as the Youth Livelihoods programs among others, but youth participation is still a gaping hole in budgeting processes even with regard to programs targeted towards their economic empowerment.

Active participation of youth is hinged on their ability to demand for responsive policies and accountability from their leaders. The ability of youth to demand for better service delivery, especially at the local government level, can only be achieved if youth are able to meaningfully participate in all local budgeting processes including planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating. An assessment conducted by UYONET under its 'Ours By Right'' project found that one of the biggest impediments to effective youth participation in budget processes at the district is the limited capacity of the youth leaders to research, analyse, negotiate and lobby particularly when it comes to budget decisions.

This indicates that in order to ensure young people are meaningfully involved in the budgeting process both at the national and local government level, they need to be equipped with the necessary skills and tools to monitor and evaluate government budget implementation and offer alternatives to improve effective service delivery at the local level.

Project Objectives
Under the *Program for Youth Democratic Engagement* project currently being implemented by UYONET in Nebbi, Apac and Arua district, the objective is to have youth demonstrate capacity to conduct local and national budget advocacy, as well as monitoring and evaluation through an institutionalized Youth Budget Advocacy Alliance (YBAA). In Arua district, this project is being implemented in partnership with MACCO.

The general objectives of the project include;

i.   To strengthen the legislative, research and policy analysis competence of youth leaders in the three project districts so that they are able to engage, create and exploit new and existing opportunities for leadership at the district level through the budgeting process.
ii.   To create a mechanism for sustained political accountability through regional sharing

5 Promoting Self-Employment Through Entrepreneurship Financing: Lessons From The Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund, Economic Policy Research Centre, policy brief issue no. 47, June 2014. Accessed at: http://www.eprc.or.ug/pdf_files/Promoting_%20Self-employment_%20through%20entrepreneurship_%20financing_Lessons%20from%20the%20-Uganda%20Youth-Venture%20Capital%20Fund%20PB%2047.pdf

and reflection platforms (youth parliaments) at the national and participating district levels.

iii.   To establish an inclusive platform for Youth Budget Advocacy[6] as a prime medium through which young people are able to conduct budget advocacy, monitoring and evaluation.

The program is designed to contribute to the establishment of a sustainable youth civil society and political leader's budget advocacy alliance that will act as a primary forum to take the lead in collecting and sharing the views of youth and advocate for youth-oriented local and national budgets. The aim of this is to ensure that young peoples' voices are heard and that the National Budget increasingly focuses on issues affecting the youth as a critical segment of the population of Uganda.

Methodology

Training of program monitors

In line with the above, program targets in Arua (made up of youth leaders identified by UYONET and MACCO) were equipped with the necessary financial and technical skills to conduct budget monitoring at sub county level in the district. Before conducting the monitoring and evaluation in the district, the youth leaders underwent trainings on budget advocacy, Uganda's budget process and the role of youth in the budget process, application of budget analysis techniques using district budgets, budget analysis techniques and the key factors affecting the budget process in Uganda. The Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) conducted these trainings.

In total, 42 monitors were trained in Arua district, comprising 25 male and 17 female monitors.

Individual Monitoring tools used during Field Visits

The youth monitors trained conducted budget monitoring at the district level. All the youth monitors trained were equipped with monitoring tools that they had to feed data collected from their field visits including the project being monitored and allocated budget, challenges faced, best practices and lessons learnt.

Focus Group Discussions at Management Forums

A number of management forums were held at Sub County level. The Management Forums involved the participation of the youth leaders and the sub county/district technical and political leadership. These forums facilitated focus group discussions that reviewed the field reports and discussed the challenges presented and made recommendations.

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6 The Youth leaders Budget Advocacy Alliance is a platform that will bring together young leaders in their diversity to engage and contribute to the budgeting process in Uganda to ensure budgets are responsive to the needs of Young people.

Both, the trainings and processes of conducting budget monitoring and advocacy were aimed at informing the process of developing budget-briefing position papers. This report therefore summarises the findings of the youth monitors in the district of Arua.

PRESENTATION OF KEY FINDINGS MADE

Overview of Government Development Programs Monitored In Arua District:

NAADS

NAADS is mandated to contribute to the modernization of the agricultural sector, with the aim of increasing productivity of the land and the work invested therein. The key objectives of the program include: promoting food security, nutrition and household incomes through increased productivity and market-oriented farming; enabling the farmers to access agricultural advisory services; and developing the private sector's capacity and systems and assuring quality of advice. It should be noted that NAADS is not a youth-specific program.

While this program has been wound down and replaced by the Operation Wealth Creation, the evaluation done in this assessment is for programs under NAADS.

NUSAF YOP

NUSAF YOP is a program designed to address the persistent youth unemployment problem prevalent in post-conflict Northern Uganda. Like the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), NUSAF YOP is effective in the Northern Uganda districts affected by more than two decades of armed conflict, as well as in the spillover districts. The program was conceived to address unemployment as a potential source of negative economic and security issues. NUSAF YOP offered cash transfers to groups of youths in order to increase employment and reduce conflict.

Youth Livelihoods Program (YLP)

The Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) is a rollingGoU Program, targeting the poor and unemployed youth in all the districts in the country. The Program is implemented under the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD). It is financed initially from Government own resources (with a possibility of development partners' support in the future). The initial budget estimate for the program is Uganda Shillings 265 billion in the next 5 years.

CDD

As one of the mechanisms of supporting the Local Government Sector Investment Plan (LGSIP), GoU with support from International Development Agency (IDA) earmarked funding assistance through the Local Government Management and Service Delivery (LGMSD) Program. Among others, the LGMSD Program is supporting the CDD approach as a way of redirecting and targeting resources to the lowest service delivery centers.

The CDD approach builds on experiences and practices of other government programs and

its approach is designed to create an interface between Government and Communities especially through integrated LG planning & budgeting as well as ensure deeper involvement of communities in decision-making and resource utilization; hence the adoption of the CDD theme as "Communities as Drivers of Change".

CDD programing has been one of the government programs popular for the empowerment of communities in Uganda. It is a development initiative that provides control of the development process, resources and decision-making authority directly to community groups.

The cornerstone of CDD initiatives is the active involvement of members of a defined community in at least some aspects of project design and implementation. In addition, intending beneficiaries have to meet certain sanitation requirements at their household levels.

The Scope of Youth Monitoring and Evaluation in Arua District

Youth leaders in Arua were identified and financially and technically supported to conduct budget monitoring at district and Sub County level. These youth leaders conducted budget monitoring at the district level in which they monitored the implementation of the various government projects. The projects monitored included those under which youth benefit; NAADS, NUSAF, CDD and the Youth Livelihood program under which funds were allocated by government to enable income-generating activities. The various projects monitored focused on activities such as; Agriculture, animal husbandry, salon management and carpentry among others.

The findings of the budget monitoring activities have been shared through Management Forums at sub county and district level conducted by targeted youth leaders. The Management Forums involved the participation of the youth leaders and the sub county/district technical and political leadership.

Both, the trainings and processes of conducting budget monitoring and advocacy were aimed at informing the process of developing budget-briefing position papers. The budget briefing papers will provide a range of policy alternatives that can spur socio-economic development in the districts and national level.

In total, there were 15 monitoring reports submitted by youth monitors in Arua district. The reports covered a total of 73 projects that were monitored by the group. There projects were in the following sub counties;
1.   Ajia Sub county, Vurra county
2.   Rigbo sub county
3.   Arua hill division
4.   River Oli division

5.   Arivu sub county
6.   Vurra sub county
7.   Uriama sub county
8.   Dadamu sub county
9.   Katrini sub county
10.   Uleppi sub county

Key Findings Made

In implementing the various projects that youth received funding for, they faced a number of challenges stemming not onlyfrom internal group weaknesses that hampered sustainability of the projects but also from constraints within the government agencies charged with implementing the budget.

Insufficient skills toimplement projects

The most recurring challenge was the lack of skills capacity to run projects, particularly among those carrying out farming. For example, the groups rearing goats inArivu and Ajia sub counties did not have adequate knowledge regarding vaccinations and so most of their animals ended up dying. Similarly, 10 projects monitored had challenges with business skills to scale the projects, a number of the respondents expected government to continuously inject money to sustain the projects. The lack of sufficient knowledge of modern farming methods as well as lack of business acumen has made it difficult for most of the groups to reap profits from their projects or to sustain the projects beyond the fist two years.

Lack of cohesion among the groups

Resources were given under NAADs, NUSAF and CDD to groups of people to start various enterprises. However, many times members of these groups failed to co-ordinate with each other and work together thereby affecting the success of their projects. Failure to attend meetings in which the projects were discussed or to coordinate with each other in building shelters for the animals were some of the challenges highlighted in monitoring reports that affected group cohesion.
Lack of cohesion was the biggest challenge faced by 100% of the groups in Dadamu Sub County.

Insufficient funds to maintain projects

Observation reports indicated that a number of groups received insufficient funds to maintain their projects. While money catered for buying initial outputs, the funds could not cover the cost of scaling the projects. For example one group the Anavu youth group received money for goat rearing and were able to purchase 20 goats but the funds failed to cater for emerging issues like buying drugs for the goats. All the projects monitored in Uriama Sub county as well reported similar challenges with resources. This was partly due to groups receiving less money than they had budgeted for, the Uriama Association for youth development for example received only 65% of their budget to implement project activities.

Mismanagement of project funds by beneficiaries

Some re allocations included members borrowing money for personal reasons as reported in UleppiSub County and not refunding this money. In one project, the members threw a celebratory party that took up 20% of the allocated funds for their goat rearing projects while in Arivu sub county, it was reported that many groups took the goats for individual use instead of the group.

There were also a number of ghost projects found in the assessment that had received funds but could not be traced for example awindri school drop out girls youth group that received sh. 2,900,000 but could not be found. Likewise, in Vurrasub county, one of the five projects that was supposed to be monitored could not be traced; the LC1 wasn't aware of the existence of the group other than the presence of a sign post.

Poor record keeping by most groups

A number of project implementers did not have the necessary procurement and financial skills. As such no procedures were laid out making it hard for the group to account for the money received, as there were no receipts to show. This also made it hard to track the progress of project or understand what financial challenges groups faced.

Lack of market for products

A number of livelihood projects monitored faced an acute challenge of finding market for their products and goods. All the projects monitored that engaged in chair hiring as a money making venture did not have enough demand for their chairs and hence hardly made any profit.

In-availability of market is partly due to the saturation of similar projects in the same area. The Ombokoro Union of disability in Ajia Sub County, for example, had to compete for customers with so many other groups who also had grinding mills in the area.

Corruption and kickbacks by officials

Among the groups monitored, there were a number of complaints of receiving less money than approved from the local government officials. St. Anthony youth choir in OlukoSub County reported that sh. 300,000 was retained by the CDO before their funds were transferred. Another example is the Amburu women grinding mill project in UleppiSub County where the district released sh. 2,300,000 for the group but the sub county only released 2,060,000 to the group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made by the monitors basing on their interactions with the youth beneficiaries of the government projects. We felt that it was equally important to capture the concerns raised by local government officials as these are usually the first point of contact for the beneficiaries and their recommendations will contribute a great deal towards the improvement of the implementation of these projects and service delivery. These recommendations are intended to improve implementation of government projects in general and improve the management and sustainability of projects by youth beneficiaries.

To improve government project implementation: government needs to set and enforce policies that ensure the selection criteria is applied in a transparent and impartial manner as opposed to the arbitrary selection that was done by the district leaders. This would not only reduce on the confusion and animosity towards leaders who were perceived as unfair, but would also promote efficiency in the implementation of the project. A number of beneficiaries interviewed stressed the importance of maintaining communication between the youth groups and district leaders at all stages of the implementation of the project.

To improve group project management: Consultations with the different youth groups in the district should precede the group selection.   Furthermore, young people should be prioritized since they constitute the largest proportion of the population.

*Recovery of Government funds :*Groups which have failed to return money (those that are known to have misappropriated funds or that have made no effort to start repaying) should be blacklisted in order to ensure that government resources are not wasted on groups who have already shown themselves to be dishonest and instead spent on new or already successful groups so that the government has higher chances of recouping its investment. Groups that received funds MUST pay.

Prior to receiving the allocated funds, each group should have a recovery plan developed by them in consultation with the accounting officer, which should be strictly adhered to once their projects start running.
Recovery of funds from groups who received funding in the first cycle should be prioritized in the future.

*More comprehensive training for the youth before the selection of beneficiary groups and disbursement of funds :*A longer training period, preferably one week, targeted at imparting knowledge on project selection, financial management, value addition and record keeping should be done. This will ensure that the youth are better prepared to take on these projects and manage the funds disbursed to them. Training was done in the last cycle but it only lasted for 1 day which was not sufficient as pointed out by both the youth groups and the district leaders who did the training.

Continuous follow up and monitoring of the beneficiary groups by sub-county officials is

also necessary to facilitate the assessment of progress, identification of challenges they are facing as well as the provision of technical support in areas of weakness to ensure sustainability of the projects.

Access to complete information regarding the government projects and their obligations as beneficiaries. : The Sub county authority should allocate office space to the Community Development Officers (CDOs) for smooth operation including proper filing of documents and reports. The inadequacy of information was attributed to the weakness of the CDO with regard to the keeping and sharing of records. Official documents should be kept at the office instead of at the CDO's home as was previously done.

Youth groups should also be required to maintain files in which records of members, activities and group decisions are kept. This would go a long way towards improving the communication between the District officials and the project beneficiaries by reducing the bureaucracy and political posturing at the District level.

Mentorship and capacity building for the youth beneficiaries: Most of the project beneficiaries are people who have not run a business or a farm before and as such need to have consistent training and monitoring of their progress if the projects are to survive the initial stages and thrive even after government support is withdrawn. In addition, the youth proposed to have mentors from each sub county and not just at the district level so that they can reach everywhere and increase access to information and support.

The Ministry should increase the funds allocated to individual groups or in the very least provide an explanation to the District officials when less money than was projected is disbursed.: This would improve the relationship between the district leaders and the youth that is currently one of great distrust as the youth do not feel like they received all that was due to them while the officials insist that they disbursed all the funds that they received from government. Transparency and openness in discussions on funding are of utmost importance if the cooperation and participation of youth in government projects is to be maintained.

District budgeting should take inflation into account: The prices of inputs keep fluctuating in the district due to inflation. Therefore while planning for implementation of activities the district local government needs to factor in the effect of inflation on prices.

Sustainability should be prioritized: Government in implementing livelihood programs needs to seriously address the issue of sustainability. Many projects collapse after government support has been withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

The weaknesses and challenges noted from the beneficiaries and government agents revolved around issues like inadequate information, instances of poor leadership and dishonesty, which can all be addressed through minor structural adjustments and an emphasis on transparency.

The recommendations above were made by members of youth beneficiary groups, youth leaders and the district leaders and are intended to improve the implementation of the government projects as well as increasing youth participation in the projects. The ultimate goal is to guarantee the sustainability of the different youth projects which is of utmost importance not only for the young people who are earning a living from them but also for the government which should be able to recoup its investment into these projects so that more youth can continue to benefit for a longer time. Participation of the youth and effective implementation of the projects are key in order for all stakeholders to achieve the desired outcomes.

As such, the recommendations from all stakeholders should be given the attention that they deserve and all efforts should be made to implement them. The youth of Arua remain eager to participate in government projects and ensure their success despite the many challenges that they have faced. They are waiting for the next budget cycle in the hopes that their concerns will be addressed and that they will have better chances of succeeded in their various ventures with the support that they need.

ANNEXTURE 1

BUDGET MONITORING REPORTING TOOL

Date: _____

Name: _____

Subcounty: _____

Project No: _____

Project Name				
Budgeted Amount	Actual Funds Released	Amount Spent	Data Source	Reason for Variance (if any)

Challenges:
_____
_____

Best Practices: _____
_____

Lessons: _____
_____

Recommendations: _____
_____

ANNEXTURE 2

Table Showing Activities Monitored Per Sub County.

Sub County or Sector Monitored	Activities Monitored
Ajia Sub County	1. Aloidrozu Farmer group in Dubai village 2. Omgbulukuva Farmers Association Project in Opileva village 3. Ombadeni Farmers Group in Aliba village 4. AriceniOlili Project 5. Omvudraku Farmers group in Aupi village 6. Adroava farmers group in Ombizoku village 7. Octofe farmers group in Omoo village 8. Onzoa farmers group in Ayiko village 9. Okpoava diary cow project in Ombizoku village 10. Adruvu goat rearing project 11. Liberty farmers group goat rearing project 12. Opilevu PWD goat rearing project
Katrinin Sub County	1. Limgoro youth goat rearing project 2. Oninia youth poultry project 3. Anavu youth grafted mangoes project 4. Anivu youth piggery project
Katrina Sub County	5. Anavu youth goat rearing project 6. Akunia projected spring water project 7. Olua primary school latrine project 8. Aliogolo plastic chairs and utensils project 9. Olea Apiary farm project
Rigbo Sub County	1. Construction of two semi detached staff houses at sub county head quarters 2. Construction of staff house and two pit latrines at Olivu health centre II 3. KaligoAliodrozu youth catering project
	1. Construction of Latrine in Awindiri primary school 2. Bazaar youth car washing bay 3. Nyaluma women grain processing project 4. Modified Water stand project in Nsambya South 5. Nyaluma Water project 6. Arua district youh PWD association
Arua Municipal Council, River Oli Division	1. Adriko youth carpentry and joinery youth group 2. Swalia youth metal fabrication 3. Obolokofuko metal fabrication 4. Wake Up Orphanage tailoring 5. Ojolua golden age carpentry

Arivu sub county	1. AnakawaOrobi youth and elders goat rearing 2. Aliodrozu salon project 3. Ombavu People living with AIDS project 4. Jakiri Elders and youth cattle rearing 5. Camasira elders and youth cattle rearing
Vurra sub county	1. Ayikoyo group 2. Amaalueta youth grinding mill and salon 3. Okonko salon 4. Ringiliintergrated families association
Ajia Sub County	1. Ombokoro Union of disability 2. AYAA united PWDs goat rearing project 3. AcivuOlevu PWD piggery project 4. AlioOkoni EWAA disabled group goat rearing project 5. Pajulu united PWD goat rearing project
Oluko Sub County	1. Royal Tailoring and knitting 2. St. Anthony Youth Choir 3. MunguEconi PWD group 4. St Peter Choir group 5. Origamaa community youth group
Uriama Sub county	1. Association for youth development Uriama 2. Asianzu VSLA association 3. Irikiri women and elders group 4. Meyapeg group 5. Alio youth association 6. Amada ewasi women group
Dadamu Sub County	1. Congo youth carpentry and joining 2. Ayibiri youth club 3. Oludri youth salonYapi Initiative 4. Ayibiri youth cattle rearing
Arivu sub county	1. Aliocenduku Youth Goat rearing 2. Ommo women and youth goat rearing 3. Pajulu youth carpentry 4. Ombavu goat rearing project 5. Alionderuku PWD goat rearing group
Uleppi Sub county	1. Katiyi youth salon 2. AmaOnzi youth grinding mill 3. Amburu Women grinding mill 4. Uleppi youth poverty alleviation forum