The Status of NEET in Uganda

A Quantitative Analysis of Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) (15 – 24 years old)

Country Report

UN WOMEN | WOMEN COUNT

The Status of NEET in Uganda

A Quantitative Analysis of Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) (15 – 24 years old)

Country Report

Acknowledgements

The author thanks Robert Dalais for help with the math, Liz Ebersohn for assistance with research, graph content, layout and edits, Simon Nissling from The UN Women Uganda Country Office, Isabella Schmidt of the UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office, as well as the UN Women Research and Data Section for support and technical guidance, and Maria Payet, Yacouba Diallo, Yves Perardel and Kieran Walsh from the ILO Department of Statistics for input on data definitional issues and survey methodology and comments on the regional report

UN Women is the UN organisation dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

Author
Helen Perry

Proofreading and editing
Kyana Bowen

Design and layout
Conrad Mudibo

UN Women
East and Southern Africa Regional Office
UN Gigiri Complex, UN Avenue; Block M, Ground Floor
P.O. Box 30218- 00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 762 4778

africa.unwomen.org
Email: esaro.publications@unwomen.org
unwomenafrica
unwomenafrica
unwomen
unwomenafrica

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Tables

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALMP	Active labour market policies
EET	Employment, education or training
ESA	East and Southern Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LMIC	Low to middle income country
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for the Measurement of Education Quality
SDG	Sustainable development goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UN DESA	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UN Population Division	United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN Women ESA-RO	UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

1 INTRODUCTION

Neither good quality education nor productive employment is universally available to the world's youth. Reducing the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is target 8.6 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN DESA 2021). The ILO, in their *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020* estimate that:

> *One-fifth of young people currently have NEET status, which means they are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving an income from work, nor enhancing their education and skills. Clearly, their full potential is not being realized, though many may be contributing to the economy through unpaid work, which is particularly true of young women. (ILO 2020a)*

In Uganda a total of 30% or 2.3 million youth between 15 and 24 are not in employment, education or training (NEET). However more young women (37%) than young men (21%) are NEET. Worst affected are young women between the ages of 20 and 24 of whom 50% are NEET (Uganda National Household Survey 2019/20).[1]

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation for youth in Uganda especially young women who were vulnerable to greater job losses, early marriage, and lacked the social protection that school normally provides (UN Women 2020). Uganda implemented one of the longest COVID-19 lockdowns in the world and schools were closed from March 2020 to the January 2022. There was a partial reopening of schools in September 2020, during which 10% of grade 10 girls and 18% of grade 12 girls did not come back to school – compared to 8% of grade 10 boys and 2% of grade 12 boys (Muhumuza 2021).

The NEET indicator, which measures the percentage of young people who are not in employment, education or training, is an important concept that captures a broad array of vulnerabilities among youth. Touching on issues of early school leaving, unemployment and labour market discouragement, NEET status also highlights the issues of youth who are engaged in family labour for own consumption or family domestic and care work

Source: UN GIS (2020

1 Unless otherwise referenced, the data cited in this document comes from the Uganda National Household Survey 2019/20 (UNHS 2019/20) microdata. The data extraction and calculations are the author's.

and thus not employed[2]. The consequences of high NEET rates are twofold. Firstly, on an individual level, absence from both education and employment increase the risk of poverty and a permanent disengagement from the labour market. Secondly, on a country level, high NEET rates are a loss in terms of unused labour supply, lower productivity and lower GDP output.

Young women in East and Southern Africa are disproportionally affected by NEET status. Leaving school early, marriage, assisting with subsistence farming, unpaid domestic work, taking care of family members and fewer opportunities to take up work which may be seen as inappropriate or unsafe for young women, all play a role in the NEET status of young women. NEET status is also more likely to become a permanent state for young women. The NEET rate in many developing countries declines very little for young women between 15 and 24 years old when ten years later the cohort is between the ages of 25 and 34 years (ILO 2020a).

To ensure that recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic also reduces the number of youth NEET, especially young women, the UN Women Eastern and Southern African Regional Office has commissioned a quantitative research report on the status of youth NEET in twelve East and Southern African countries. This report constitutes the investigation into the status and determinants of NEET in Uganda. To gain greater insight into which policies might best enable both a return to full-time education and a growth in youth employment, the report analyses data from the Uganda National Household Survey 2019/20 (UNHS 2019/20) which was conducted in 2019 and 2020 and the findings published in 2021 by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. (UBOS 2021).

The report is structured as follows:

It will first give an overview of the economic, demographic and gender context of Uganda. Growth prospects and employment opportunities will affect strategies to address the lack of access that young people have to paid work. However, these are affected by the projected size of the youth population and their current socioeconomic status. The interaction between poverty, access to social services and gender norms frequently lead to young women leaving school and into marriage and childbearing before accessing employment (UNICEF and UNFPA 2021).

Using the country's survey data, the next section of the report gives a description of youth by status – NEET, employed or in education. This data is disaggregated by age group and sex. Methodological and definitional issues surrounding the calculation of the NEET rate and the definition of employment used in the survey is discussed in this section.

The third section of the report presents analytical statistics and the determinants of youth NEET. Logistical regression models are used to calculate the probability of young women having NEET status depending on their circumstances. The variables tested for their effect on NEET status are age, marriage, highest level of education attained, time spent in unpaid family agriculture or enterprise, family structure, urban or rural residence.

The fourth section of the report is the conclusion and recommendations that arise from the data analysis. Most of these recommendations reinforce the country's current development agenda and the work done by committed stakeholders and development agencies.

2 This report uses the definition of work and employment from the 19th ICLS (ILO 2013). See Section 3 for more detail.

2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Structural transformation and economic growth of between 6% and 8% is driving a decline in poverty with a reduction in the total workforce employed in subsistence agriculture and a take-off in industrial production, largely in agro-processing. Following the shock of COVID-19, there have been widespread closures of companies, permanent layoffs in industry and services, a rapid slowdown of activity, particularly in the urban informal sector, and a movement of labour back to farming (World Bank 2021).

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic the number of youth NEET was at risk of increasing over the next 10 years with the youth population growing at a faster pace than the economy could provide jobs for them. With a total population growth of over 3% per year and slower economic growth projected, GDP per capita will remain below its pre-COVID-19 trajectory (World Bank 2021). The impact of COVID-19 on Uganda has reduced income from exports, tourism and remittances. Widespread job losses in industry, tourism and services coupled with a rapid slowdown in activity in the urban informal sector have meant an increase in household's vulnerability to poverty (AfDB 2021).

This section gives a description of Uganda's economic growth prospects in terms of GDP growth and GDP per capita; it presents the projected growth of the youth population; and an overview of progress in women's equality. Issues related to education and employment are considered as central to the NEET analysis and are therefore discussed in more detail in Section 3.

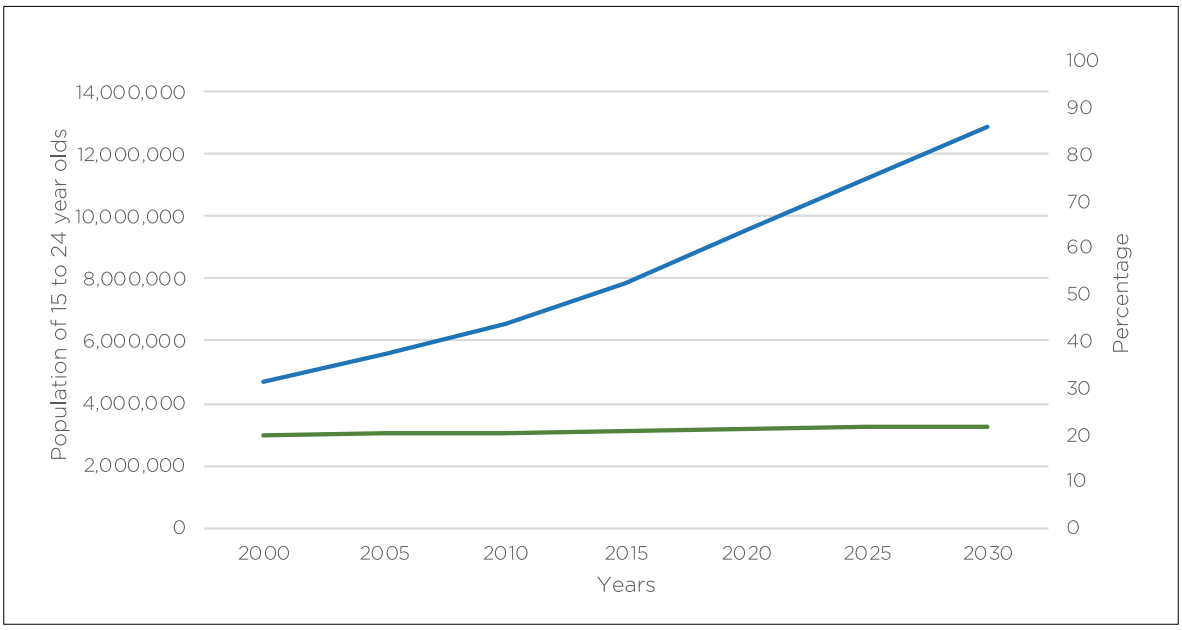
2.1 Demographic profile by sex and age

Intrinsic to wealth is population growth. This impacts at a macro level in per capita terms, in the labour absorption capacity and in the state's ability to provide services. At a family level without sufficient employment the number of dependents increases and the potential for a spiral of vulnerabilities increases. Those countries whose population growth rate has slowed down "are much better placed to achieve economic take-off and middle-income status."(Bryceson 2018)

Uganda is one of few East and Southern African countries whose 15 to 24 year old population is projected to continue to grow as a percentage of the total population beyond 2030 (UN Population Division 2019 projection) and is estimated to reach nearly 22% by 2030 (UN Population Division 2019). The total population growth rate in Uganda was estimated to be 3.3% in 2020 (UNFPA 2021).

Figure 1 shows the number of 15- to 24-year-old youth projected to 2030 and the number of 15- to 24-year-olds as a percentage of the total population.

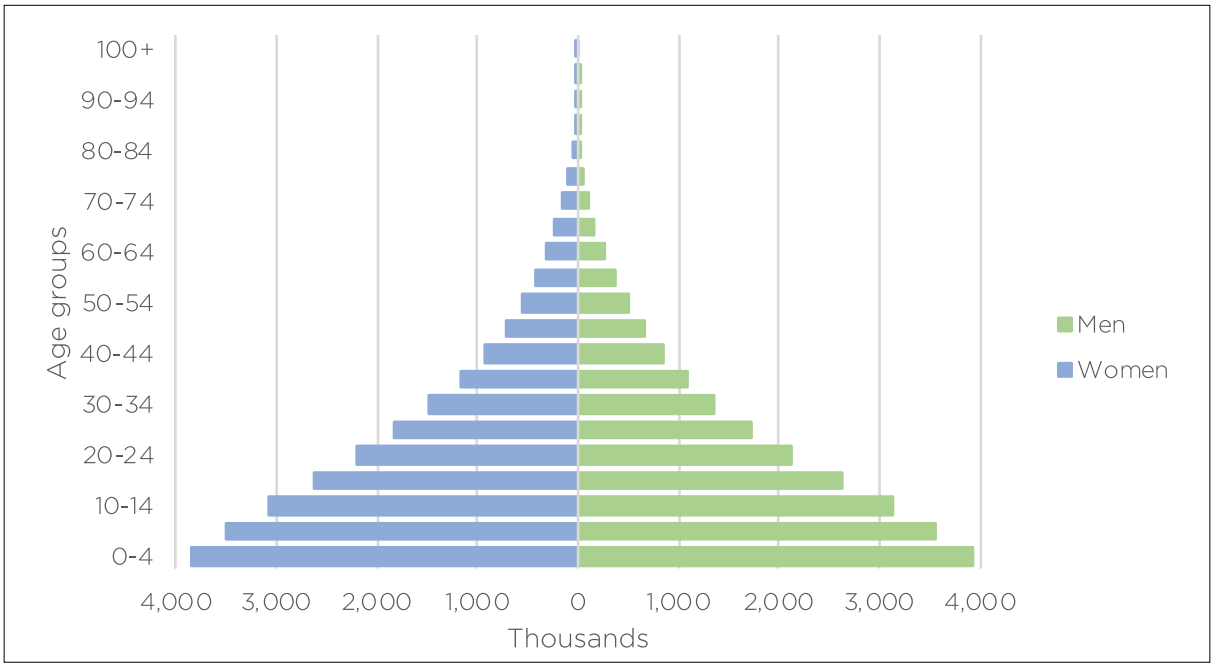
Figure 1: Number of youth and youth as a percentage of the total population from 1990 projected to 2030 by sex (15-24)



Source: UN Population Division (2019), author's calculations.

In order to realise the demographic dividend the percentage of young people would need to be decreasing as a percentage of the total population. With a total population growth rate of 3.3% this is unlikely to take place in Uganda for several decades; even if the annual population growth rate were to decrease dramatically to the approximately 2% needed to meaningfully reduce the proportion of youth (UNFPA 2021). Figure 2 shows the population pyramid for Uganda. While there is a slight slowing down of the growth between cohorts, it is likely that poverty, unemployment and a shortage of social services will have a negative effect on young people in the decades to come.

Figure 2: Uganda population pyramid, 2019



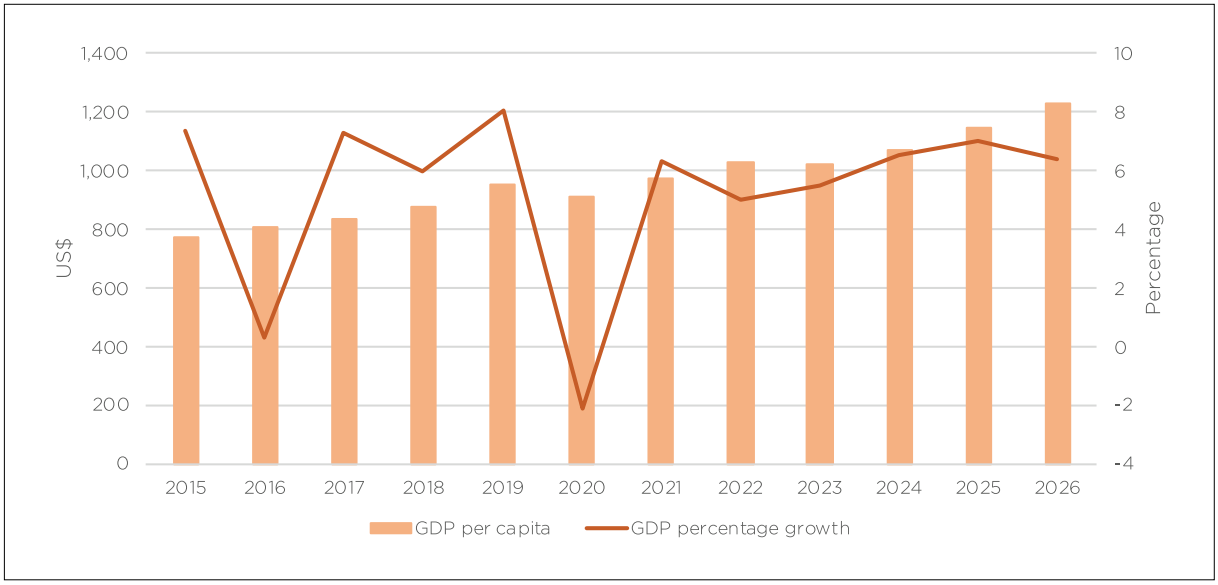
2.2 Economic growth prospects

Uganda has seen a shift in growth and employment towards the industrial sector. The transformation has been characterized by a reduction in the total workforce employed in subsistence agriculture and a take-off in industrial production, largely in agro-processing (Guloba et. al. 2021). However, there is still a heavy reliance on low productivity agriculture which constitutes about 25% of the economy, 50% of exports and 70% of employment (World Bank 2021). Raising incomes will require improving productivity in agriculture and expanding more productive employment in industry and services. Uganda's Third National Development Plan 2020/21-24/25 (NDP III) aims to achieve this by prioritizing government spending in agricultural development; infrastructure for industrial development and tourism, including roads, power, and water; and human capital development in health, education and water sanitation.

Inclusion of women and youth in the NDP III is foregrounded with the acknowledgement that while women are predominant in agricultural production this is mostly subsistence agriculture. Young adults in Uganda lack employment opportunities and even those who are employed, work in the informal sector where their jobs are often under-paid, temporary and of low productivity (Guloba et. al. 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic reductions in employment, especially in the tourist and urban informal sector, had a greater impact on women and youth. Other impacts include increased numbers of young adults lost to the education system due to interrupted education; economic and food insecurity; and disruptions in services which could lead to unplanned pregnancy and the increased risk of early marriage for young women (UNICEF and UNFPA 2021).

Figure 3 shows the projected GDP per capita and GDP growth rates projected to 2026. Growth rates are projected to be lower than pre-COVID 19 and will depend to a large extent on the return of the tourism industry (IMF 2021).

Figure 3: GDP per capita and GDP growth rates projected to 2026



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Database (2021).

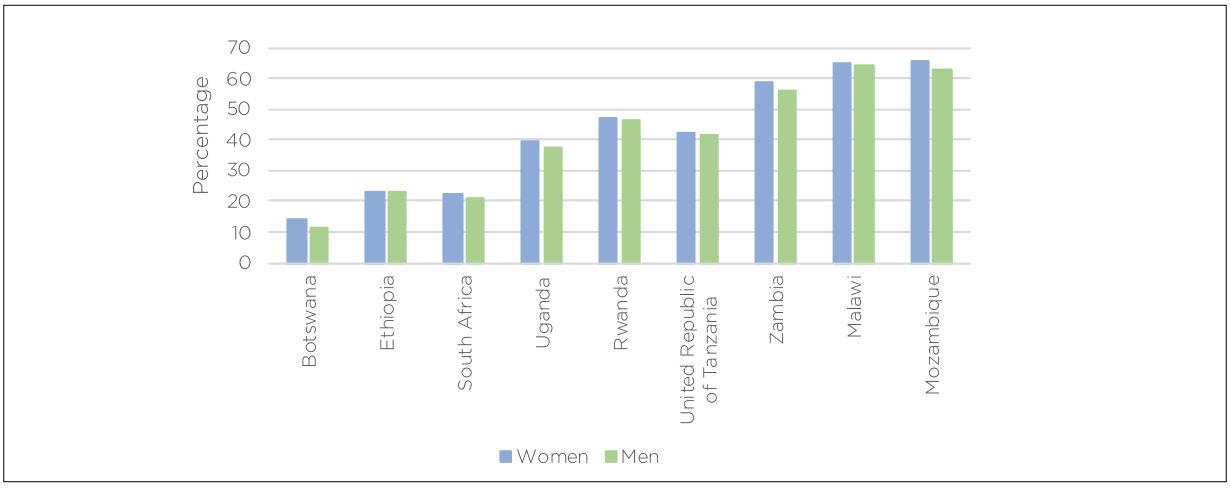
2.3 Poverty profile by sex and age

Despite positive economic growth over the past two decades which has reduced poverty rates, there is still over 37% of the population living in extreme poverty.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of the population living in extreme poverty (less than US$ 1.90 per day) for selected countries in this NEET study.

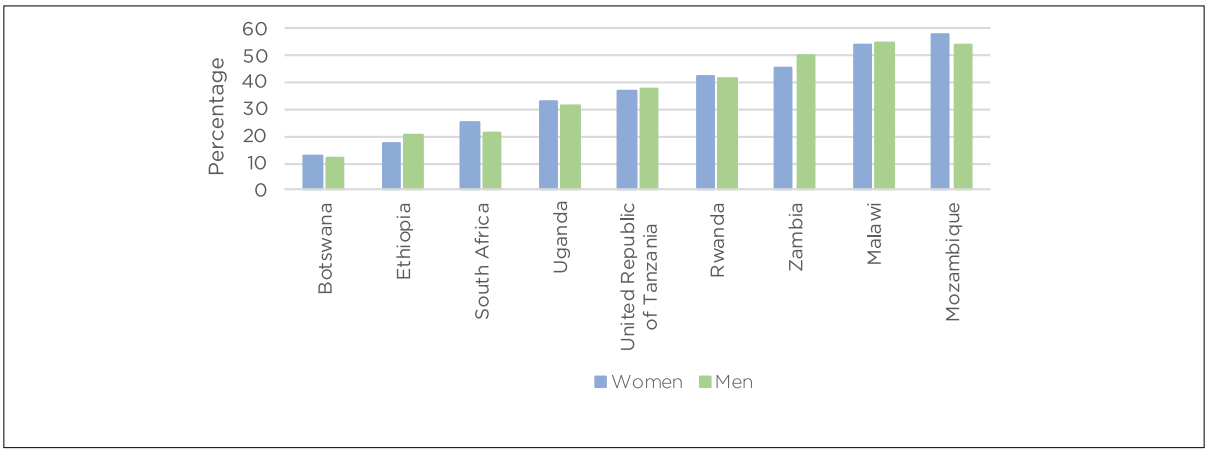
Uganda's youth poverty rates in Figure 5 are slightly lower than the national poverty rates but both show the same gender inequality. Men's poverty rates are 2 to 3 percentage points lower than women's. In addition, several of Uganda's development indicators that pertain to the health and wellbeing of women are lagging behind many of the other East and Southern African countries in this study. They are also not keeping pace with the trajectory needed to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Access to healthcare is limited with only 60% of women giving birth in a health facility and under-five mortality rates of more than 5%. Poverty related under-nutrition in children is high and stunting affects 29% of children under the age of 5 (UNDESA 2021).

Figure 4: Percentage of population living in extreme poverty in selected East and Southern African countries by sex and age



Note: Extreme poverty is below US$ 1.90 per person per day in 2011 parity purchasing power (PPP).
Source: UN Women et. al. (2020) Annex 4: Estimates and Forecasts of Extreme Poverty by Sex and Age - Population aged 15-24.

Figure 5: Percentage of youth living in extreme poverty by sex (15-24)



Note: Extreme poverty is below US$ 1.90 per person per day in 2011 parity purchasing power (PPP).
Source: UN Women et. al. (2020) Annex 4: Estimates and Forecasts of Extreme Poverty by Sex and Age - Population aged 15-24.

2.4 Gender norms and women's equality in Uganda

Gender equality indicators in Uganda have improved with the government having ratified international gender equality commitments. Progress has been made in participation of women in government with women holding 33% of parliamentary seats and 46% of local government positions (UN Women 2022). Increased social spending has seen women's access to education and healthcare improve. In 2016 74% of women give birth attended by a skilled assistant compared to 42% in 2006 (UBOS 2018). Less progress has been seen in the labour market where women are more likely to work in the informal sector and rural economy. Self-employed women and women in subsistence agriculture still lack access to finance and services (UN Women 2022). Women lack access to more productive agricultural inputs and training in modern farming methods. Rodgers and Akram-Lodhi (2019) found in their study on gender productivity gaps in agricultural output that the factors affecting women's lower productivity are access to agricultural inputs, less secure land rights, gender-based distortions in product markets, rigid gender divisions of labour at the household level, lack of male family labour, lack of access to family agricultural implements and fertilizers which have to be purchased in the marketplace.

A number of gender norms that impact negatively on young women persist. Early marriage and childbirth impact negatively on young women's opportunities for further education and employment. Table 1 shows the percentage of women married by the age of 19 in the countries included in this study. 30% of Uganda's women are married by the age of 19. Teenage pregnancy and childbearing rates remain high and in 2016 data from the Demographic and Health Survey showed that 24% of women between 15 and 19 are either pregnant or have had a child. The proportion of women aged 15 to 19 who are pregnant or have had a child increases from 3% at 15 years old to 54% at 19 years old.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on teenage pregnancy and marriage with poverty pushing more young women into marriage and transactional sex. The lengthy closure of schools has left girls without the social protection that it offers and had a negative impact on campaigns to end teenage pregnancy and marriage. Estimates from the District Health Information System shows a 17% spike in teenage pregnancies between March 2020 and June 2021 (UBOS 2021, UNFPA 2021).

Table 1: Percentages of women married at the age of 19 and 24 and percentages of adolescent pregnancies and births for selected East and Southern African countries

	Botswana	Ethiopia	Kenya	Malawi	Mozambique	Namibia	Rwanda	South Africa	Uganda
Percentage of women married at the age of 19	9	30	14	46	60	7	5	6	30
Percentage of women married at the age of 24	31	63	54	84	70	15	45	23	48
Percentage of women ages 15 to 19 who have had children or are currently pregnant	n. d.	6.7	18	33	38	19	7	16	24*

* Teenage pregnancy and childbirth has declined from 31% in 2000/1 (UBOS 2018 p89) which is the figure reported in the regional report of this study.

Source: Uganda adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from UBOS (2018). Mozambique adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from meta-analysis by Jaén-Sánchez et. al. (2020). South African adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from National Department of Health et. al. (2018). Kenya adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014 in Republic of Kenya et. al. 2016. Ethiopia adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from UNDP (2020). All other adolescent birth and pregnancy rates from meta-analysis by Kasa et..al. (2018). Marriage rates from country survey data, author's calculations.

3 ANALYSIS OF THE UGANDA NATIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY 2019/20: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The Ugandan Government's National Household Survey 2019/20 (UNHS 2019/20) has a sample of 15 912 households and 76 767 household members. This country report looks at the profile of surveyed youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years, who live in the household. Data was collected on the household members present at the time of the survey, as well as all usual or regular members of the household absent at the time. No data is included on household members who may have been absent at the time – either studying and living in hostel accommodation or working and staying in workers lodging.

> *"Youth NEET are a highly diverse group and reasons for being NEET vary. There are many reasons why a young person may leave school and not actively be seeking a job. They may face particular obstacles; have other demands on their time such as assisting in family own use farm or enterprise production; they may be disabled, and/or there may simply be (or perceived to be) no suitable jobs available"* (ILO 2020b).

The relative number of youth NEET in a country is affected by how many 15–24-year-olds are able to access education or employment. To understand the drivers of NEET, it is also important to look at the prospects for youth in both of these areas. This section is not intended to be an exhaustive overview of the labour market or education system in Uganda but uses the country survey data to examine the number of youth enrolled in education and/or employed as well as the nature, where possible, of the work they do.

3.1 Definitions of NEET and employment

Across East and Southern Africa the NEET rates are affected by the precise definition of employment captured in the various household survey instruments – which may differ slightly by survey and by country. Many countries are still in the process of updating household and labour force surveys to reflect the definition of employment as revised at the ILO 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2013 (ILO 2013).

The major revision in the definition of employment in the 19th ICLS is that it *excludes* "own use production work comprising production of goods and services for *own final use*" (ILO 2013). In East and Southern Africa NEET rates using the definition of employment from the 19th ICLS standards are substantially higher than the NEET rates using the 13th ICLS (1982) definition of employment (ILO 2013). The removal of "production of goods and services for *own final use*" from the definition of employment effectively increases the numbers of NEET youth – especially in largely subsistence agricultural countries where young people assist with family agricultural production for own final use. There may also be

more youth currently engaged in family production for own use that now become defined as unemployed – hence also potentially raising the youth unemployment rate.

The process of updating household and labour force surveys to reflect the 19th ICLS standards takes time and care needs to be taken with the design of the survey questionnaires so they reflect the standards as defined. Measuring the differences in work for pay or profit (and therefore employed) versus work for production of goods and services for own final use (and therefore not employed) can be particularly sensitive to questionnaire design – especially amongst groups in less formal employment such as youth and women. In a review by the ILO and the World Bank in Sri Lanka more detailed and carefully structured survey questions find differences in the numbers and hours of paid employment – including increased numbers of women engaged in small enterprise activities. They also find greater hours worked than previously reported in unpaid family work. (Discenza 2021).

A detailed review of employment data in household surveys by the World Bank finds that household and labour force surveys that do not have questions designed to elicit the revised definition of employment tend to collect data that overstates employment in both youth and women (Desiere and Costa 2019). Klasen (2018) points out that there is likely to be a discontinuity in comparisons of NEET before and after countries implement changes to the 2013 19th ICLS standards. In addition, countries are likely to have different time-scales for the implementation of the new standards. Care should be taken with both inter-country and in-country comparisons over time.

Definition of NEET

Youth not in employment, education or training is the indicator of the Sustainable Development Goal 8, Target 6: "By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training". According to UN DESA (2021) the youth NEET rate differs from the youth unemployment rate as it includes the discouraged work seeker category as well as those who are outside the labour force and not in education or training (ILO 2013).

The NEET rate is calculated as follows*:

$$\text{NEET rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{total number of youth aged 15-24 in employment} + \text{number of youth aged 15-24 in education or training)}}{\text{total number of youth aged 15-24}} \times 100$$

It is important to note that the indicator is composed of two different sub-groups – unemployed youth (actively seeking work) not in education or training as well as youth outside the labour force (not actively seeking work) not in education or training. Unemployed youth who are in education and training who should not be counted as NEET.

**Education* is formal or non-formal education (institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider).

Employment is defined as all persons of working age who, during a short reference period (one week), were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. This specifically excludes work in family agriculture or family enterprises for own consumption and it excludes unpaid domestic and care work.

Training is a non-academic learning activity through which a person acquires specific skills intended for vocational or technical jobs. (UN DESA 2021)

Implications of the 19th ICLS definition of the labour force for NEET rate calculations

This report uses the National Household Survey 2019/20 (UNHS 2019/20) for the analysis of youth NEET. The survey metadata doesn't specify which ICLS protocol was used.

Using the 19th ICLS standards, this report shows a NEET rate of 19% for both women and men between 15 and 24 years old; a 37% NEET rate for women and a 21% NEET rate for men; whereas the ILO *Modelled Estimates* in the ILO Data Explorer which use the 13th ICLS standards show a 20% NEET rate for women and a 13% NEET rate for men 15 to 24 years old (https://ilostat.ilo.org/).

Table 2 shows the data available in the UNHS 2019/20 and the methodology used to extract the data according to the 19th ICLS standards.

Table 2: ICLS standards applicable in the Uganda National Household Survey 2019/20

ICLS standards used in survey	Implication for calculated NEET rates in this report
ICLS standards used: Not specified in the survey metadata or the published report. Questions on employment include working for wage/commission/salary; run business of any size; help without being paid in a business run by the family; work on household's farm/forest/fish/hunt for sale or barter. *[An extremely small number of respondents help without being paid in the family business *and* in family farming where the proceeds were mainly for family consumption and their main job description is "subsistence farmer". In these cases the respondent was imputed to be "not employed". All others who are not subsistence farmers as their main job description are classified as "employed".] **Agriculture:** Distinguished between products for sale or family consumption. **Household business enterprise:** **Other unpaid work related questions:** The survey asks whether the following household tasks were undertaken - fetch water; fetch firewood; cook; clean utensils/house; wash clothes; care for children/old/sick; other household tasks – and how many hours were spent on such tasks during the preceding day.	**Employed, if in the past 7 days:** 1) Worked for wage/commission/ salary; 2) Run a business of any size; 3) Help without being paid in family business; 4) Work in household farm/forest/ fish/hunt for sale or barter 5) Was temporarily aWWbsent from above **Not employed if**: 1) Work in household farm/ forest/fish/hunt for family consumption (see * in central column) 2) Volunteer or unpaid apprentice 3) Undertake household tasks including fetch water, firewood, cook, clear and care for family members.

3.2 Population of youth in the UNHS 2019/20 by sex and age (15 to 24)

Table 3 and Figure 6 shows the number of youth in the survey disaggregated by age group and sex. While it is not unexpected for sample surveys to show some variation in the number of a particular population group, there appears to be an under-representation of young men aged 20-24. Table 4 shows the percentage of women and men in each age group in the survey According to UBOS (2021) the percentage of women and men in this age group should be no greater than 51% to 49% respectively (UBOS 2021).

Survey coverage bias – young men out of the household, living in school hostels or at places of work.

In many of the countries in this study, analysis of the data shows an undercount of young men in relation to women. This could be due to several factors for example:

- secondary school pupils living in hostels at school or informal hostels in nearby communities;
- employed youth who may be working and staying in worker's hostels or at their places of employment – especially those who work as day labour in the agricultural sector; or
- unemployed youth sleeping rough or sleeping where they hope to seek employment or piecework.

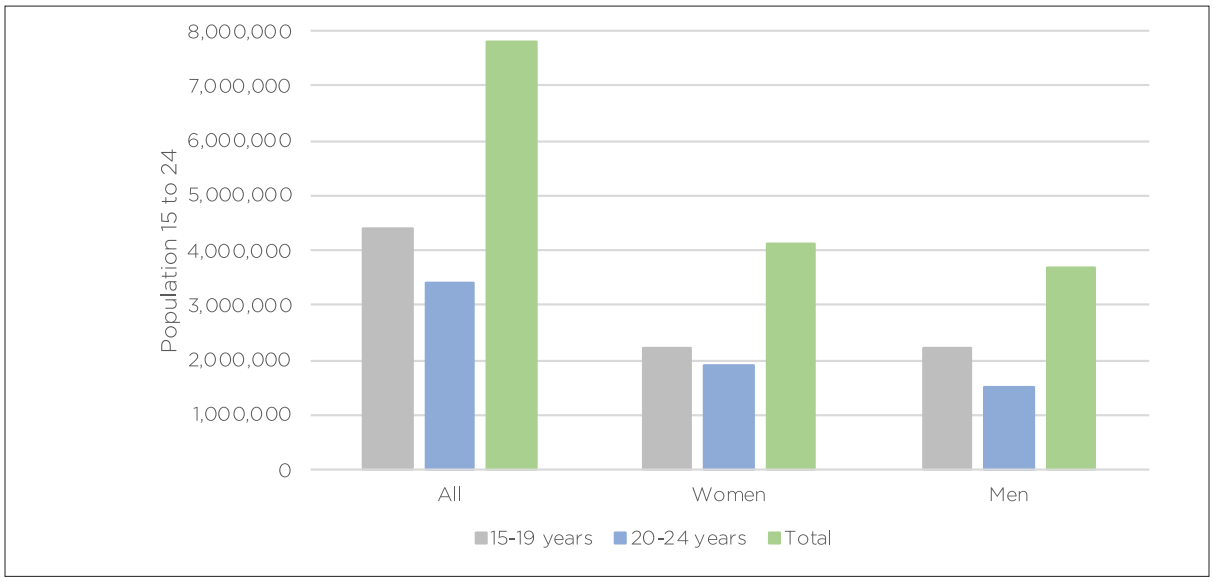
As with all household surveys, only family residences are included in the sampling frames. Of the surveys analysed, this coverage bias is most evident in *Botswana* (probably due to boarding for secondary school), *Malawi*, *Rwanda,* and *Uganda*. The *Ethiopian* data shows coverage bias amongst young men between 20 and 24 as well as age heaping at 15, 20 and 25.

Table 3: Total number of youth included in the UNHS 2019/20 survey by sex and age (15-24)

	Total	Women	Men
15-19 years	4 407 196	2 203 208	2 203 988
20-24 years	3 414 588	1 922 850	1 491 738
Total	7 821 784	4 126 059	3 695 726

Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

Figure 6: Population by sex and age (15-24)



Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

Table 4: Percentage of women and men in the survey by age (15-24)

	Women Per Cent	Men Per Cent	Ratio of women to men
15-19 years	50	50	1,00
20-24 years	56	44	1,29
Total	53	47	1,12

Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

Note on the household members included in the survey: Table 5 shows the number of youth aged 15-24 years old in the household by age group and sex as well as their residential status in the household – either "Regular/usual member present" or "Regular/usual member absent". It is not clear how long these members may have been absent for, nor where they may be residing while absent. However, all absent household members have data for all data fields in the survey and are included in the analysis.

Despite the inclusion of regular members of the household who are absent, there are still substantially fewer men between the ages of 20 and 24 represented in the survey. It is likely that these young men have migrated in search of work and are living in accommodation that doesn't fall into the definition of a household and are therefore not captured in the survey. This will affect some of the findings of the determinants of NEET.

Table 5: Residential status of surveyed household members (15-24)

	Age	Women	Men	Ratio of women to men
Present in the household	15-19	1 725 593	1 794 174	0.96
	20-24	1 680 012	1 256 387	1.34
	Total	3 405 605	3 050 561	1.12
Absent but a usual or regular member	15-19	477 615	409 814	1.17
	20-24	242 839	235 350	1.03
	Total	720 454	645 165	1.12
Total		4 126 059	3 695 726	1.12

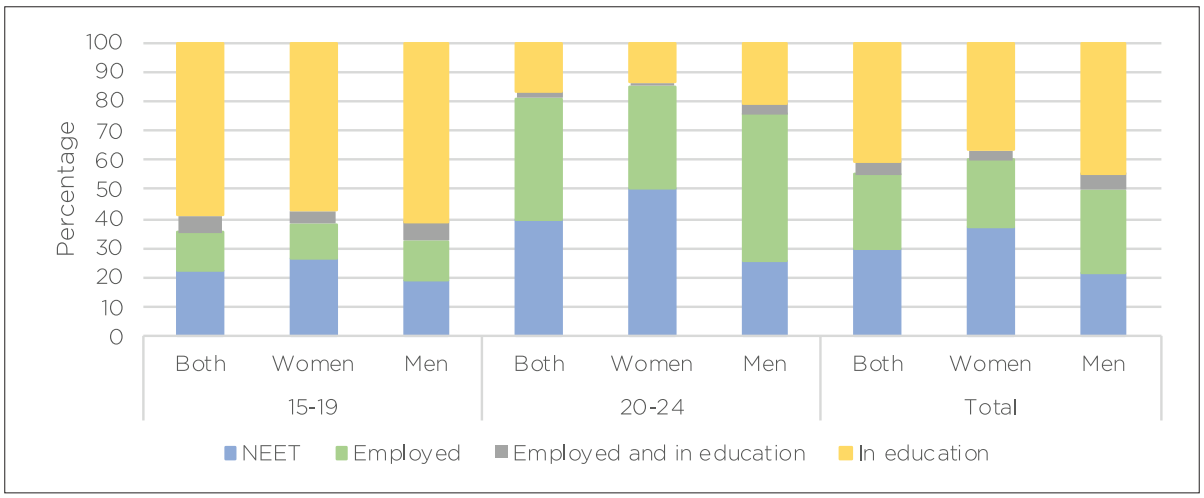
Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

3.3 Overview of youth by activity status

Figure 7 and Table 6 show the number of youth by activity status. The highest percentage of youth NEET are women aged 20-24 (50%). Young men in that age group are half as likely to be NEET (26%) with 53% employed and 24% in education (including those who are employed and in education). More than a third (36%) of young women in the 20–24-year age group are employed and 14% are in education.

Young women in the age group 15-19 are predominantly in education, at 62% (including those in education in both the categories of "in education" and "employed and in education"). Sixteen per cent are employed (including those who are employed in the category "employed and in education"). Finally, 26% are NEET. Similarly, at this age young men are also predominantly in education at (68%). 21% are employed (including those employed in the "employed and in education" category) and 19% are NEET.

Figure 7: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex 15-24.



Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

Table 6: Percentage of youth by activity status – NEET; employed; employed and in education; and in education only, by sex and age 15 to 24

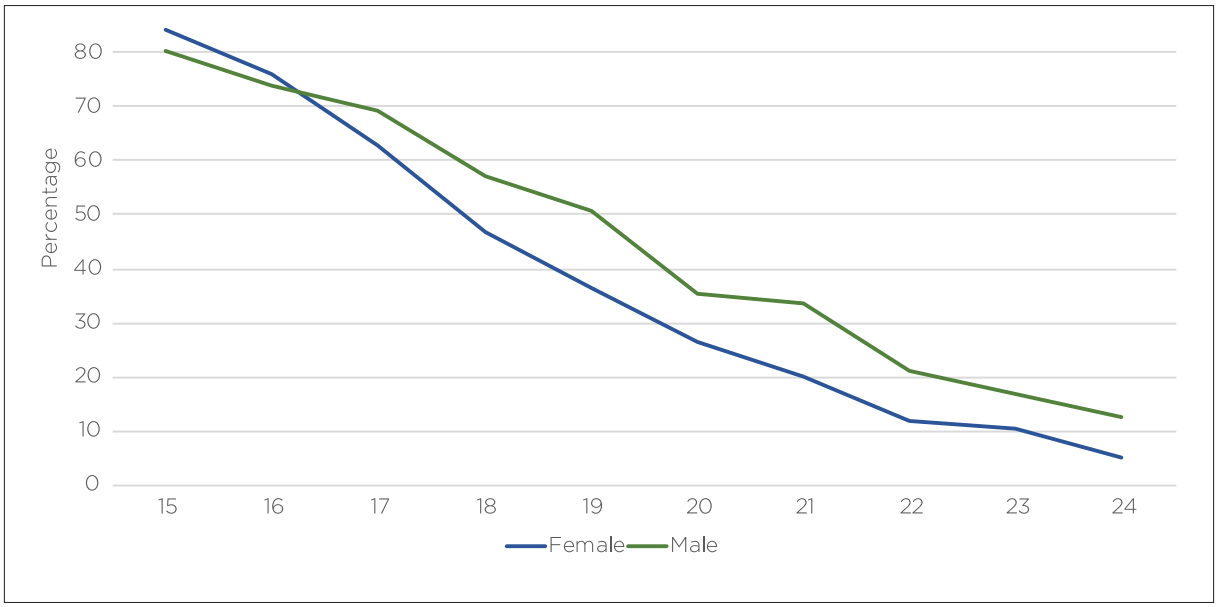
	Age Group	Women Per Cent	Men Per Cent	Ratio of women to men
NEET	15-19	27	19	1.4
	20-24	50	25	2.5
	Total	37	21	2.0
Employed	15-19	12	14	0.9
	20-24	35	50	0.9
	Total	23	28	0.9
Employed and in education	15-19	5	7	0.7
	20-24	2	4	0.5
	Total	3	5	0.6
In education	15-19	57	61	0.9
	20-24	13	21	0.8
	Total	37	45	0.9

Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

3.4 Education profile of youth

Figure 8 shows the percentage of women and men enrolled in education or training by age in years. Attendance at school starts declining between 15 and 17 years of age. At age 15 young women's education enrolment is higher than men's by 4 percentage points but by age 18 only 46% of women are enrolled in education compared to 57% men. The gap between women and men's enrolment remains at about 11 percentage points until 22 years where it narrows to a between a 6 and 8 percentage point difference.

Figure 8: Percentage of youth currently enrolled in education by sex and age in single years (15-24), by sex

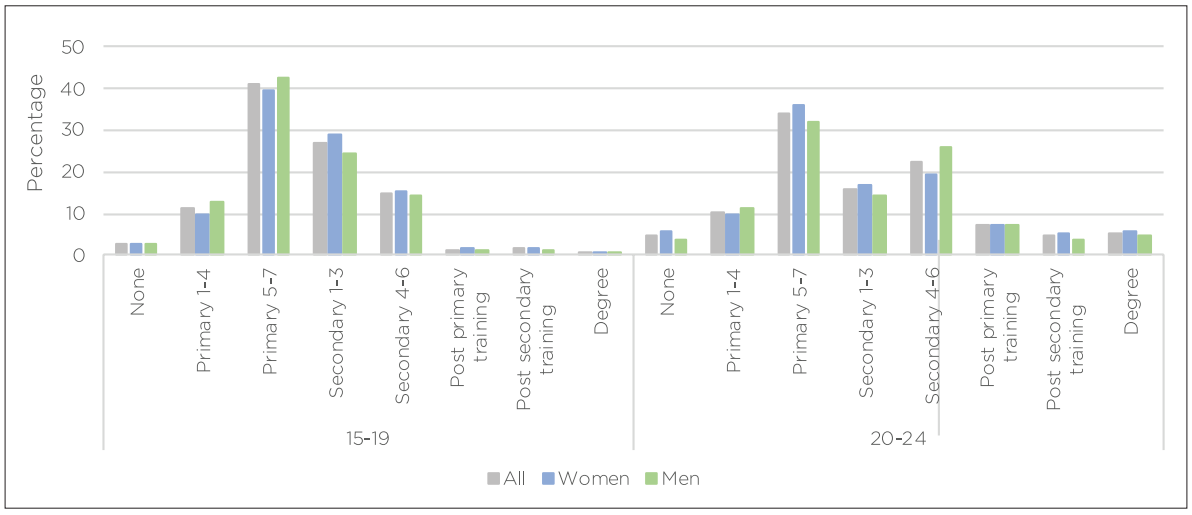


Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

Figure 9 and Table 7 show the highest education level attained. In the age group 15-19 approximately 50% have attained primary levels, less than 30% have attained secondary grades 1-3 and 15% have attained secondary grades between 4 and 6. In this age group young women seem to move through the school system slightly faster than young men with 29% women having attained lower secondary compared to 25% of men.

However, by the ages of 20-24, 26% of men have attained secondary grades 4, 5 or 6 and compared to 19% of women in the same age group. In this age group slightly more women (5%) compared to men (4%) attain post school training as well as higher education where 6% of women and 5% of men attain degree level education.

Figure 9: Percentage of youth by highest level of education, sex and age (15-24)



Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

Table 7: Percentage of youth by highest level of education attained, sex and age (15-24)

		Women Per Cent	Men Per Cent	Ratio of women to men
15-19	None	3	3	1.01
	Primary 1-4	10	13	0.75
	Primary 5-7	40	43	0.93
	Secondary 1-3	29	25	1.18
	Secondary 4-6	15	15	1.04
	Post-primary training	2	1	1.25
	Post-secondary training	2	1	3.69
	Degree	0	0	1.00
20-24	None	6	4	1.95
	Primary 1-4	10	11	1.06
	Primary 5-7	36	32	1.42
	Secondary 1-3	17	14	1.47
	Secondary 4-6	19	26	1.47
	Post-primary training	7	7	1.66
	Post-secondary training	5	4	1.55
	Degree	6	5	1.26

Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

3.5 Employment profile of youth in Uganda

Uganda's employment opportunities are not growing fast enough to absorb the number of young people joining the labour market. The services sector has had the greatest growth over the past decade but young people working in the services sector remain "engaged in low-value services (e.g. petty trade, food vending, etc.) and only few are able to secure employment in high value added economic activities like agro-processing, horticulture or tourism" (Guloba et. al. 2021). The agricultural sector employs the highest percentage of the Ugandan population, but here again most agricultural workers are engaged in vulnerable employment which is defined by inadequate earnings, low productivity and difficult conditions of work. 61% of all Ugandans are employed in vulnerable employment with more women (71%) than men are in vulnerable employment (Guloba et. al. 2021).

The percentage of youth employed in Uganda is shown in Table 8. A relatively high number of young people are employed *and* attending school. In total 16% of women and 20% of men aged 15-19 are in employment and not attending an education institution. In the 20–24-year-old age group 37% of women and 54% of men are employed (including those employed and in education).

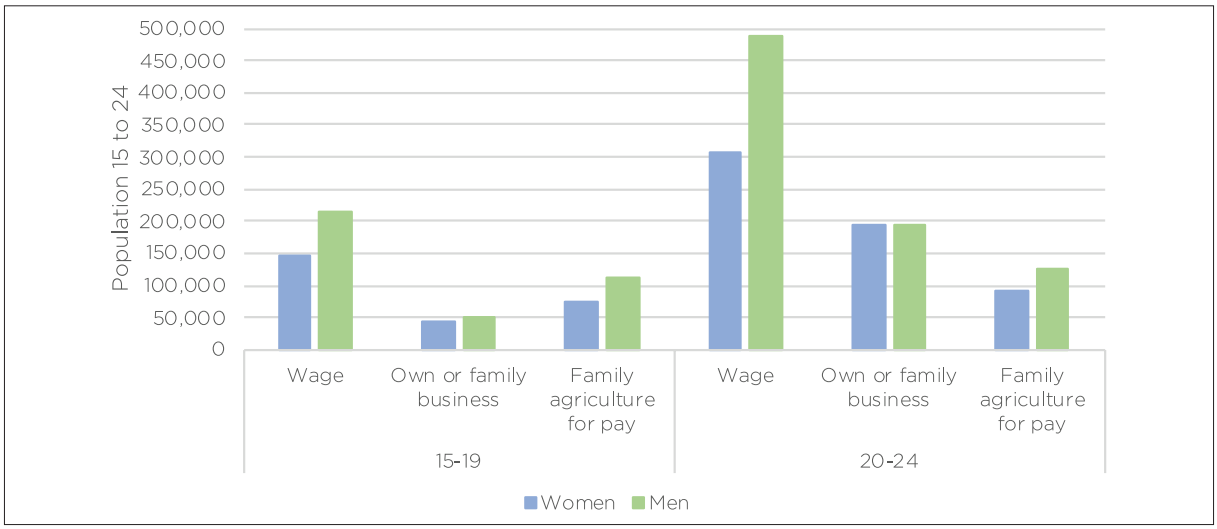
Table 8: Percentage of youth employed; and employed and in education by sex and age group 15-24

	Age Group	Women Per Cent	Men Per Cent	Ratio of women to men
Total percentage employed	15-19	16	20	0.8
	20-24	37	54	0.7
	Total	26	34	0.8
Employed only	15-19	12	14	0.9
	20-24	35	50	0.9
	Total	23	28	0.9
Employed and in education	15-19	5	7	0.7
	20-24	2	4	0.5
	Total	3	5	0.6

Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

Figure 10 shows the type of paid work that youth are engaged in. While most employed youth in both age groups are engaged in wage work, this is predominantly part-time, casual, and often short term during the harvesting season. Notable is the relatively high number of 15–19-year-old men who are engaged in wage work.

Figure 10: Number of employed youth engaged in paid work by type



Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

Figure 11 shows the percentage of employed youth by workplace type. While not fully describing the nature of the work that youth are engaged in, it gives some idea of the likelihood of whether the work would be formal, informal or seasonal. Most youth, both women (43%) and men (44%), are engaged in agricultural work. 22% of women and 17% of men are employed in an enterprise, plant or factory. Young women tend to be employed in their own home or an employer's home (20%) or in a market (7%). In terms of young men – 17% have no fixed place of work and 7% work on construction sites.

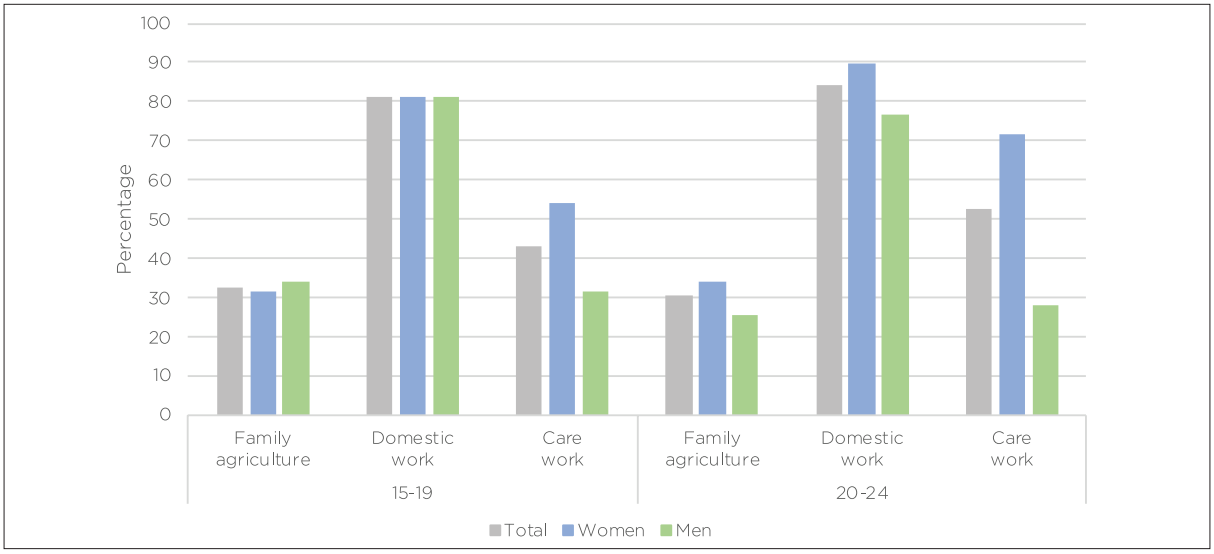
Figure 11: Percentage of employed youth by workplace type and sex

Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

3.6 Unpaid care and domestic work by sex

Young women's ability to move into employment is often circumscribed by the amount of unpaid care and domestic work that they are engaged in. While, as seen above, more young men 15-19 are employed, they also participate equally in both family agriculture and domestic work. Domestic work in this case includes collecting wood and water as well as building and fixing family dwellings. In the 15–19-year age group more young women (54%) than young men (31%) are engaged in care work. In the age group 20-24 more women than men are engaged in family agriculture, domestic and care work than young men. Care work begins to predominate in young women's lives with 72% engaged in care work compared to 28% of young men.

Figure 12: Percentage of youth engaged in unpaid work by type

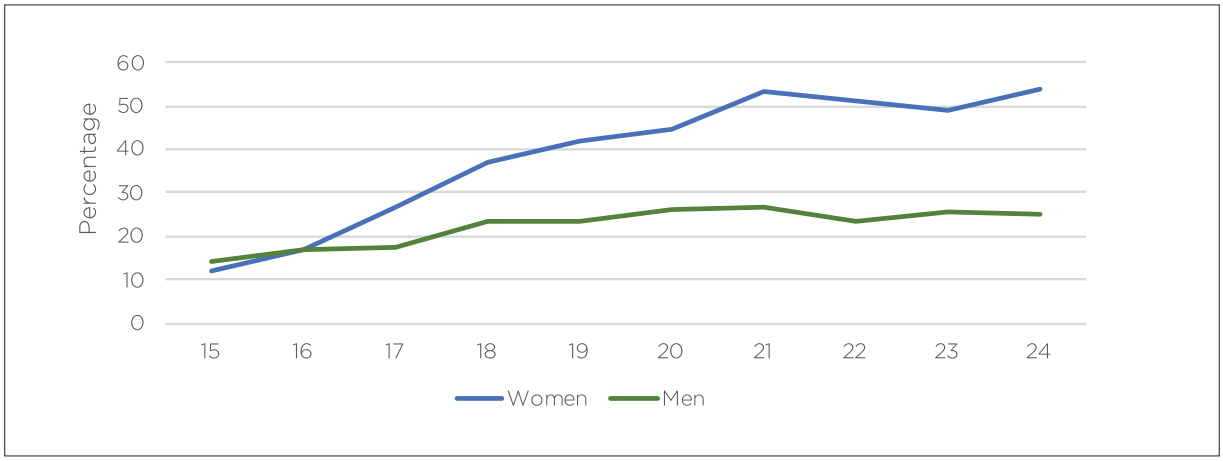


Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

3.7 Profile of NEET youth by sex

Figure 13 shows the percentage of NEET youth by age and sex. At 15 there are slightly fewer young women than young men NEET (as there are slightly more 15 year-old women enrolled in school than men at this age). This starts changing at 16 years old with the NEET rate for both sexes at 18%. The NEET rate of young women rises to over 50% at 21 years old and remains at this level through to 24 years old. The NEET rate of young men increases to 20 years of age and remains under 30% through to 24 years old. The levelling off of young men's NEET rates is due to a commensurate increase in employment as they leave school.

Figure 13: Percentage NEET youth by sex and age in single years (15-24)

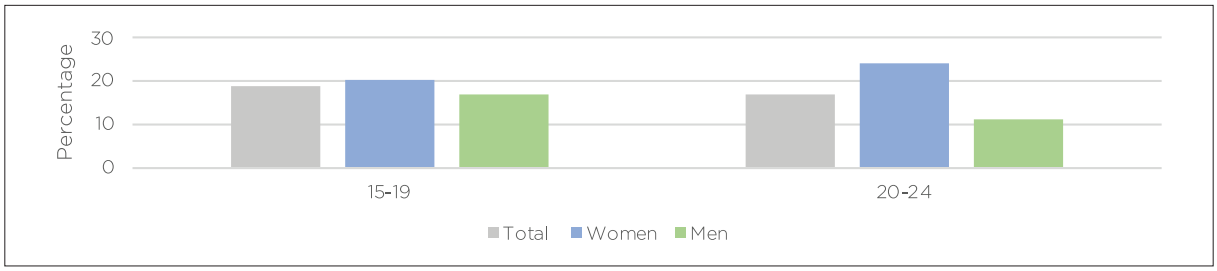


Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

There are more work seekers amongst this age group of women than men – there are approximately as many more women work seekers as there are more men employed. Figure 14 shows the unemployment rate amongst women in the 20-24 age group is 24% and 11% for men at this age.

It should also be noted that the unemployment rate amongst men aged 20-24 may be different if those who are possibly missing from the survey have in fact migrated in search of work or to work.

Figure 14: Unemployed as a percentage of the labour force by sex and age (15-24)



Source: UNHS 2019/20. Author's calculations.

4 DETERMINANTS OF YOUTH NEET

To develop policy to mitigate the likelihood of youth becoming NEET and remaining outside of the labour market permanently, it is important to try and understand what factors in the Ugandan context might determine NEET status. Given that women are more likely to be NEET than young men it is important to see whether there are factors determining NEET in young women that differ to men.

The descriptive data from the Uganda National Household Survey 2019/20 shows the differences in young women and men in terms of their enrolment in education, employment status and NEET status. While more young women are enrolling in higher levels of education than men, they are not entering the labour market at the same rate as their male peers. Women have higher NEET rates and higher unemployment rates than men. It is important to attempt to understand what identifiable factors in the Ugandan context might determine why women are more likely to be NEET than men.

In other research on the individual and household factors associated with the number of years of education attained it has been fairly widely ascertained that socioeconomic status, education levels of parents, availability of learning resources such as books and electricity, time spent on household chores, distance from school and nutritional status are amongst the most important (Bashir et. al. 2018, Karamperidou et. al. 2020 and Lewin 2011). Similar factors are associated with the probability of youth and women's employment (Klasen 2018 and O'Higgins 2017). For young women in particular, early marriage, childbirth and gender norms around the cost benefits of further years of education as well as gender norms around household roles and the suitability of certain employment for women, impacts on both education levels attained and employment (Comblon 2017 and Nieuwenhuis 2018).

In order to ascertain whether there is an association between these factors and the probability of being NEET a multivariate logistic regression model was constructed with NEET status as the dependent variable. Independent variables were tested based on research as mentioned above and the descriptive analysis of the data from the Ugandan National Household Survey 2019/20 that show possible correlations between NEET and sex, age group, marriage, highest level of education attained, urban or rural residence and involvement in family farming for own use.

This section of the report is structured as follows: The first section gives the structure of the model and the method used in coding the variables for analysis is given. In the second section the findings of the model are presented and the associations between NEET and background characteristics such as sex, age, marital status, and family composition are analysed. Lastly, some limitations of the model are explained.

4.1 Structure of the logistic regression model

A multivariate logistic regression is a widely used statistical method appropriate to the categorical nature of survey data. As well as the dependant variable (NEET status) being categorical, many of the independent variables in the survey data are categorical such as sex, married, highest level of education, urban/rural.

The logistic model is:

$$\log(\pi/(1-\pi))=\beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 \ldots\ldots\ldots$$

where $Pr(Y=1)=\pi$

$\beta 1, \beta 2, \beta 3\ldots\ldots$ are the Odds Ratios of $X1$, $X2$, $X3$ respectively

The model was run in *Stata* as a weighted sample of the survey set.

Individual level data for all 15- to 24-year-olds was compiled from the Uganda National Household Survey 2019/20 for the regression analysis. The following data from the survey was used: Individual demographic information; individual education and employment data; household composition data and urban/rural location. Data was coded as noted in Table 9 which lists the variables used in the model.

Table 9: List of variables used in the logistic regression model and method used for compiling the coding

Variable	Type of variable and code used	Method used to compile codes
Dependent variable		
NEET status	Dummy variable 0 = not NEET 1 = NEET	Labour and time use data was used to establish employed or not; Education data used to establish in education or not.
Independent variables		
Sex	Dummy variable Male = 0 Female = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Age group	Dummy variable 15 to 19 = 0 20 to 24 = 1	Data on individual respondent. Age in years coded as age group.
Married	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Urban/rural	Dummy variable Rural = 0 Urban = 1	Household data.
Highest level of education	Dummy variable with 7 categories None or Prim 1-3 = 0 Prim 4-7 = 1 Sec 1-3 = 2 Sec 4-6 = 3 Diploma/training = 4 Degree = 5	Data on the highest grade attained was coded into none; lower and senior primary; lower and senior secondary; training; higher education; and adult literacy.
Can read and write	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.

Variable	Type of variable and code used	Method used to compile codes
Access to a computer	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Access to the internet	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Household composition	Number of children under 15 years old Number of adult dependents Household size	Data on individual respondent's household members.
Engaged in unpaid family agriculture	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Engaged in unpaid care work	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Engaged in unpaid domestic work	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
Engaged in unpaid family business	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
HH receives remittances	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
HH receives agricultural income	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.
HH receives business income	Dummy variable No = 0 Yes = 1	Data on individual respondent.

There were substantial differences observed in the descriptive data between the age groups and between women and men. This includes the number who are NEET, in education, employed, married and type of household they may live in. In order to establish whether the various factors impact differently on the NEET rate depending on age group and gender three separate models were run as follows:

- All 15 to 24 year-olds;
- All 15- to 19-year-old-olds;
- Women only 20- to 24-year-olds.

4.2 Findings of the model

The results of the logistic regressions are summarized in Table 10 and show the probability of being NEET. Most of the coefficients were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. Several coefficients are retained in the table that have p values greater than 0.1 due to their relative impact or not on the probability of being NEET.

The descriptive data in Section 5 showed a greater number of NEET women, especially in the 20-24 age group. This result is confirmed by the logistic regressions where being a woman increases the probability of being NEET in the 15-19 age group by 1.48 times and in the 20-24 age group by 2.81 times. Being in the 20-24 year-old age group more than doubles the chance of being NEET.

Higher levels of education attainment reduce the probability of being NEET for both age groups but by a greater amount for the 15-19 year-olds who complete years of secondary education. Those who complete secondary 1-3 are 88% less likely to be NEET and those who complete secondary 4-6 are 81% less likely to be NEET. This marginal difference might indicate slightly higher unemployment rates amongst high school graduates and is confirmed by the likelihood of NEET amongst all ages being higher for completion of some grades of upper secondary than lower secondary.

Interestingly there is no statistical significance in any of the school level factors when the regression is run for women only (except for the secondary levels in the 15-19 year-old women). However, post school education and training reduce the probability of being NEET in the 20-24 age group. Post-primary and post-secondary training seem to reduce the probability of being NEET more than a degree level education. While there are relatively small numbers of youth who have attained post school training (7% post-primary and 5% post-secondary), it seems as if these courses, which are often three months or six months in duration, might be an effective way to increase employment. The regression model for 20-24 year-olds shows a 49% decrease in the probability of being NEET for both sexes and a 68% reduction in the probability of being NEET for 20-24 year-old women only. Attaining post school higher education and training reduces the probability of being NEET by over 94% for 20-24 year-old women.

Marriage has the expected impact of increasing the probability of being NEET especially amongst the 15-19 year-old women where they are 3 times more likely to be NEET than their unmarried counterparts. The 20-24 year age group of women have a 2.06 times higher probability of being NEET as opposed to those who aren't married.

Youth living in urban areas are more likely to be NEET than their rural counterparts, in the case of 20-24 year-olds this is double the likelihood and in the case of urban women this is 2.2 times that of rural women.

In terms of family structure, no statistically significant impact was found in relation to the head of household or the gender of the head of household. The number of adult dependents in the household increases the chance of being NEET for the 20-24 age group by 1.6 times. Interestingly, as with most of the other countries in this study, the number of children under 15 decreases the probability of being NEET by 19% overall and by 28% for the 20-24 year-olds with a 34% reduction in the probability of being NEET in the 20-24 year-old women.

Doing unpaid domestic and care work increases the probability of being NEET. This is especially true for young women where those between the ages of 15 and 19 doing domestic work are 2.12 times more likely to be NEET. Similarly, those between the ages of 20 and 24 doing care work are 1.6 times more likely to be NEET (although this figure is not statistically significant). The UNHS did collect data on time spent on unpaid domestic work, however there were inconsistencies in the data that would need to be addressed before it can be used.

Involvement in unpaid agriculture increases the probability of NEET by 5.5 times across all age groups. In the 15–19-year age group has an increased probability of over 3.5 times but the women and men between the ages of 20 and 24 who engage in unpaid family agriculture are 9.6 times as likely to be NEET. The analysis of only young women aged 20 to 24 shows that they are 13 times more likely to be NEET if they work in family agriculture

than if they do not. This is more profound than the impact of marriage, living in a rural area, unpaid work in the family business and caring for family members collectively.

Finally, whether the family receives remittances or gets income from family farming and family businesses decrease the probability of being NEET by about 50%

Table 10: Results of logistic regressions for youth NEET status – individual and household characteristics

Category (omitted variable in parenthesis		15-24 year-olds		15-19 year-olds		20-24 year-olds	
		Women and men	Women only	Women and men	Women only	Women and men	Women only
	Variable	Coefficients					
Sex (men)	Women	2.04***		1.48***		2.81***	
Age group (15-19)	20-24	2.11***	2.03***				
Married (No)	Married	1.88***	3.00***	4.93***	6.82***	1.26**	2.06***
Urban/rural (rural)	Urban	1.61***	1.67***	1.33***	1.32*	2.04***	2.20***
Highest level of education (none)	Prim. 1-4	0.82	1.08	0.52**	0.57	0.83	1.07
	Prim. 5-7	0.74	1.13	0.36***	0.59	1.07	1.21
	Sec 1-3	0.37***	0.69	0.12***	0.25***	0.86	1.22
	Sec 4-6	0.55***	0.84	0.19***	0.36**	0.88	1.01
	Post-prim. training	0.22***	0.30	0.40***	0.87	0.18***	0.16***
	Post-sec. training.	0.18***	0.22	0.02***	0.04***	0.26***	0.23***
	Degree	0.38***	0.68	-	-	0.41**	0.54
Number of dependent adults		1.28***	1.31***	1.07*	1.06	1.59***	1.66***
Number of dependent children under 15		0.81***	0.79***	0.92**	0.93	0.72***	0.66***
Doing unpaid care work (no)	Yes	1.08	1.17***	1.01	1.19	1.23*	1.21
Doing unpaid domestic work (no)	Yes	1.18	1.37***	1.18	2.12***	0.99	0.86
Doing unpaid agricultural work (no)	Yes	5.49***	6.38***	3.72***	3.57***	9.56***	13.05***
Doing unpaid family business (no)	Yes	3.46***	2.96***	2.65***	2.15***	5.35***	4.00***
HH receives remittances		0.94	0.90	1.00	1.00	0.81**	0.75**
HH receives some agricultural income		0.58***	0.47***	0.52***	0.50***	0.59***	0.44***
HH receives some business income		0.73***	0.66***	0.88	0.92	0.60***	0.50***
Can read and write (yes)	No	1.72***	1.59***	1.98***	2.20***	1.20	1.02
Access to a computer (no)	Yes	0.56***	0.45***	0.26***	0.15***	0.74	0.67
Access to the internet (no)	Yes	0.98	1.06***	1.54*	2.32**	0.89	0.84
Constant		0.18***	0.15***	0.72***	0.20***	0.14***	0.36

Note: Statistical significance indicated as follows: * = p <.10; ** = p < .05; *** = p < .01. Some coefficients with statistical significance of up to p < 0.3 where retained – these have no asterisk.

4.3 Limitations of the model

Prevailing literature finds that the socio-economic status of households has a positive and determining effect on the health, education attainment and employment outcomes for individuals (Deaton 1997). In the absence of detailed calculations of household income or expenditure, a proxy for household wealth is usually possible to construct – such as housing type, access to water and ownership of household items reported by the household (Malpezzi 2002). All these proxies were tested and there was no meaningful differentiation in the impact on NEET – even when controlling for urban and rural location. This in itself may have been instructive if any of the variables were statistically significant and in many cases several of the variable values dropped by *Stata* when running the estimation.

Not only was there no impact on NEET status of this relative poverty index (nor any of the individual components) but it's inclusion in the model created collinearity to the extent that it weakened both the impact and the statistical significance of nearly *all* the other variables – but most especially highest education level attained. While there are certainly various statistical methods to correct for this – most notably by creating interaction terms, it was felt that interpreting the interaction terms would be too complex for the policy reader. (See O'Higgins 2017 pp 179 to 197). In any event, while there is research that shows a relationship between number of years of school attained and socioeconomic status (Bashir et. al. 2018, Karamperidou et. al. 2020 and Lewin 2011), there is less direct evidence of a relationship between women's employment prospects and socioeconomic status (Klasen 2018).

5 NEET POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

Uganda has committed itself to gender equality and youth development in all aspects of its policies and planning. The overarching plan for medium term growth and human resource development is the Third National Development Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 (NDP III). The NDP III aims to achieve growth in the agricultural and agricultural processing industry, mineral and mining sector, petroleum extraction, tourism development, manufacturing, clean energy development, transport infrastructure and information technology. A focus on women's development and youth employment are included in the plan which stresses their importance for economic growth.

In fact, Uganda's policies for gender equality over the past 20 years have recognized both the exclusion of women from human resource development and the gender norms and attitudes that reinforce women's social and economic disadvantage (UN-Habitat n.d.). Implementation of these policies and effecting change for young women has had mixed results. Currently there are still many inequalities in young women's access to education and employment. As seen in the analysis of the UNHS 2019/20 the youth NEET rate is higher for young women than young men with NEET rates of 50% for 20–24-year-old women and 26% for men in the same age group. Enrolment in education of young women, especially in upper secondary school, post school training and higher education is lower than that of men for all ages.

5.1 Early marriage and teenage pregnancy

Perhaps one of the most profound symptoms of young women's disenfranchisement is seen in the number of early marriages and teenage pregnancies in Uganda. A lack of access to further years of education; difficulty accessing reproductive health care and social norms that limit young women's agency; combined with endemic poverty levels underpin both teenage marriage and pregnancy.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on teenage pregnancy and marriage with increased poverty pushing more young women into marriage and transactional sex. The lengthily closure of schools has left girls without the social protection that it offers and had a negative impact on campaigns to end teenage pregnancy and marriage.

Urgent interventions need to be made into reducing the numbers of teenage pregnancies and changing conflicting social norms whereby young unmarried youth find it difficult to access contraception at the same society perceives that having a child "as proof of fertility" will improve their marriage prospects and be a way out of poverty.

5.2 Education

International indicators show that Uganda has lower rates of enrolment throughout the school system than most SSA countries, but this becomes chronic during lower secondary school where both women and men begin to drop out of school in increasing numbers. Uganda also scores lower on international tests than comparable lower middle-income countries (Bashir et. al. 2018). There would be a range of reasons for this, and these are not all included in this paper. Further, more detailed analysis of the UNHS 2019/20 might lead to some interesting insights such as whether the distance to the nearest secondary school is a determinant of enrolment in education. Currently 66% of rural and 55% of urban children live more than 3km away from the nearest secondary school – the highest in SSA (Bashir et. al., 2018).

Some of the analysis of the UNHS 2019/20 data has implications for policy in the education sector. Amongst others, the total enrolment rates between 15 and 19 are higher for young men than for young women, however, when disaggregating for highest education level attained there are more young women between 15 and 19 attaining secondary school than men (Figure 11). The slightly higher overall enrolment of young men in this age group is due to higher numbers in primary school. Young men are repeating more years of school – possibly due to combining school with paid employment (Figure 9). This leads to missing time at school and possibly repeating grades. At this point young women are not more disadvantaged than men educationally.

At a policy level the early secondary grades would be an important point in young women's development to reinforce educational strategies that keep girls at school and for continuing to shift social norms away from early marriage and childbirth.

Young men's education and training also needs interventions at this level and possibly different modes of education. For example, late afternoon classes during intensive agricultural seasons, may be more conducive than the demoralizing efforts of repeating years of schooling.

5.3 Employment

There are several issues that emerge from the analysis of the UNHS 2019/20 data that converge with international literature on the matter of creating jobs for youth in SSA in general and in Uganda specifically (Guloba 2021). It is useful to reflect on youth employment from policy analysis done by Fox and Gandhi (2021) where they present their findings on which interventions have worked to improve employment for young adults. Not all these propositions emerge from the analysis of the UNHS 2019/20, but they may converge with the entire strategy outlined by Fox and Gandhi (2021):

Economic transformation

> "...the only way to improve youth's income earning prospects significantly and sustainably is to improve all employment and earnings opportunities through economic transformation." (Fox and Gandhi 2021:24)

While the introductory sections of this report have outlined broader Ugandan strategy for economic growth, Guloba et. al. (2021) offers some detail as to which economic sectors have shown the greatest potential for youth employment. Service based industries or

"industries without smokestacks" offer the greatest employment growth potential with agro-processing, horticulture and tourism having the most potential for employment creation in low and medium skilled jobs. One of the largest employers of youth (before the COVID-19 pandemic) was tourism which employs more young women than men. Young men are more likely to be employed in agro-processing such as crop production, fishing and forestry and young women in horticulture – where both the export market and the fresh fruits and vegetables market is growing.

Guloba et. al. (2021) argue that contraction over the past decade in manufacturing and job losses for youth in that sector do not suggest it will expand and offer youth employment in the near future. The services sector has also shed youth jobs and is seeing employment becoming increasingly informal – especially in wholesale and retail trade. While this is not necessarily a disadvantage for youth employment it does necessitate several structural inputs from local government (UN-Habitat 2021).

Raising productivity in the informal sector – both on the farm and off the farm

Given the findings in the analysis of the UNHS 2019/20 of unpaid family agriculture being the greatest determinant of NEET and that paid family agriculture "employs" 30% of 15-29 year-olds and 16% of 20-24 year-olds, agriculture is seemingly an essential component of rural employment opportunities for youth.

Makumbi (2018) and Guloba (2021) argue that improving productivity in agriculture needs greater government investment. According to Makumbi (2018) Uganda has experienced a decline in the relative budget allocation to the agricultural sector. During the financial year 2012/13 3.4 percent of the national budget was allocated to the sector and it then declined to 2.7 percent in 2015/16.

Encourage the entrance of large firms

According to Fox and Gandhi (2021: 24) large firms have an:

> "out-sized role in economic transformation and employment creation since they tend to use newer technology, pay higher wages and are more likely to export. In addition they often structure the market for medium and smaller firms operating in related sectors who will be their suppliers and retailers".

While data does exist in the UNHS 2019/20 on the economic sector and size of business that a young person may be employed in, it was beyond the scope of this paper to analyse these implications for youth employment.

Infrastructure

Uganda has large infrastructure investments earmarked in their NDPIII including roads, power, duty-free special economic zones to promote domestic and international investment. Several analysts have commented in general about the high prices of transport, electricity, and digital services in SSA and in Uganda in particular (Makumbi 2018 and Guloba 2021). Youth in Kampala interviewed by UN-Habitat (n.d.) stated that the cost of electronic communications was a barrier to business as was sufficient space to work and trade.

Youth targeted interventions and active labour market policies

While not directly within the scope of this analysis there are some findings that relate to the need articulated by Ugandan business owners interviewed by several researchers, for increased "soft skills" such as communication, problem solving as well as more digital and IT skills. Fox and Ghandi (2021) find this with other case studies across the sub-continent where several programmes, complementary to the formal education system, are proving cost effective. UN-Habitat (n.d.) certainly found in their interviews with young women in Kampala that this was one of the few ways in which young women were able to overcome societal norms which required young women to be deferential.

> "Women in particular benefit from developing socio-emotional skills. These interventions are showing results in terms of higher self-employment earnings and better access to wage jobs. It is a productive avenue for closing the gender pay gap." (Fox and Ghandi 2021: 26)

There is much debate about the success of interventions that directly support youth in job searches, entrepreneurial skills, technical skills development, job placements and apprenticeships. Kring (2017) suggests that the impact of ALMPs "*based solely on job placement rates in the short term tend to show only small positive impacts. However, their longer-term impact is generally more substantial. ALMPs are particularly valuable for women, enabling young women to gain essential skills and work experience, as well as providing guidance in non-traditional work opportunities*."

UN-Habitat (n.d.) has identified several sources of assistance for youth and women's organizations. The Kampala local government, for example, provides a range of support and services such as credit to youth and women's organizations. Registered savings and credit cooperatives that operate throughout the country can receive government grants for youth and women's business development and initiatives exist that facilitate other financial support such as bulk buying and marketing. However, UN-Habitat also point to the need for training and support for young women not only in business and finance but also in overcoming gender and youth norms that prevent them from continuing their formal education, finding decent work for equal pay or starting a business. (UN-Habitat 2018)

From the analysis of the UNHS 2019/20 data we see that young women are leaving school early but do appear to be taking up post-school training which increases their probability of being employed. Between 15 and 19 years of age, 17% of young women and men have some sort of wage income, mostly in informal and seasonal work and often in family farming and family businesses. Between 20 and 24 young women are more involved in caring for family members and increase their involvement in family agriculture and family business which can probably be combined with childcare. Interestingly a larger percentage of women in this age group than men are actively seeking formal employment.

It seems that increased years of good quality schooling, post school training, business, and financial literacy; as well as creating opportunities for increasing agricultural productivity and small businesses in rural areas, would benefit young women in the short to medium term. This will ultimately allow them to be better placed for longer term employment opportunities that arise.

6 REFERENCES

African Development Bank. 2021. Uganda Economic Outlook. Accessed 3 November 2021 at https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/east-africa/uganda/uganda-economic-outlook.

Bashir, S., Lockheed, M., Ninan, E. and Tan, J. 2018. Facing Forward: Schooling for Learning in Africa. *Africa Development Forum series*. Co-published by Agence Française de Développement and the World Bank.

Bryceson, D. 2018. Agrarian Labour and Resources in Sub-Saharan Africa: Gender and Generational Change within Family Farms, 1980–2015. UN WOMEN Discussion Paper Series No. 22, March 2018. UN Women. Accessible at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/3/discussion-paper-agrarian-labour-and-resources-in-sub-saharan-africa.

Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) 2020. Citizens Guide to Uganda's Third National Development Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 (NDPIII). CSBAG: Ntinda.

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Uganda Chapter. 2021. Research Findings on the Situation of, and Impact of Covid-19 on School Going Girls and Young Women in Uganda. Accessible at https://faweuganda.org/ wp-content/ uploads/2021/09/COVID-19-Impact-Study-on-Girls-and-Women-Report-2020.pdf.

Fox, L. and D. Gandhi. 2021. Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa: Progress and Prospects. Paper was prepared as part of the Africa Growth Initiative's Industries without Smokestacks (IWOSS) project. Brookings Institution Press: Washington, DC.

Guloba, M., Kakuru, M., Ssewanyana, S., and Rauschendorfer, J. 2021. Employment creation potential, labor skills requirements and skill gaps for young people: A Uganda case study. *Africa Growth Initiative Working Paper #37.* Washington: Brookings Institute.

IMF. 2021. Uganda Request for a Three-year Arrangement Under the Extended Credit Facility — Press Release, Staff Report and Statement by the Executive Director for Uganda. Accessed on 3 November 2021 at https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2021/06/30/ Uganda-Request-for-a-Three-Year-Arrangement-Under-the-Extended-Credit-Facility-Press-461347.

ILO 2013. Resolution I: Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization. From the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Geneva, 2–11 October 2013.

Kwesiga, E., Wamajji, R., Mubangizi, P. and Mwesigye, G. 2019. State of the Youth Report in Uganda: Assessing Government's investment in young people. Centre for Policy Analysis: Kampala.

Makumbi, R. 2018. Uganda's National Youth Policy and Job Creation for Youth. *IDS Bulletin: Youth Employment and the Private Sector in Africa Volume 49, Number 5, November 2018*. IDS: Brighton.

Muhumuza, R. 2021. Ugandan kids lose hope in long school closure amid pandemic. AP News. 1 November 2021. Accessed on 2 November 2021 at: https://apnews.com/article/ coronavirus-pandemic-uganda-education-schools-f21f7f5751f32a4785c6b215c81f1530.

Rodgers, Y. and Akram-Lodhi, H. 2015. The gender gap in agricultural productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Causes, costs and solutions. UN Women Policy Brief No.11. Accessible at https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/04/the-gender-gap-in-agricultural-productivity-in-sub-saharan-africa.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) and The DHS Programme. 2018. Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2016. UBOS: Kampala.

Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). 2021. *COVID-19 and Beyond: A Spotlight on Uganda's Adolescent Reproductive Health.* UBOS: Kampala.

UNFPA 2021. UNFPA Data web page. Accessed on 07/12/2021. Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/data/UG.

UNICEF, UNFPA. 2021. Act Now: Accelerating gender equality by eliminating child marriage in a pandemic; UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage Annual Report 2020.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA). 2021. Sustainable Development Goals Web Page. Available at: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8 06/09/2021.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (UN Population Division). 2019. World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights. United Nations: New York.

United Nations, Geospatial Information Section. 2020. Map of Uganda. Accessed on 4 November 2021 at https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/uganda-0.

UN Women, Uganda Bureau of Statistics and UNFPA. 2020. COVID-19 Rapid Gender Assessment: Gendered Perspective. Accessed 2 November 2021 at https://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications /2021/09/covid-19-rapid-gender-assessment-uganda

UN Women. 2020. From Insight to Action: Gender Equality in the Wake of Covid-19. United Nations: New York.

UN Women. 2021. The Broken Promise: Benefits Derived by Women From the 10 per cent Agricultural Budget Allocation in Seven Countries in East and Southern Africa. Nairobi. UN Women East and Southern African Regional Office: Nairobi.

UN Women. 2022. Uganda Country Office: Strategic Note 2022-2025. Accessed at: https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/STRATEGIC%20NOTE%202022-2025.pdf.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). (no date). Strengthening Policy for Young Women in the Changing World of Work. Case study: Kampala Municipality, Uganda. UN-Habitat: Nairobi.

World Bank. 2021. The World Bank in Uganda: Overview. Accessed 2 November 2021. Available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda/overview#1.

7 DATA

IMF World Economic Outlook Database. 2021. Accessed on 17 July 2021 at: https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2021/April.

Uganda National Household Survey 2019/20. Obtained from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

World Bank PovcalNET data. Accessed on 17 July 2021 at: https:/povertydata.worldbank.org/ poverty/home/.

East and Southern Africa Regional Office
UN Gigiri Complex, UN Avenue;
Block M, Ground Floor
P.O. Box 30218- 00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 20 762 4778

africa.unwomen.org
Email: esaro.publications@unwomen.org
unwomenafrica
unwomenafrica
unwomen
unwomenafrica

UN WOMEN | WOMEN COUNT