



## Measuring the Impact of Gender Equality Innovations for Transformative Youth Agricultural Livelihoods Project in Ntoroko and Kasese in Western Uganda

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<b>Research Organization involved in the study:</b>	The international Center for Research on Women (ICRW)
<b>Address of Research Institution:</b>	<b>KENYA:</b> Vienna Court, Ground Floor, State House Crescent, Nairobi. P.O. Box 44168 – 00100 Nairobi, Kenya <b>UGANDA:</b> S&L Chambers, First Floor, Mackinnon Road, Nakasero, Kampala. P.O. Box 2475 Kampala, Uganda
<b>Other Organization(s) involved in the study:</b>	Save the Children Uganda Save the Children Canada
<b>Location of Study:</b>	Uganda
<b>By:</b>	Cleopatra Mugenyi and Naome Wandera (International Center for Research on Women)
<b>Contact Information of Research Team Lead:</b>	Cleopatra Mugenyi Director, ICRW Africa Regional Office Email: <a href="mailto:cmugenyi@icrw.org">cmugenyi@icrw.org</a> Tel:(+254) 722 418 285
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Canada

This project aimed to build on the successes of a previous multi-country youth agriculture and livelihood initiative called Youth in Action (YiA). Uganda was one of the sites of the original program where discriminatory norms and attitudes negatively affected young women's ability to fully benefit from the program. This project "Measuring the Impact of Gender Equality Innovations for Transformative Youth Agricultural Livelihoods Project in Ntoroko and Kasese in Western Uganda" called Youth in Action Plus (YiA+) for short, aimed to develop, implement, and evaluate gender transformative interventions added to the original YiA program with an aim to enhance agricultural livelihoods for young women and men and generate stronger food security outcomes for their households and communities. The project built on the YiA model to (i) facilitate household and community understanding of and conversations about gendered labor division; (ii) enhance intra-household communication and equitable decision-making about resource allocation; (iii) enhance intra-household communication and equitable decision-making about reproductive choices; and (iv) shift community views and institutional attitudes toward young people – particularly young women – as economic agents, participants and leaders in agricultural production.

While YiA was relatively successful at improving the lives of young people, several socio-cultural and gender-based had an impact on the outcomes of the program especially for young women. This pilot of the gender transformative YiA+ program aimed to **identify and address the discriminatory social and gender norms and practices in households, communities and market institutions that prevent young women from attaining their full potential in the agricultural sector**. The specific objectives were:

- **SO1:** To design a gender transformative curriculum that will guide young men and women, their families, communities, and institutional representatives to identify and address the discriminatory gendered norms and practices that underline the gender inequalities in agriculture.
- **SO2:** To implement and test the YiA+ model, consisting of the current YiA program plus the newly developed gender transformative curriculum, in Ntoroko and Kasese, Uganda.
- **SO3:** To evaluate the YiA+ model in terms of its influence on discriminatory gender norms, attitudes and behaviors on youth agricultural livelihoods, household food security and nutrition.
- **SO4:** To take the model to scale by working with stakeholders, implementing partners, private sector and government partners to embed key gender transformative components of the YiA+ model into their own agriculture livelihood programs.

A **gender assessment** was undertaken in the the two target districts and covered four sub counties. The gender assessment was intended to provide contextually relevant information for the adaptation of the YiA curriculum (YiA+) as well as the development of the SBCC strategy and activities. Gender inequalities are portrayed at household level as evidenced through division of labor. Women and girls are particularly more vulnerable to shoulder heavier work burdens and roles that are not paid and keep them at home compared to boys and men. Agriculture and agriculture related roles also continue to dominate use of time among girls and women with more women engaged in tillage and harvesting. However, females do not have more time for other activities outside agriculture such as fishing and animal husbandry, including the high-end value chains as less than half of their time spent in such activities is to provide only a supportive role to boys and men. The challenges girls and women face in improving their livelihoods are largely external to themselves. Lack of access to incomes earned at individual and household level has contributed to limited earnings for girls and women have also impacted negatively on related benefits such as their education and retention in school. Yet still girls and women, more than boys and men are not engaged in any formal or community opportunities to earn any income outside their homes with traditional unpaid labour still dominant amongst them.

The gender transformative **YiA+ curriculum was designed and developed**. Beyond the goals of the original YiA curriculum, the gender transformative YiA+ package aimed to; (i) increase youth awareness that gender inequality is socially determined and to promote youth adoption of gender equitable beliefs and practices; (ii) encourage equitable decision-making at household and community levels; (iii) raise youth aware about what constitutes SGBV and the negative consequences of SGBV, and to increase youth knowledge of how to prevent and respond to SGBV; (iv) give boys and girls confidence and teach them to appreciate themselves and others for the different ways they contribute to society; and (v) ensure that both boys and girls are able to grow and sustain livelihoods in agriculture. The original YiA “Learning for Life” curriculum was evaluated to determine which specific activities and modules were central to the original success of the program. The layout and sequencing of the 5 modules (Introduction; Myself; My Family; My Community; My Business) was robust and rather than adding a new gender-specific module, it was decided that gender-specific activities should be incorporated within the existing curriculum while maintaining the fidelity of the business and financial literacy sections. The **YiA+ M&E framework and theory of change (TOC)** were also developed.

In order to support the gender-specific elements added to the Learning for Life curriculum and to make the YiA+ package a truly gender-transformative intervention; **SBCC activities were developed to be implemented in the communities from which the program participants come from**. Beyond the exiting 2 family and community celebrations and graduation included in the original YiA program, the following elements were developed to be delivered during the Learning and Actions phases of YiA+: (i) 6 sessions with family members and/or spouses; (ii) Community dialogues with stakeholders and community leaders; and (iii) Radio talk shows for community radio which will involve facilitators, key stakeholders, program participants, and community members.

All intervention materials were developed and translated and facilitators were recruited and trained. We were unable to recruit program participants and implement the intervention due to project delays that were compounded by the restrictions that were put into place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## List of Acronyms

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DCDO:	District Community Development Officers
CDO:	Community Development Officer
FGD:	Focus Group Discussions
GA:	Gender Assessment
ICF:	Informed Consent Form
ICRW:	International Center for Research on Women
IDRC:	International Development Research Center
IRB:	Institutional Review Board
KII:	Key Informant Interviews
LC:	Local Council
MUREC:	Mildmay Uganda Research Ethics Committee
OWC:	Operation Wealth Creation
SBCC:	Social behavior change communication
SC:	Save the Children
SCDO:	Sub County Community Development Officers
UNCST:	Uganda National Council of Science and Technology
YiA:	Youth in Action
YiA+:	Youth in Action Plus
YLP:	Youth Livelihoods Program

## 1.0 The Research Problem

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Approximately 89 million young people are out of school worldwide. Many out of school youth lack access to economic opportunities and key foundational skills, and are excluded from policies and programs that support safe and productive employment. These factors limit the ability of youth to transition out of poverty as they grow into adulthood. In much of Africa subsistence agriculture is the largest livelihood activity available to rural and less developed areas. Farming supports 90% of Uganda's population and it is likely to remain the most significant source of employment for youth in the foreseeable future. Yet the ability of youth to benefit from agriculture is limited by gender inequality.

This project aimed to build on the successes of a previous multi-country youth agriculture and livelihood initiative called Youth in Action (YiA). Uganda was one of the sites of the original program where discriminatory norms and attitudes negatively affected young women's ability to fully benefit from the program. This project "Measuring the Impact of Gender Equality Innovations for Transformative Youth Agricultural Livelihoods Project in Ntoroko and Kasese in Western Uganda" called Youth in Action Plus (YiA+) for short, aimed to develop, implement, and evaluate gender transformative interventions added to the original YiA program with an aim to enhance agricultural livelihoods for young women and men and generate stronger food security outcomes for their households and communities. The project built on the YiA model to (i) facilitate household and community understanding of and conversations about gendered labor division; (ii) enhance intra-household communication and equitable decision-making about resource allocation; (iii) enhance intra-household communication and equitable decision-making about reproductive choices; and (iv) shift community views and institutional attitudes toward young people – particularly young women – as economic agents, participants and leaders in agricultural production.

From the YiA program, youth demonstrated significant positive changes in employment, daily earnings, and improved autonomy on economic decisions with no statistically significant differences between girls and boys. Despite the encouraging results, evaluations of the original program, including a rapid gender equality analysis conducted in the intervention areas, recognized ongoing gender-based barriers that girls faced and which impacted development of sustainable agricultural livelihoods. These included (i) lack of control and decision-making power of female youth over household and community resources related to traditional and stereotypical home-based work; (ii) early marriage, pregnancy and being single mothers that resulted in irregular attendance and participation in vocational and apprenticeship trainings of girls; and (iii) limited access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) services. Negative stereotypes for boys were also identified, where boys were also found to feel excluded, and negatively stereotyped as criminals and targeted for arrest by authorities. Boys were highly influenced by peer groups on substance abuse (alcohol, marijuana, opium, cigarettes), perpetration of GBV on girls, theft and crime, engaging in antisocial behavior (fights and conflicts).

While YiA was relatively successful at improving the lives of young people, several socio-cultural and gender-based barriers such as those identified above had an impact on the outcomes of the program especially for young women. This pilot of the gender transformative YiA+ program aimed to **identify and address the discriminatory social and gender norms and practices in households, communities and market institutions that prevent young women from attaining their full potential in the agricultural sector.** The specific objectives were:

- **SO1:** To design a gender transformative curriculum that will guide young men and women, their families, communities, and institutional representatives to identify and address the discriminatory gendered norms and practices that underline the gender inequalities in agriculture.

- **SO2:** To implement and test the YiA+ model, consisting of the current YiA program plus the newly developed gender transformative curriculum, in Ntoroko and Kasese, Uganda.
- **SO3:** To evaluate the YiA+ model in terms of its influence on discriminatory gender norms, attitudes and behaviors on youth agricultural livelihoods, household food security and nutrition.
- **SO4:** To take the model to scale by working with stakeholders, implementing partners, private sector and government partners to embed key gender transformative components of the YiA+ model into their own agriculture livelihood programs.

A number of milestones were realized during the 24 month project implementation period:

- A **project inception meeting** was held in Fort portal, Uganda. Save the Children (SC) and ICRW co-hosted the meeting to which 63 key project stakeholders from the districts were invited. The built understanding, ownership, and mobilized support for the YiA+ project among key district and sub-county stakeholders. Stakeholders included; political and technical leadership, implementing partner organizations, media houses, youth representatives, District Local Council chairpersons, Production officers, Community Development Officers (CDOs), Resident District Commissioners (RDC's), Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) focal persons, District Education Officers (DEOs), youth livelihood program focal persons, youth district councilors, Sub-county CDOs, youth representatives/councilors, Sub-county Internal Security Organization (GISO) and extension workers, and previous YiA implementing partner CBOs (FURA and RIDE Africa). The meeting was also attended by a representative from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The one-day inception meeting was followed by a two-day internal project kick-off meeting for the ICRW and SC project team to review, conceptualize and draw a clear roadmap for effective project roll out.
- The project also held **Sub-county level inception meetings with all the six targeted subcounties** of Butungama, Nombe, Rwebisengo and Karugutu in Ntoroko district and Kisinga and Nyakatonzi in Kasese district. Through these meetings, the project was introduced to key sub-county stakeholders and laid ground for effective stakeholder mapping and identification of potential opportunities for the project linkages. The key sub county stakeholders included both sub county based technical (sub-county chief, CDO, extension workers) and political leaders (sub-county chairpersons, youth counselors, parish chiefs). A total of 51 stakeholders (Females: 22 and Males: 29) actively participated in the meetings. Mapping of social and health services for linkages was also conducted during the sub-country inception meetings.
- **Community Advisory Boards (CAB)** were formed at each of the six targeted sub-counties. The CABs comprised of 10-12 community members with equal female and male representation and representation from each parish in the targeted sub-county. Later on, youth representatives, parents, and graduates from the previous YiA program were recruited to the CABs.
- A project **Communication Strategy** was developed and disseminated by month 6 of project implementation and rolled out across both ICRW and SC as a basis for project communication guidelines and protocols.
- The gender transformative **YiA+ curriculum was designed and developed**. Findings from the gender assessment along with the reviewed YiA livelihoods curriculum were included in the complete YiA+ package. Beyond the goals of the original YiA curriculum, the gender transformative YiA+ package aims to; (i) increase youth awareness that gender inequality is socially determined and to promote youth adoption of gender equitable beliefs and practices; (ii) encourage equitable decision-making at household and community levels; (iii) raise youth aware about what constitutes SGBV and the negative consequences of SGBV, and to increase youth knowledge of how to prevent and respond to SGBV; (iv) give boys and girls confidence and teach them to appreciate themselves and others for the different ways they contribute to society; and (v) ensure that both boys and girls are able to grow and sustain livelihoods in agriculture. The original YiA "Learning for Life" curriculum was evaluated to determine which specific activities and modules were central to the original success of the program. The layout and sequencing of the 5 modules (Introduction; Myself; My Family; My Community; My Business) was robust and rather than adding a new gender-specific module, it was decided that gender-specific activities should be incorporated within the existing curriculum while maintaining the fidelity of the business and financial literacy sections. In order to support the gender-specific elements added to the Learning for Life curriculum and



to make the YiA+ package a truly gender-transformative intervention; SBCC activities were developed to be implemented in the communities from which the program participants come from. Beyond the exiting 2 family and community celebrations and graduation included in the original YiA program, the following elements were developed to be delivered during the Learning and Actions phases of YiA+: (i) 6 sessions with family members and/or spouses; (ii) Community dialogues with stakeholders and community leaders; and (iii) Radio talk shows for community radio which will involve facilitators, key stakeholders, program participants, and community members.

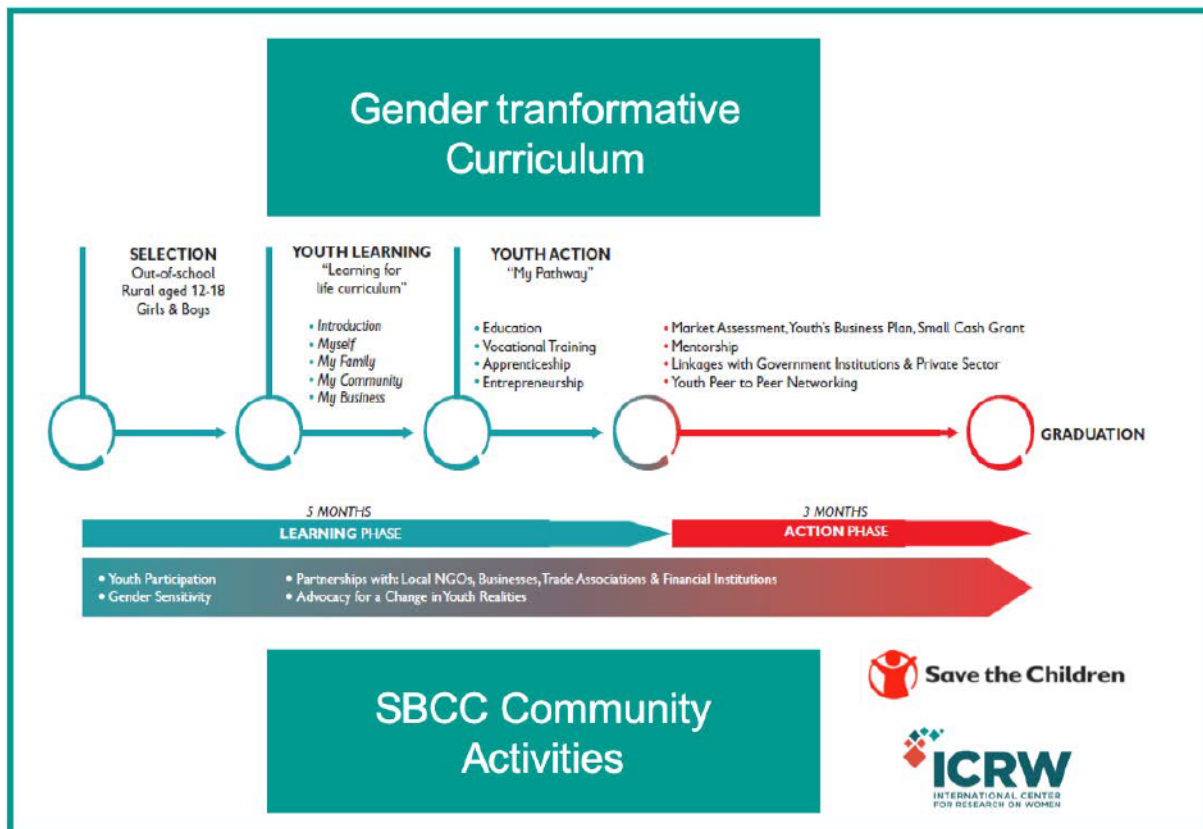


Figure 1 YiA+ involves gender-specific elements added to the Learning for Life curriculum and community-based SBCC activities for a complete gender-transformative package

- The YiA+ M&E framework and theory of change (TOC) were developed.
- **Quarterly CAB meetings** were conducted. These were intended to keep stakeholders informed of the progress of the project.
- A **gender assessment in the two project districts (Ntoroko and Kasese)** was carried out to enable contextually accurate information to be used to inform the adaptation and revision of the original curriculum and develop the gender transformative YiA+ curriculum.
- The **Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy, activities, and materials** were developed.
- Twenty-four (12 male, 12 female) **community-based facilitators were recruited and trained** to deliver the YiA+ curriculum for out of school youth; (i) Myself, (ii) My Family, (iii) My Community, and (iv) My Business.
- The **baseline and endline evaluation protocol development** was completed, and the required IRB review processes commenced.
- **Beneficiary selection process** was initiated with 782 youth signing up for the program (350 female, 432 male). Selection of youth participants was concluded in five of the six sub counties with attendance of over 500 youth with approximate 50% female participation.

Approximately, 300 parents (with over approximately 70% female participation) and 356 youth (185 male, 171 female) were selected against a target of 394.

- Print work for the curriculum training materials was completed in preparation for their application.

**Project delays:** There were delays in year one of the project that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in year two. The LOE and duration for comprehensive curriculum revisions and development of SBCC materials was underestimated during project design. The gender assessment protocol took much longer to get approval than anticipated which slowed finalization of the YiA+ package and a downstream effect on the implementation of YiA+. The delayed approvals required Save the Children engage in more community-based meetings to manage stakeholder relationships.

**Effect of COVID-19 on program implementation and research activities:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic Uganda issued a series of policy directives in March 2020 that included a total lockdown of the economy. These directives impacted agricultural livelihoods as well as the social context in the project areas. In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic the project areas have experiences severe flooding that lead to internal displacement of some project populations. The popul in some areas thus affecting mapping output drawn in preparation for the project. Both ICRW and Save the Children moved to remote work in response to the pandemic and lockdown. The restrictions on meetings also meant that field-based activities could not occur.

Following an assessment of the situation on the ground we concluded that the disruptive impact of policies related to COVID-19 as well as the natural disasters<sup>1</sup> would make it difficult for our research to truly measure causality of the curriculum on youth livelihoods. Even though we proposed to adapt the further to include activities and information on post-disaster resilience; the COVID-19-related public health precautions would have an extended and deep impact on livelihoods within our project communities. Women and girls faced additional vulnerabilities and marginalization, negative impacts on to their livelihoods and mobility, increased care responsibilities, and increased risk of GBV. Both pastoralist and agricultural households experienced serious income loss during this pandemic. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS) had classified Kasese and Ntoroko districts as populations in crisis<sup>2</sup> due to the combined effects of floods and COVID-19 restrictions. We therefore foresaw challenges with recruitment into the program and challenges with promoting alternative livelihoods outside of traditional gender norms.

In response to the changed context, ICRW and Save the Children requested to revise the original research methodology. We revised our case control methodology to a baseline/endline evaluation with non-participating community members of the same age groups serving as a comparison group. This request was granted by the IDRC program officer. But as a result of the unintended impacts of COVID-19 and the flooding on the project, we needed to request a costed extension that would enable us to repositnd to the changed context as well as complete the project over a longer period of time. While there were no project specific field activities underway during the lock down period, all project staff were still present and Save the Children was providing PPE and rolling out other social protection strategies in vulnerable communities. Unfortunately our request for a costed extension was not granted by IDRC.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://twitter.com/UgandaRedCross/status/1266331131403739136?s=20>

<sup>2</sup> <https://fews.net/east-africa/uganda/key-message-update/may-2020>

## Project Milestones:

Activities	Milestones	Reporting indicators and comments	Progress Achieved	Reason for partial or non completion
<b>YEAR ONE</b>				
<b>Project Preparation</b>	Effective teamwork established between ICRW and Save the Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MOU and sub-agreement signed.</li> <li>Kick off meeting held</li> </ul>	Completed	
	Project methodology and implementation plan refined and agreed upon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed work plan completed.</li> <li>Monitoring framework completed</li> <li>Communications strategy completed</li> </ul>	Completed	
	Project implementation team finalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 research officer recruited and trained.</li> <li>1 YiA+ field coordinator recruited and trained.</li> <li>Field research assistants recruited and trained</li> </ul>	Completed	
	All requisite ethical and institutional clearances obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender assessment protocol developed and submitted for ethical review.</li> <li>Institutional and in-country ethics review received</li> </ul>	Completed	
	Engagement with community and stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community advisory boards (CAB) formed.</li> <li>Stakeholders identified.</li> <li>Research project introduced to stakeholders</li> </ul>	Completed	
<b>Objective 1</b>	YiA+ curriculum finalized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender assessment completed.</li> <li>Referral services mapped.</li> <li>YiA curriculum reviewed and YiA+ curriculum developed.</li> <li>YiA+ monitoring framework and data tools developed</li> </ul>	Completed	
<b>Objective 2</b>	YiA+ curriculum implementation initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 facilitators selected and trained.</li> <li>420 YiA+ participants recruited.</li> <li>100 YiA participants (control group) recruited.</li> <li>15 agri-business mentors identified.</li> <li>400 peer trainers identified and trained</li> </ul>	Partially completed	Although we managed to recruit and train the facilitators in anticipation of rolling out the study, we did not complete recruitment of the YiA+ participants as we were unable to secure a project extension from IDRC. We did not recruit the mentors and per trainers for the same reason.

Activities	Milestones	Reporting indicators and comments	Progress Achieved	Reason for partial or non completion
<b>Objective 3</b>	Evaluation of YiA+ curriculum initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field research assistants recruited and trained.</li> <li>Institutional and ethical approval for baseline and endline protocol received</li> <li>YiA+ baseline survey completed.</li> <li>Community knowledge attitudes and practices (KAP) baseline survey completed.</li> <li>Data analysis of baseline surveys initiated</li> </ul>	Not completed	The baseline and endline protocol was completed and about to complete review. Because we were unable to secure a project extension we could not carry out the baseline surveys within the .
<b>Objective 4</b>	Scaling of YiA+ curriculum by partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>46 facilitators from various scaling partners trained.</li> <li>Implementation of YiA+ components by scaling partners initiated</li> </ul>	Not completed	This was not completed as we were unable to secure a project extension.
<b>Project and research Management</b>	Project quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 Monthly project management meetings between ICRW and SC held</li> </ul>	Completed	
	Community and stakeholder communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 quarterly CAB meetings held.</li> <li>Dissemination of project progress at household, community, and local government levels</li> </ul>	Partially completed	While CAB meetings were held we were unable to disseminate project progress as the project had stalled during the COVID-19 lockdown period.
<b>YEAR TWO</b>				
<b>Objective 2</b>	YiA+ curriculum delivery completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduation of participants from YiA+ (and YiA)</li> </ul>	Not completed	This did not happen as the intervention was not implemented.
<b>Objective 3</b>	Evaluation of YiA+ curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>YiA+ endline survey completed.</li> <li>Community knowledge attitudes and practices (KAP) endline survey completed.</li> <li>Data analysis of end-line surveys initiated</li> </ul>	Not completed	
<b>Objective 4</b>	Scaling of YiA+ curriculum by partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation report of scaling partners completed</li> </ul>	Not completed	
<b>Project and research Management</b>	Project quality assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 monthly project management meetings between ICRW and SC held</li> </ul>	Completed	

Activities	Milestones	Reporting indicators and comments	Progress Achieved	Reason for partial or non completion
	Community and stakeholder communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 quarterly CAB meetings held.</li> <li>Dissemination of project progress at household, community, and local government levels continued</li> </ul>	Partially completed	While CAB meetings were held we were unable to disseminate project progress as the project had stalled during the COVID-19 lockdown period.
	Project results dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 presentation of draft evaluation results at regional/national fora</li> </ul>	Not completed	There were no results to present.
<b>Objective 3</b>	Analysis on the effectiveness of YiA+ curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed report outlining the results of the pilot study on feasibility and effectiveness of the YiA+ intervention.</li> </ul>	Not completed	The intervention was not implemented so could not be evaluated.
	Analysis on the changes in community attitudes brought about by the YiA+ project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed report outlining the outcomes on the YiA+ curriculum on the community completed</li> </ul>	Not completed	The intervention was not implemented so could not be evaluated.
	Analysis on the scalability of the YiA+ model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed report outlining the scalability of the YiA+ intervention</li> </ul>	Not completed	The intervention was not implemented so could not be evaluated.
	Project evaluation completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report outlining changes in: (i) young women's confidence, negotiation skills, productive, and reproductive choices; (ii) household division of labor and decision-making; (iii) community attitudes to the value of women's economic contributions; and (iv) disparity in agricultural income between young men and young women.</li> </ul>	Not completed	The intervention was not implemented so could not be evaluated.
<b>Project results dissemination</b>	Results of project disseminated and documented for various audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 stakeholders workshop held to disseminate the findings of the research.</li> <li>1-2 scientific papers completed and submitted for publication</li> </ul>	Not completed	The intervention was not implemented so could not be evaluated.

**Specific Objective 1: To design a gender transformative curriculum that will guide young men and women, their families, communities, and institutional representatives to identify and address the discriminatory gendered norms and practices that underline the gender inequalities in agriculture.**

Progress towards this objective: A gender assessment was undertaken in the the two target districts and covered four sub counties. The gender assessment was intened to provide contextually relevant information for the adpatiation of the YiA curriculum (YiA+) as well as the development of the SBCC strategy and activities. Following is a synthesis of the results form the gender assessment results from the school context, division of labour and use of time, source of livelihoods and access to assets, decision making and participation, barriers, and opportunities for engagement of girls in livelihood training.

- Across the sampled communities, challenges faced at school by girls and boys limit opportunities to contribute to improvement of their livelihoods and but also define how girls and boys are provided opportunities to overcome barriers in their lives, those of their households and communities. Dropping out of school is recognised as a contributing factor to patriarchal tendencies, poverty, early marriages, pregnancies, and alcoholism. Specifically, for girls, it has contributed to exploitation, domestic violence, lack of voice and participation and poor health outcomes. The existence of negative parental attitudes limited parental involvement in the education of their children due to poverty, violence against women and girls, chronic illness and death of parents also contribute to the challenges faced by girls and boys. Furthermore, long distances to school contribute to rape, early marriage, and teenage pregnancy among girls. Poverty and lack of sustainable livelihoods at household level, the heavy burden of household chores, peer pressure and the negative perception of parents towards the value of education were mentioned as factors contributing to dropping out of school for both girls and boys.
- Gender inequalities are portrayed at household level as evidenced through division of labor. Women and girls are particularly more vulnerable to shoulder heavier work burdens and roles that are not paid and keep them at home compared to boys and men. In addition, girls and women dominate household chores such as fetching water, taking care of children, caring for all household members and cleaning than boys and men. More females also continue to spend more hours per day than males undertaking household roles yet still, more women continue not to earn any money from such roles.
- Boys also undertake more physically demanding tasks, within and outside the household and receive more support especially from their fathers compared to their counterparts. The few girls who undertake similar work receive meaningful financial rewards or other compensation for this form of labour and largely depend on their mothers for support.
- Agriculture and agriculture related roles also continue to dominate use of time among girls and women with more women engaged in tillage and harvesting. However, females do not have more time for other activities outside agriculture such as fishing and animal husbandry, including the high-end value chains as less than half of their time spent in such activities is to provide only a supportive role to boys and men.
- The challenges girls and women face in improving their livelihoods are largely external to themselves. Lack of access to incomes earned at individual and household level has contributed to limited earnings for girls and women have also impacted negatively on related benefits such as their education and retention in school. Yet still girls and women, more than boys and men are not engaged in any formal or community opportunities to earn any income outside their homes with traditional unpaid labour still dominant amongst them.
- Violence against women and girls is common and takes various forms with sexual and physical (violence) being most frequently mentioned by research participants. Girls and women are

the main victims whereas men and boys are the perpetrators. Sexual and domestic violence is mostly experienced by women and girls and affects them in greater proportions compared to boys. Boys mentioned that they mostly experience violence in the form of corporal punishment while they are at school as perpetrated by teachers. In pastoral communities, girls are ambushed on their way from school and markets, raped and forcefully married off by their families. Rape is a common occurrence as a means of getting girls to get pregnant, be ashamed and get married off in these communities.

- Traditional beliefs, norms and practices have contributed to the gendered perceptions and practices in both districts including entrenchment of patriarchy. This has influenced the role of men and boys, and the position girls and women in routine activities, livelihoods and how they participate at individual, household, and community levels. However, it is important to note that no girls and women assert that women should be considered as heads of households than males and they do not challenge this male dominance.
- Non-participation of females is not purely limited by work and family obligations alone but also due to capacity gaps and a lack of space and opportunities to exercise their right to engage with others. This contributes to how they understand their livelihood options, source their information, and ultimately participate in the markets.

The results of the gender assessment were utilized in the adaptation of the YiA curriculum and the development of the SBCC strategy and activities.

**Specific Objective 2: To implement and test the YiA+ model, consisting of the current YiA program plus the newly developed gender transformative curriculum, in Ntoroko and Kasese, Uganda.**

Progress towards this objective: The YiA+ curriculum and SBCC activities were not implemented.

**Specific Objective 3: To evaluate the YiA+ model in terms of its influence on discriminatory gender norms, attitudes and behaviors on youth agricultural livelihoods, household food security and nutrition.**

Progress towards this objective: The YiA+ curriculum and SBCC activities were not implemented so no baseline and endline evaluations were undertaken.

**Specific Objective 4: To take the model to scale by working with stakeholders, implementing partners, private sector and government partners to embed key gender transformative components of the YiA+ model into their own agriculture livelihood programs.**

Progress towards this objective: The YiA+ curriculum and SBCC activities were not implemented so the requisite activities for this objective could not be undertaken.

#### 4.0 Synthesis of Research Results Towards AFS Themes

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Because we were unable to complete this project we cannot comment on our results and their contributions towards the AFS themes. Had we completed the project activities we would have expected to provide evidence towards the following:

- **Increasing agricultural productivity (Availability)** – Addressing the gender specific constraints to agricultural productivity.
- **Improving access to resources, and/or markets and income (Accessibility)** – Addressing the constraints that youth and young women in particular face with access to markets. This project would have also provided evidence on ways that young women's income can be improved.
- **Informing policy** – This project would have engaged with policymakers at district and national level through Save the Children's broad advocacy activities and engagements. The results would have been used to inform Uganda's youth employability and entrepreneurship policies and strategies.



## 5.0 Project Outputs

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### **Gender Assessment**

The gender assessment aimed to guide the design and implementation of the YiA+ gender transformative curriculum.

### **YiA+ curriculum**

The YiA+ curriculum is a gender-transformative intervention that aims to support equitable, sustainable, and scalable solutions for enhanced agricultural livelihoods for youth as well as stronger food security outcomes for households

### **Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) strategy**

SBCC activities were developed to be implemented in the communities from which the program participants come from.

### **Trainer of Trainer (TOT) Curriculum**

The TOT was co-facilitated by ICRW and SC staff in Fort portal, Uganda.

### **YiA+ Monitoring Framework and Data tools**

The project developed a M&E project and a set of evaluation tools and theory of change (TOC).

### **YiA+ Communication Strategy**

The communication strategy/plan was developed and disseminated in the month of June 2019 for roll out across both ICRW and SC.

### **Mapping of referral services**

Mapping of social and health services for linkages was conducted during the sub-country inception meetings. This process involved identifying local social and health service linkages available for adolescents aged 15-18 years. This exercise was a key step towards building sustainability of the program to continually support the direct beneficiaries beyond the funding phase.

## 6.0 Problems and Challenges

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During project design we underestimated the LOE and duration that would be needed for development of the intervention. This required comprehensive revision of the original Youth in Action (YiA) curriculum to produce the gender transformative Youth in Action Plus (YiA+) package. The YiA+ curriculum package is made up of a 4 module revised curriculum that is delivered to program participants over 3 months along with a Social Behavior Change Communications (SBCC) package that provides the rest of the gender transformative components. The SBCC package was to be delivered in the communities that the participants came from and is made up of family meetings, community meetings, radio shows, and posters. Both the YiA+ and SBCC packages also have facilitator guides and training guides for facilitators.

In addition to the underestimation in the amount of time it would take to create the full YiA+ implementation package, we also experienced delays in receiving ethical approval for the gender assessment protocol. As the information obtained from the gender assessment was required to finalize the YiA+ and SBCC packages, this also slowed finalization of the gender transformative intervention and resulted in delayed implementation of the pilot prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The delayed intervention finalization required that the implementing team on the ground (Save the Children) hold more community-based meetings that initially planned for to manage the expectations of community stakeholders. Though this caused constraints to the budget for monitoring and community advisory board meetings, it maintained the good relationship that Save the Children has with the communities they work in. Due to these delays there was a concern prior to COVID-19 that the pilot would need to be compressed into a shorter timeframe and could reduce the fidelity of the intervention.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Uganda issued a series of policy directives in March 2020 that included a total lockdown of the economy and highly restrictive social distancing measures. These directives impacted agricultural livelihoods as well as the social context in the project areas (Ntoroko and Kasese). Later in the year both Ntoroko and Kasese experienced severe flooding that led to the internal displacement of communities in areas that were part of the pilot intervention. As a result of COVID-19, the flooding, and internal displacement of communities Save the Children revised their field-based activities from pilot preparation to respond to the immediate needs of the communities.

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the complete YiA+ package (including SBCC) had been translated and was ready for roll-out in Ntoroko and Kasese. Once COVID-19 restrictions were put in place we could not train the facilitators of complete recruitment of program participants. With the new context (disrupted livelihoods, increased food insecurity, inability to travel or work) we revised the YiA+ curriculum to respond to a gendered agricultural livelihood recovery and resilience context. We also adapted the curriculum delivery methods to respond to social distancing and COVID-19 safety guidelines.

In 2020 ICRW recognized that crisis and recovery contexts present significant ethical concerns for research. The initial idea to maintain a control sites in sub-counties that were experiencing heightened socio-economic hardships was not ethically sound. We worked with Save the Children to reassess program participant numbers for recruitment given limitations on group gatherings. We also determined the need to extend social protection interventions across the two districts. The total number of project participants was reduced by approximately one quarter due restrictions on meetings and intervention delivery requirements. A revised total reach of 394 youth was then planned and distributed across the two districts.

With approval from IDRC, we adapted the research design. We redesigned the research protocol to extend YIA+ to 100 youths in Kasese district and maintained a non-experimental design but moved from a quasi-experimental to a correlational design. The baseline and endline then increased the sample size to 732 from 315 covering 15-18 year old YIA+ program participants and non-program participants from the same communities. We reviewed the research protocol to align the sampling strategy with current realities on the ground and integrated COVID-19 safety guidelines to protect research teams and participants.

As mentioned above were unable to train the facilitators in March 2020 as planned due to the lockdown. In addition to this the ICRW and Save the Children staff from outside Uganda who were to be part of the training were unable to travel due to the total ban on international travel. Recruitment of project participants also had to be halted in March 2020. Training of facilitators eventually happened in Q4 of 2020 (following all COVID-19 safety protocols) led by ICRW and Save the Children Uganda-based team members. Recruitment activities also restarted during Q4 2020 – albeit at a more modest scale. Project activities continued as soon as it was possible because we believed that an extension to the project would be granted. We had submitted a request for a costed extension in July 2020. We received refusal of our request in November 2020.

## 7.0 Overall Assessment and Recommendations

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While this was an ambitious research idea, we would plan more time for intervention design and development. In hindsight, and even without COVID-19 disruptions, this project was ideally suited for 36 months rather than 24 months. The first 12 months would be focused on intervention design and development; the second 12-18 months on baseline data collection and intervention implementation; and the final 6-8 months on endline data collection, report and manuscript writing, and dissemination of project results.

Given the catastrophic nature of the COVID-19 pandemic on institutional operations and the fact that project teams were still employed and on the ground, we believe that requests for costed extensions are likely. We believe that our request for an additional 15% of the total budget and a time extension of less than a year was reasonable. With Uganda now opened up we believe that we would have been able to deliver results that would be applicable for rural youth and agricultural livelihoods across the continent.

## 9.0 Annexes

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The following annexes are attached for reference:

- Annex 01: Gender Assessment Report
- Annex 02: Youth in Action Plus (YiA+) Curriculum Resource Manual
- Annex 03: Trainer of Trainers (TOT) Manual
- Annex 04: SBCC Facilitator Planning Tool for Radio
- Annex 05: SBCC Radio Show Themes
- Annex 06: SBCC Facilitator Guide for Family Meetings
- Annex 07: SBCC Poster Concepts
- Annex 08: TOT Training Report

Please note that all annexes are for private use only as the intervention has not yet been rolled out or tested for efficacy.

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