Youth Realities, Aspirations and Transitions to Adulthood in Dryland Agriculture in Tanzania

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Acknowledgements

We would like to register our great appreciation to ICRISAT whose financial support made it possible to conduct this study. In particular Dr Esther Njoroge-Mungai and her team including Dr Katindi Njonjo and Rachel gave invaluable support during the design stage as well as in the course of data collection and analysis for the study. Logistical and moral support received from various stakeholders including TARI, District and village authorities as well as the youth is greatly appreciated. Jeffery Bentley edited this report.
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Acronyms
ACT Agricultural Council of Tanzania
ADP Actions for Development Programmes
AGRA Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AMCOS Agriculture Marketing Cooperative Society
BAKITA Baraza la Kiswahili Tanzania
CAVA Cassava: Adding Value for Africa
CBC Centre for Behaviour Change and Communication
CRDB Cooperative Rural Development Bank
CRP Crop Research Programme
DAICO District Agricultural, Irrigation and Cooperatives Officer
ESA East and Southern Africa
FAQ Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGD Focus group discussion
GLDC Grain Legume Dryland Cereals
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRISAT International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IIITA International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
ILO International Labour Organisation
KII Key informant interview
LH Life history
LIMC Low and middle income countries
MEDA Mennonite Economic Development Associates
NGO Non-governmental organisation
NMB National Microfinance Bank
NAYODEN Nanyumbu Youth Development Network
NFRA National Food Reserve Agency
NSYIA National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture
ROSCA Rotating Savings and Credit Association
SACCOS Savings and Credit Co-operative Society
TaCRI Tanzania Coffee Research Institute
TARI Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute
TAS Tanzania Shillings
TV Television
SAGCOT Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania
VICOBA Village Community Bank
Summary

Opportunities and challenges facing African youth have recently received greater attention from various stakeholders including researchers, governments, and development partners. Although agriculture has great potential for providing youth employment opportunities, it has not been harnessed due to poor strategies resulting from a narrow contextual understanding of who the “youth” are, their realities, the challenges they face and the agricultural opportunities they can use. To answer these questions, a team drawn from ICRISAT and Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) jointly carried out a study on youth realities, aspirations and transitions to adulthood in dryland agriculture. It was done in two selected regions of Songwe and Mtwara in Tanzania. The study aimed to find out the actual youth realities, their dreams and aspirations, and how they transitioned into adulthood. The study also aimed to find out youth perceptions of agriculture, the challenges they faced and the opportunities they had to benefit from farming.

Method

The study was done in four districts from two regions of Songwe and Mtwara. In Songwe, the study districts were Mbozi and Momba, and in Mtwara the districts were Nanyumbu and Masasi. A qualitative and interactive participatory approach was used. Data was collected through 10 focus group discussions, 61 key informant interviews and 63 life histories with respondents from various age groups, from males and females. Collected data were transcribed and thematically analysed.

Findings

Youth definition

The study found that “youth” was defined according to various criteria including age, social responsibilities, physical maturity, economic independence and self-awareness. This definition was context-specific: a transitional social category that is socially constructed, historically situated and internally diverse.

Where they live, what they do and where they dream to stay

Most youth were living in rural areas and were engaged in agriculture. Although they had access to land, their access to financial services, extension services and markets was generally limited. Their participation in decision-making was generally low. Most youth would like to live in urban areas where the availability of social services makes life better than in rural areas. However, a small proportion of youth dreamed of staying in rural areas where they could readily get social support from family and friends. More importantly, they could invest in agriculture to raise money to invest in other businesses.

Youth transition

Several context-specific events triggered youth transition into adulthood, including early marriage, early pregnancy, acquisition of wealth and economic independence, among others.

Existing opportunities and challenges

The youth had various opportunities, including the availability of land, transport and communication infrastructure. However, youth faced various challenges including limited access to inputs, lack of money, climate change and inadequate skills.

Markets were both an opportunity and a challenge. Markets were opportunities due to organisations or companies which bought some crops in some districts. Markets were also a challenge because there was limited access to profitable markets, low prices for agricultural products, poor access to market information, market informality and lack of standard measurements of products.

Potential cereals and grain legumes and resources needed for youth to succeed in agriculture

The crops with the most market potential are groundnuts, common beans and maize in Mbozi District, and sorghum and paddy in Momba district. For the Nanyumbu and Masasi in Mtwara region, they were green gram, pigeon peas and groundnuts. To use the existing agricultural potential, youth need land, inputs, extension services and financial services.

The strategy to support youth engagement in dryland agriculture and make it attractive and profitable should focus on identified value chains, i.e. paddy, sesame, sunflower and sorghum (Momba), groundnut (Mbozi), groundnut, green gram, pigeon pea and sunflower (Nanyumbu and Masasi). Efforts should also be made to enable youth to access profitable markets, quality agro-inputs at affordable prices, tailor-made credit facilities and land. Also, capacity building on such key issues as good agricultural practices (GAP), soil and water management and conservation, processing, storage, marketing, entrepreneurship and financial management. Capacity building should create awareness among youth on the potential of agriculture in contributing to the achievements of their dreams and aspirations.
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Attention to the participation of young people in decision-making and access to employment opportunities have recently become key to ongoing global and regional development planning and interventions. This is especially critical in Africa where population growth has a “youth bulge”, defined as “a peak in the share of persons aged 15-24 in the population” (see AGRA 2015). Not only is Africa home to a greater proportion of young people, it is also projected to have even more youth by 2030, with most African countries predicted to experience a youth bulge within the next five decades (Mabiz and Benfica 2019). Africa is the only region of the world where the rural population and the number of rural youths, in particular, will continue to grow after 2050 (United Nations 2017). Tanzania is experiencing a similar situation. It has been reported that the number of Tanzania’s youth aged 15-24 is expected to swell to about 18 million by 2035, from its current 10 million. There are currently an estimated 17.5 million Tanzanians between 15-34 years of age and that number is expected to double by 2035 (Haji 2015).

Given the youth bulge, governments in sub-Saharan Africa are under enormous pressure to create more and better jobs for the region’s young and rapidly growing population (Mueller et al. 2019). Currently, young people’s open unemployment rates (in which an individual is educated and willing to work but is unable to get a job) in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) are around 10-15%, about three times as high as the adult rate, and rising, even in contexts of economic growth (White 2019). Official youth unemployment in Tanzania is relatively low, at 6.5% among those 14-25 years and 9.9% among the 15-35-year-olds. However, this mask a larger problem of chronic underemployment, as youth who would like jobs in the formal sector are often forced into low-paying, self-employment (Haji 2015).

Agriculture, particularly small-scale farming, is still by far the largest single source of adult and youth employment in LMICs, accounting for 44 and 35% of all employment in Africa and Asia, respectively and with a much higher share in rural employment (ILO 2017: 42). In Africa, wage-earning opportunities are limited and cannot absorb the estimated 10 to 12 million job seekers per year (AGRA 2015). However, the strategy to promote youth engagement in agriculture raises a question as to whether this is the right policy to pursue if youth are leaving agriculture (AGRA 2015). Despite this, as observed by AGRA (2015: 15): “For now and the foreseeable future, it is and will remain the primary employment growth sector for most countries. For this reason, new opportunities for youth in agriculture and along the production and marketing value chain need to be identified and promoted to create wealth and achieve pro-poor economic growth.”

On the other hand, as observed by Mueller et al., the opportunities and challenges of African youth receive greater attention today from researchers, governments, and development partners, yet there are still gaps in our knowledge and often an overreliance on broad generalisations and general frameworks (Mueller et al. 2019), hence the need for the present study, which was carried out in Tanzania as part of a three country studies for ICRISAT (including Uganda and Ethiopia), with the following objectives:

- Understanding who are the dryland youths – male and female, their aspirations and values, and to classify them into typologies.
- Understanding the “opportunity structures” available to the youth and the unique challenges they face, assessing the agricultural value chains (including their support systems) that have the highest potential for the youth to engage and benefit in different regions.
- Understanding which young men and women can take advantage of different rural agricultural opportunities, and the process of engaging with the commercialised local or rural economy, including the agricultural value chain.

The results from the study will be used by CRP-GLDC to guide a strategy for youth engagement in East and Southern African (ESA) dryland regions.

2. Method

2.1 Study area

This study was carried out in the Songwe and Mtwara regions of Tanzania. Songwe Region is one of the Southern Highlands regions in Tanzania. It is located between latitudes 7° and 9°36’ south, between longitudes 32° and 33°41’ east. It borders Malawi and Zambia to the south, Rukwa and Katavi regions to the west, Tabora to the north and Mbeya region to the east. Lake Rukwa to the west is the largest water body in the region. Songwe Region has an area of about 27,598.9 square km. Most of the population is involved in agriculture and livestock keeping. Crops are paddy, maize, groundnuts, coffee, sesame, sunflowers, beans and sorghum. The main indigenous ethnic groups are the Nyiha, Nyamwanga, Bungu and Ndali. These ethnic groups are patrilineal.

Mtwara Region is located in the south of Tanzania between longitudes 38° and 40°30’ east, between latitudes 10°05’ and 11°25’ south. It borders with Lindi Region to the north, the Indian Ocean to the east and is separated by the Ruvuma River from Mozambique to the South. The region has a surface area of about 16,720 square kilometres. The major activities involve agriculture and some fishing. Cashewnut is the major cash crop followed by coconut, maize, cassava, sesame, pigeon peas, cowpeas, bambara nuts, sorghum, groundnuts and sunflower. The main indigenous ethnic groups in the area are the Makonde, Makua, Yao, and Mwela. These ethnic groups are matrilineal.

Both regions and the study districts were selected because of their characteristic dryland agriculture and because they produce cereals and legumes. Two districts in each region were purposively selected for the study (Figure 1). These are Mbozi and Momba in Songwe Region and Masasi and Nanyumbu in Mtwara Region. Within each district, two wards were randomly selected and within each ward four villages were selected. Also, various informants were interviewed in the NGOs (including local ones) and government departments in the study area. Ten focus group discussions, 61 key informant interviews and 63 life histories were conducted.

2.2 Procedures and methodological approach

The study was qualitative and participatory, using the following interactive steps:

Training workshop: a one-week workshop was organised at Sokone University of Agriculture (SUA) by ICRISAT and SUA. The workshop aimed to train participants on qualitative research from “concepts to operationalisation and tools”. The training brought together 23 participants (15 males and eight females) from among graduates and staff of SUA, University of Dar es Salaam, ICRISAT, and CBCC (Kenya), seed companies and crop aggregators, two research institutions (TARI Makutupora and TARI Nalendele) and two NGOs (Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania and Opportunity Girls Tanzania). The workshop was instrumental also for finalising plans for the study.

![Figure 1: Map of the study areas.](image-url)
2.2.1 Literature review, secondary data and information gathering

A thorough literature review was conducted, and the findings have been incorporated throughout this report. Experiences and case studies from different countries where gathered. Information from the literature review was instrumental in developing the data collection instruments.

2.2.2 Primary data collection

Before primary data collection, members of the research team visited the study area in October 2019 to obtain research clearance and a permit from the Regional Administrative Secretary Office as well as from the offices of the District Administrative Secretary. The visit also aimed to introduce the study to the audiences and to select study areas (wards and villages) in collaboration with District Agriculture, Irrigation and Cooperatives (DAICOs) and District Youth Officers. During the visit the sampling plan and the procedure for selecting respondents were discussed. The respondents were selected by the DAICOs with ward and village extension officers and the research team.

Data collected by two teams in November 2019. One team of five members went to Songwe Region and the other team went to Mtwara Region to conduct the key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and life histories. Direct observation was also used to collect data for the study. All interviews were tape-recorded, and the enumerators took notes with the consent of the respondents.

2.3 Data processing and analysis

Data was analysed manually following a thematic analysis procedure (Braun and Clarke 2006). The team transcribed the audio-recorded interviews and translated the transcripts from Swahili to English followed by categorisation of data into words and phrases to develop codes. The materials were organised into "folders", i.e. examples of similar analytical ideas or themes. Then the research teams discussed and interpreted the codes in line with the study objective for consistency and relevance. After agreeing on codes, four research team members independently read the transcripts and field notes thoroughly to gain an overall impression of the research questions, making deep interpretation for specific statements and content. Through a back-and-forth process of reading through the data set, guided by the codes, data were interpreted to identify themes, patterns, characteristics, challenges and relations.

A combination of techniques included word and phrase repetitions and comparing primary data with literature and discussing the differences between them. The next stage involved summarising the themes for presentations to the research team for further interpretations and development by identifying recurring themes and highlighting any similarities and differences in the data. The data set was then analysed, categorised and organised into final themes and sub-themes which emerged through the coding process. The final stage involved data verification, by checking the validity of understanding through rechecking the identified codes. This allowed us to verify and, in some cases modify our previous thinking (Sarantakos 2013). Then a summary (a matrix table of data) was prepared where the study findings were linked to the study objectives.

3. Results

3.1 Youth characterisation

3.1.1 Youth definition

In the study area, youth were defined using several criteria such as age, social responsibility, physical maturity and bodily changes, economic independence, self-awareness and level of schooling.

**Age bracket**

There was great variation in defining youth based on age. In most communities, youth were regarded as people aged between 18 and 35 years. In other communities, the age bracket for youth was between 18 and 40 while in others it was between 15 and 25. Another common age bracket mentioned was between 18 and 45 years. The lowest age is 15 and the highest is 45. Someone who started primary education at age seven would have completed primary education by age 15 and would have finished secondary education (ordinary level) by 18, which is also the legal voting age. However, the respondents gave no explanation for the upper age boundary. Respondent’s definition could have been influenced by their own experiences with various government policies and laws.

The most common age brackets used to define youth were 18 to 35 and 18 to 40 years, reflecting a lack of common understanding of who counts as "youth". The definition of "youth" varies across organisations and communities. For example, the government of Tanzania (and the African Union) define youth as those between the ages of 15-35 years (United Republic of Tanzania 2007: 10). The UN defines youth as 15 to 24 years old. The Commonwealth Youth Program uses the age category of 16 to 29.

**Social responsibility, community functions and roles**

Generally, the communities defined a youth as a person who assumes specific expected social responsibilities. At the family level, female youth were expected to perform domestic chores such as cooking, washing and caring for the young children. Male youth were expected to perform such activities as building houses, ploughing with oxen (especially in Mbobi and Momba), mining in Mtwara and others. However, some of the responsibilities such as farming were shared by both male and female youth.

At the community level a youth is defined as a person who assumes such tasks as digging graves (for males) and cooking and serving food (for females) during funerals, and road construction (for males). A youth is regarded as a person who is energetic and able to perform community tasks that are exhausting and energy demanding. One of the respondents in Mbobi District gave the following remarks as to how youth are defined in terms of social responsibilities,

“Socially, youth is someone who participates in various community development and social activities, for example, funerals (digging graves), construction of roads, and protection of the community” (a 35-year-old male KII respondent, Mbobi, 12th November 2019).

Generally, this implies that the communities perceive youth as being energetic and expected to give help in times of hardship.

**Self vis-a-vis community perceptions of youth**

The study found that youth do not see themselves as other community members do. The youth saw themselves as hard-working and people who were depended upon by their communities. For example, in Mbobi a FGD with youth (20s to 30s) defined youth as independent people who use their labour to earn a living. Youth were perceived as self-aware people who engaged in independent social and economic activities such as starting a business, building their own houses, starting a farm and producing their own crops for sale, as illustrated in the following statements:
Physical maturity and bodily changes

A youth was also defined as a person who had attained puberty, characterised by a change in depth of voice, growth of beards and muscles (for males), development of breasts and menstruation (for females). Youth appear to have a smooth face with no wrinkles, energetic, and “slim fit” as observed by a female key informant:

“From our traditions and customs, the male youth play a pivotal role in our community; he has to engage in all family economic activities. He has to be energetic and devotes time to work and earn income. When he gets married, he has to be responsible and take care of the family needs. When he is lucky enough to get family land, he has to use it productively” (a 34-year-old male KII respondent, Mbozi, 12th November 2019)

A similar view was expressed in Nanyumbu where one key informant said,

“Ooh! I mean youth are more interested in leisure and like roaming around playing games” (a 53-year-old male LH respondent, Momba, 13th November 2019).

A youth was also defined as a person who had no concrete goals for life yet (KII Nanyumbu, 12 November 2019). A closely related definition was given by one of the male key informants in Momba District in Songwe region:

“In this community, youth are those who assume some social responsibilities. You may find somebody starts working to become economically independent before getting married. For example, someone may start farming a piece of land that has been given to them by parents” (53-year-old male KII respondent, Momba, 13th November 2019).

This implies that youth is a stage for preparation for taking adulthood responsibilities. It is a stage where young people construct their own identities based on chosen affinities, rather than familial or class constraints. According to Giddens (1991), it is a stage where a person’s ontological security (a sense of order and continuity with regard to one’s experiences) is threatened by having to make significant choices about the future.

Self-awareness

This study shows two perspectives of self-awareness in the definition youth. On one hand, the community perceived youth as a person without concrete goals to achieve in life, with a poor dress style, misbehaving, disrespectful, stylish and fashionable, extravagant, lacking self-awareness, mobile, slippery and to some extent untrusted. This is demonstrated by the following remarks by an elderly male key informant:

“Many youths in our area first want freedom and are fond of stylish and fashionable things; they do not settle at one place. Some days are spent in town and others back in the village; they do not have concrete goals for life yet” (KII Nanyumbu, 12 November 2019).

On the other hand, youth were also regarded as people who were self-aware and could own property and run their life. This was regardless of the person’s age as long as the person was aware of one’s self and able to manage one’s life, as remarked by a participant in FGD held in Mbozi:

“When a person is self-aware, that age does not matter. If the person is capable of running his or her own life, even at a tender age, that person is regarded as a youth” (20s--40s mixed FGD participant, Mbozi, 11th November 2019).

Other community members did not ascribe self-awareness to a person’s age. Self-awareness is not a function of age although there is a general belief that youth are not always self-aware. Youth themselves revealed that they were self-aware and not disrespectful, in spite of the claims of some of the elders in their communities. The following remarks from Momba and Mbozi confirm the observation that “Youth are people who keep themselves clean and dress well” (FGD, the 20s and 30s Mombi, 13th November 2019). Moreover, a participant in FGD in Mbozi stated:

R4. In terms of ethnicity, even among the community members, youth are full of wisdom and tend to respect both young and elderly people in the society, for example by using good language in conversation (20s–30s Female FGD participant, Mbozi, 11th November 2019).
This implies a strong negative perception and stereotyping of youth in the larger community. This is in contrast to young people who generally viewed themselves positively. The difference in perception could have been influenced by the media or differences in aspirations and goals and expectations by the larger community vis-a-vis the youth

Whether the person has completed basic education or not

Youth were defined as attending or having completed basic education. A person who had completed primary or secondary education without progressing to the next level of schooling was regarded as a youth regardless of his/her age. Being in school extended the lower age limit to be considered youth. A person who is 18 or 20 years old and still in school is regarded as a child. This is because at this stage they still fully depend on parents or family for their wellbeing. On the other hand, once one has completed school, even at the age of 15, one is considered to have entered the youth stage and is expected to assume youth responsibilities as indicated in the following extract.

“We have those who go to school and those who missed a chance to progress with their education. This means those who don’t progress with schooling have to become independent. They will start constructing their own houses and engaging in economic activities that can help them earn a living” (34-year-old KII respondent, Mbozi 12th November 2019).

This shows that the classification of young people into different categories is closely related to context-specific criteria. These include age, assignment of social responsibilities, physical and bodily changes, economic independence, self-awareness and whether the person has completed basic education or not. This implies that biological age is not the only important criteria for defining youth. As observed by Ismail (2016), the definitions of youth highlight how the term is relative and relational, referring to a transitional social category that is socially constructed, historically situated and internally diverse.

3.1.2 Where they live and what they do

Most of the youth involved in the study lived in rural areas and few lived in cities. However, there is seasonal youth mobility between rural and urban areas. In Mtwara, youth moved to rural areas during the harvest season, especially of cashewnuts. This movement was meant to exploit business opportunities by selling various items. During the harvest season farmers in rural areas usually have money from sales of cashewnuts. However, most youth would move back to cities at the end of the harvest season and would not take part in production activities. However, in the Southern Highlands and in particular, in Mbyea and Songwe regions, most youth stayed in rural areas where they were engaged in agriculture. They see agriculture as a source of capital which can be used to invest in other economic activities as these remarks from FGDs with female and male youth show:

“Even if they open a business-like food vending or a shop, you will see them going to farm, therefore, agriculture takes a large share of all economic activities that are performed in our village” (20s–50s mixed FGD participant, Momba 13th November 2019).

“Agriculture is the mainstay of our livelihoods; our incomes originate from agriculture. The capital we are using in other activities comes from our earnings in agriculture. We cannot succeed in any way without agriculture. Kilimo ni uholi (agriculture is life)” (20s–50s mixed FGD participant, Mbozi, 11th November 2019)

In addition to contributing to food security, agriculture was perceived as a source of capital for other businesses. However, during the off-season, a few youths migrated to urban centres to earn income to re-invest in agriculture. Most of such youth in the Southern Highlands were male and not yet married and thus had no binding family responsibilities. Most youth go to big cities like Dar es-Salaam and Mbyea. However, in some cases the movement to the final destination is gradual. For example, in the Southern Highlands, on their way to the final destination some youth first move to nearby townships such as Mbozi Town, Tunduma or Sumbawanga. In Mtwara, the main destination is Dar es-Salaam and transit centres included Masasi, Lindi and Mtwara towns. However, due to traditions and cultural norms that aim to protect female children, mobility of male youth is limited.

The study found both similarity and variation in activities done by youth in the two study areas. In rural areas, youth were involved in other income-generating activities during the off-agricultural season (Table 1). Some of the activities were also similar in both rural and urban settings. In both regions, most of the male youth were engaged in the motorcycle taxi (boda boda) business, where a few were owners of the motorcycles while others worked as employees. According to Mbegu and Mjema (2019), despite the negative impacts associated with it, the boda boda business has created enormous employment for youth in Tanzania.

Urban female and male youth in both regions were employed in food vending. Male youth engaged in selling fast food such as potato chips, roast bananas, and chicken, while female youth sold traditional cuisine such as ugali, and rice. Male youth normally sell food preferred by females, while female youth sell foods that males like. Engagement of female and male youth in food vending is a challenge to the perception that in Africa, food vending is dominated by females (Nimura and Eisen 2010).

The current study found that male youth are working in food vending, an occupation they did not traditionally occupy. Changing economic conditions could be propelling male youth to challenge the notion that selling food is not an occupation for a man.

### Table 1: Where youth live and what they do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Songwe/Mbyea</th>
<th>Mtwara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural</strong></td>
<td><strong>Urban</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boda boda (male)</td>
<td>Boda boda (male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop production (male and female)</td>
<td>Crop production (male and female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maize, beans, groundnuts, paddy, sesame, sorghum</td>
<td>Sesame, green gram, pigeon peas, vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock keeping</td>
<td>Livestock keeping Poultry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxen, pigs, goats, dairy cattle, poultry</td>
<td>Hawkers (male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling &amp; betting</td>
<td>Gambling &amp; betting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokering (madalali)</td>
<td>Brokering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans e.g. carpentry, masonry, welding etc.</td>
<td>Artisans e.g. carpentry, masonry, welding etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and entertainment</td>
<td>Sports and entertainment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rural youth also engaged in crop production. In Mbozi District (Songwe Region) the main crops were maize, beans, groundnuts and garden crops (e.g., tomatoes and vegetables). In Momba District (Songwe Region) the main crops included paddy, sesame and sorghum. In Nanyumbu and Masasi districts (Mtwaras Region), the main crops were sesame, green gram, pigeon peas and vegetables. In Mbozi and Momba districts many youths kept livestock, such as pigs, goats and oxen while in Mbozi they kept dairy cattle, oxen and pigs. In all the districts poultry keeping was common, but very few youths kept poultry in Mtwara.

Male youth in the study areas were engaged in gambling and betting games as an income-generating activity. Although gambling and betting were primarily considered to be recreational activities, they
were increasingly done for earning income. According to Njoroge (2018), gambling and betting have spread in rural and urban areas of East Africa among the youth, mainly males. Charcoal making, mining (in Tunduru District not covered in this study), brokering, petty business and artisan work attracted male youth. The most common petty businesses reported by the youth was selling farm produce in small piles alongside the road or near a larger market (mainly females). Other businesses were mobile: hauling water as well as selling secondhand clothes or mitumba and peanuts. A small proportion of youth (male and female) was idle, i.e. doing nothing.

Female youth had fewer options to earn money than males. For example, it is easy for male youth to cut trees and make charcoal to sell, or to engage in betting games. But for female youth, their only option was to farm either as a labourer or as the owner of the farm. The options for female youth are limited by the lack of access to land and capital and by the restricted mobility of female youth due to culture and traditions. Females were perceived to be more productive and more efficient than their male counterparts.

Generally, despite the challenges faced in farming, the youth considered agriculture an important livelihood activity. When asked if agriculture can be a main economic activity for youth living in one’s village the response was:

“...Yes, as I see it, although youth are doing many economic activities including gardening, farming, petty businesses and livestock keeping like pigs and cattle, yet they mainly depend on agriculture as their major economic activity. Even if they open up a business-like food vending or a shop, you will see them going to farm, therefore, agriculture takes a large share of all economic activities that are performed in our village” (20s–50s mixed FGD participant, Mbozi, 11th November 2019).

3.1.3 Youth access to resources

Youth had limited access to productive resources. For example, credit facilities are located in towns and youth require collateral to access credit, which many of them do not have. In the rural areas, access to credit is poor and most young people do not have access to capital to invest in agriculture. There was no access to irrigation or to extension services and very few youths were aware of the existence of extension agents in their area.

Access to land

Youth access to land is varied. For example, in Mtwara, norms and traditions accord equal access to land to both male and female youth. Land can be acquired through different ways including inheritance, allocation from the government, purchase, or rent. Inheritance was the major mean that youth could access land.

In Songwe, norms and traditions favoured male youth, who had more access to land than females had. Even where both male and female youth had access to land, the males were given more land. For example, if parents had three acres to give to their two children (a male and a female), the son was given two acres while the daughter got one. In principle, land given to sons and daughters before marriage belongs to them. In practice, there are cases where land allocated to a female youth is repossessed by the family after her marriage. This is justified because traditionally male youth are responsible for caring for their ageing parents while the female youth is expected to marry out to another family. Local people believe that equal allocation of land to male and female youth would result in the family losing the land allocated to a married daughter and hence to another family. The institutions of land inheritance offer weak protection to youth, especially to young women, making them vulnerable to losing the land they are meant to inherit. Unlike in Mtwara, which is a matrilineal society, in Songwe Region land access by women is limited due to customs and traditions that favour men. However, even though the current arrangement benefits men more than women, rural youth can expect to inherit less land than their parents did. This is as a result of land scarcity due to increasing population density as well as increased investment in larger farms.

Access to financial services

Generally, youth have limited access to formal financial services. Most financial services are based in urban centres. Moreover, conditions attached to getting financial services are unfriendly to both rural and urban youth. Some of the conditions include having collateral such as land or a house and one’s track record for an application for credit. In order to access credit, a few respondents, especially female youth, were members of Village Community Banks (VICOBAs) and Saving and Credit Cooperative Society (SACCODS) as well as upato, a collective savings and credit scheme, or “money-go-round.” The scheme is also known as a rotating savings and credit association (ROSCA). In a ROSCA, a small group of people, generally between 15 and 30, form a group and contribute an agreed amount of money at regular meetings. One person draws out all the money contributed at each session, until all have had their turn. The ROSCA has become common all over Tanzania, with both employed and unemployed people joining hands to give and receive money in turns.

The limited access to formal financial service providers has resulted in youth opting to access credit from financially individuals who attach even stronger repayment conditions as remarked by a participant in mixed age and gender FGD in Momba:

“For example, for beans, if you borrow 50,000/= you have to pay five buckets equivalent to 20 kg of beans after harvest. The price of one bucket is 30,000/= so in total, you will pay 150,000/=, and you have to pay in kind” (20s-50s mixed FGD participant, Momba, 13th November 2019)

Thus, youth are unable to afford loans from private money lenders. Also, each district had arrangements for providing funds for youth, women and disabled development projects (Youth, Women and Disabled Development Fund). However, the youth revealed that they have not benefited from the fund, because most were not aware of its existence. And even those who were aware indicated that the amount of money allocated to the fund was too little to meet the financial needs of youth, women and disabled. One of the conditions for youth to access the funds is that they must organise themselves in groups. But many youths were not members of groups. The difficulty faced by rural youth to gain government support has also been highlighted by Giuliani et al. (2017) in a study conducted in Morocco.

Youth do have access to mobile money services like Airtel Money, M-Pesa and Tigo-Pesa. Youth also mentioned banks such as National Microfinance Bank (NMB) and Cooperative Rural Development Bank (CRDB), but they said it was difficult for them to access loans from these institutions because of stringent conditions.
Access to extension services

The youth had inadequate access to extension services, because the few extension workers were placed mainly at the ward level and tended to contact adult farmers, mostly through groups. Only a few youths, mainly female, were organised in groups and therefore could access extension services. Generally, individuals could access extension services on-demand, i.e., one could contact an extension officer when in need. The main extension methods employed were farm and home visit and farmer field school (FFS). Most youth did not see the need to demand extension services, as noted by other authors (White 2012, United Republic of Tanzania 2016, FAO 2014).

3.1.4 Youth participation in decision making and civic engagement

Across the study areas, few youths are involved in policy dialogue and leadership at the community level. However, youth in Songwe were relatively more involved in policy dialogue and leadership than those in Mtwara. For example, in Mbozi and Momba districts, some youths were members of farmer groups and a few had leadership positions:

“Many youths start engaging in politics when they are between 18 and 20. This is the time youth start talking of this or that party. But when they reach 20 years you may find them saying, ‘I am going to vie for this position’. For example, our councillor in Chithe is within the youth group. He became a councillor at an age that I have never seen anywhere else. Even those who were councillors before him were in their late thirties or forties. This one just contested in the last elections and was elected. He is in his twenties” (53-year-old male key informant respondent, Momba, 13th November 2019)

Young rural women and female youth mostly participated in civic and religious activities (e.g., church, mosque) and they volunteered in the community more than men and male youth. Youth were mobilised to join groups and were involved during election campaigns but were forgotten once the elections are over. This means that young people’s voices are not heard during the policymaking process, so it is no wonder that their many needs are not addressed. Policies are formulated without understanding their needs and aspirations.

3.2 Youth Aspirations

3.2.1 Youth dreams and ambitions

Youth dream of a good life regardless of their gender. Some of the aspirations were found to be similar among male and female youth. For example, education, asset ownership and formal employment were dreams expressed by both male and female youth. The first priority among female and male youth as well as adults was higher education. The importance of education in life is highlighted by a respondent in Masasi:

“My dream was to go for higher education and to become an expert in Swahili, but my pass mark was not good at form four so I couldn’t fulfil my dream” (A 27-year-old male LH respondent, Masasi, 15th November 2019).

This was also supported by another elderly respondent who said,

“Our priority was education. You cannot start any business or even develop without education. This education is not only formal, but informal education is also needed” (55-year-old male LH respondent, Masasi, 14th November 2019).

Aspirations for education were higher in Songwe than in Mtwara. This could be because Mtwara had fewer schools. Over the generations, education in Mtwara has not been given priority, so most parents in Mtwara are less educated, which influences future generations. As argued by Genicot and Ray (2017), aspirations are heavily influenced by the context in which a person grows up. Parental figures are particularly important for shaping aspirations and for influencing whether young people follow their own or imposed goals. Leavy and Hossain (2014) found that people’s aspirations are modulated within their “opportunity space”. This enables the rise of expectations that reflect what is possible within their geographical, socioeconomic and policy context. Banking on their qualities and characteristics, as rational agents, people make sense of their realities in line with their desires and ambitions.

In the current study, aspirations for formal employment and urban life are related to the young generation’s higher level of formal schooling, which may be further contributing to a break in family and community traditions of farming. On the other hand, building realisable life goals seems to depend on resources available to youth, including the networks, markets, and land, as well as their capabilities and dispositions. However, the need to feed a large and growing population creates more demands on agriculture, which can only be met by improving agricultural productivity. This creates an opportunity space for youth to realise their dreams for modern life if a conducive environment is created.

For female youth, their second priority was getting married to rich men and starting a family. However, this wish is a difficult wish to achieve, as women in the study area have to be approached by a man for a marriage proposal, while men make decisions to get married at their discretion. In general, marriage is socially sanctioned, and men can decide who and when to marry. This may be why getting married was not an aspiration among male youth.

The second priority for the male youth was asset ownership which ranked third among the female youth. Male youth desired assets such as motorcycles, good houses, money and land. Female youth dreamed of owning good clothes, businesses and money. Both male and female youth wanted smartphones while others dreamed of living as celebrities like Nasibu Abdul a.k.a. Diamond Platinum, one of the most famous musicians in Tanzania.

Employment was the third priority for male youth and fourth for female youth. Male and female youth aspired to become teachers, nurses, doctors, soldiers, extension workers, religious leaders and community development officers. Other dreams included a vocational career, football and music.

The fourth priority for male youth was agriculture and agribusiness which were not mentioned by female youth. Male youth aspired to engage in sesame, cashewnut, sunflower, onions, and vegetables (Mtwara), and in sesame, groundnuts, paddy, tomato, capsicum, beans and vegetables (Songwe). Poultry and goat keeping were of high potential in the study area. For Momba, goat keeping is common, but not in Nanyumbu and Masasi.

“Youth dream of having a good job. By a good job I mean when you are employed you are sure of income and job security” (36-year-old, female key informant, Namajani Masasi, 15th November 2019).

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<tr>
<th>SN</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Marrying a rich person and establishing a family</td>
<td>Asset ownership</td>
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<td>Asset ownership</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Agriculture and agribusiness</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Vocational skills</td>
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<td>6</td>
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Table 2: Female and male youth dreams.
Youth dreams and aspirations are influenced by the young people's life experiences. For example, nurses, teachers, soldiers and doctors serve as role models because youth see them or interact with them. Role models help to shape one's dreams. On the other hand, agriculture is the mainstay and a job for many, but very few dream of being a farmer. This could be because agriculture as currently practiced does not offer any hope of success in life. Lack of awareness of the opportunities in agriculture is another setback. Most respondents had difficulties in realising their first dreams. Most of them are pursuing their second dreams because of their life experiences and social-economic circumstances. Argued by Leavy and Smith (2010) while aspirations are hopes and dreams they are not necessarily embedded in reality. However, aspirations give us a better understanding of the life trajectory that young people would wish to have.

3.2.2 Where they dream to stay and why

Youth held dreams of living in urban centres due to several reasons. First, youth in the study area believe that urban areas have more employment opportunities. Second, youth in towns have good access to services like communication networks, electricity, water, entertainment, transport, training and health facilities. And there is more money circulating in urban areas, where youth do not have family obligations as in rural areas have. Youth also cited the low returns of agriculture. Some youth perceived living in towns as prestigious, meaning that when they live in towns, they can improve their Kiswahili accent and their dress styles. When they go back to the villages, they appear a class higher than those they live in the rural areas. Male youth in Mtwarara, for example, said that there are beautiful girls in cities:

“You know (laughing) in town there are many good things, including beautiful girls” (29-year-old Kil respondent, Masasi, 15 November 2019).

On the other hand, female youth said that there are economically prosperous boys in urban areas. The implication of this is that youth in rural areas held an illusion about life in the town. Although to some extent their perspective seems fairly accurate, i.e., that cities have more services and high paying jobs, in practice this is not automatic. In fact, not only are job opportunities limited, but also getting a job demands educational qualifications and experience which some of the youth lack. Thus, their illusion could be because of a lack of information and exposure about what life is like in town.

On the other hand, a small proportion of youth dreamed of leading a life in the rural area, to generate capital in agriculture for starting businesses, or because of the possibility of getting land for farming. Some said that getting food and support from family and friends was easy, and they perceive that life in town is difficult especially in terms of food, accommodation and social support during difficult times. For example, one of the respondents in a life-history said:

“You know, life in town makes people selfish as they live on a budget. So, if you are in trouble, it is not easy to get help, whereas in the village we care for each other. For example, if I have no money to buy vegetables, I can go to my neighbours and get some. Also, here (in the village) life is good because you can grow groundnuts, peas or maize for home consumption, but in town, you have to buy them” (40-year-old male life history respondent, Nanyumbu 11th November 2019).

Preferences of where to live are changing as youth have started to realise that they can stay in the village and achieve their dreams. This new perception may be due to efforts by the government and other actors to transform lives in rural areas by improving social services such as passable roads, communication networks, and investment in solar technology and rural electrification which have made it possible to have reliable power even in the remote areas. As a result, they can charge their phones to watch TV and play their music on radios and subwoofers. Some youths have also started taking advantage of opportunities available in rural areas. Such youth believe that they can still realise their dreams where they are. For example, one youth from Nanyumbu said,

“They (youth) think that a good life can be realised in town. But I have a different opinion, that if we can get capital, training and engage in agriculture, chances are that we can raise productivity and get a good life here in the village” (30-year-old key informant, Mikangala Village, 15th November 2019).

Another youth remarked:

“Let me tell you, on this side of the country (Kusini) youth dream of a luxurious life although many end-up not achieving their dreams because they do not want to work hard” (36-year-old female key informant, Masasi, 15th November 2019).

Similarly, another one remarked:

“It does not matter where you live. What matters is getting money. If you can live in the village and get money, it is fine” (30-year-old female key informant, Masasi, 14th November 2019).

Youth who had moved to town and back to villages were better placed to see and exploit opportunities in rural areas. They realised that the widely held belief that life in town was better is not realistic. For example, one of the youths who had migrated to town and came back to the village had this to say:

“Generally, youth dream of living in town because town life is perceived as luxurious, but since I have been there, I have experienced the opposite. I urge my fellow youth to stay in villages because

Box 1: How exposure to urban life helps youth make a difference in their villages

Felix Amlima is 27 years old. He is a young person living in Masasi District and was born to an ordinary family. As a child, he had a dream of working with Baraza la Kiswahili Tanzania (BAKITA), The Kiswahili Council of Tanzania, a dream he did not realise. This is because when he completed his primary education, he was selected to join a day community secondary school, which did not have enough teachers. As a result, he was not selected for high school education (Form V and VI). After completing his ordinary level secondary education in 2010, he stayed home for two years, before joining the College of Agriculture and Natural Resource in Dar es-Salaam, for a certificate course.

After completing his certificate course in 2015 he returned to his Namajani village, in Masasi. In 2018 he went to Masasi town where he was employed in an agro shop. He received 150,000/= Tanzanian shillings ($64) per month. He resolved to save 100,000/= ($43) of his salary and spend 50,000/= every month. In 2019, he and his friends formed a self-help group (upatoo) where each member contributed 50,000/= per month. The 30 members collected 1,500,000/= shillings ($643) each month which they divided between two different members each time. When he received his money, he went to buy a plot of land at Namajani for 500,000/= and a farm for 1,000,000/=, both in his home village. After some time, he decided to go home and this time he had 1,600,000/= shillings ($686) in his pocket.

At home, he decided to venture into gardening, while selling fish. He went to Kilwa once a week where he got the fish and sold them at Namajani. He bought the fish at Kilwa for 15,000/= ($6) per bucket; transport and other transaction costs was about 10,000/= and he sold them for 45,000/=, thus making a profit of 20,000/= from each bucket.

Felix had this to say:

“When I came back, my friends were laughing at me. I was very irritated and regretted coming back. I shared my sentiments with my dad, and he told me suki zote ukitu wa mzigo anaujaa aliyeuweba. Siku zote unapofanya kitu chako usianjole furani atasemoje. (Always the weight of the load is best known by the carrier). Wewe fanya kitu kilicho sahihi kwa upande wako...
A 50-year-old life history respondent, Nanyumbu, 15th November 2019 said:

Similarly, in Nanyumbu one of the respondents said:

Another respondent said:

example, one respondent said:

secretary whereas for male youth the jobs included being a nurse, teacher, transporter, priest, soldier

some of the dreams were gender specific. For female youth, the dream jobs were being a nurse and

and the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) initiatives.

by the Ministry of Agriculture. Other programs include the TechnoServe business incubation program

electrification, road, communication infrastructure and water in rural areas. Another view is that life

trend. One is that this is as a result of government efforts to improve social services such as rural

that in recent years, youth have been moving back to rural areas. There are different views on this

Youth dream of living in town for various reasons. However, youth respondents had the opinion

today to get a job in town is so difficult. I think we young people should think of working in villages

and investing in urban areas and stay there during vacation” (27-year-old KII respondent, Masasi, 15

November 2019).

Youth dream of living in town for various reasons. However, youth respondents had the opinion

that in recent years, youth have been moving back to rural areas. There are different views on this
trend. One is that this is as a result of government efforts to improve social services such as rural

electrification, road, communication infrastructure and water in rural areas. Another view is that life

in town is becoming more difficult as there are few employment opportunities, and the government
demands everyone to work hard to earn a living. Lastly, this could be as a result of initiatives by the
government and the private sector aimed at promoting youth engagement in agriculture coordinated
by the Ministry of Agriculture. Other programs include the TechnoServe business incubation program

and the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) initiatives.

3.2.3 What they dream to do as jobs

Male and female youth shared some aspirations. Both indicated the desire to do office work (formal
employment). The common dream jobs were doctor, teacher and businessman/woman. However,
some of the dreams were gender specific. For female youth, the dream jobs were being a nurse and
secretary whereas for male youth the jobs included being a nurse, teacher, transporter, priest, soldier
and farmer. The dreams were influenced by the role models who different youth looked up to. For
example, one respondent said:

“My brother was a doctor, I wanted to be like him” (43-year-old male LH respondent, Nanyumbu,
13th November 2019).

Another respondent said,

“I was very much interested with the teachers when I saw them at school” (a 53-year-old male LH
participant, Momba, 13th November 2019).

Similarly, in Nanyumbu one of the respondents said:

“One of my neighbours was a nurse. I loved kuchoma watu sindano (administering drugs through
injection)” (a 26-year-old female KII respondent, Nanyumbu, 15th November 2019).

A 50-year-old life history respondent, Nanyumbu, 15th November 2019 said:

“Formal employment was the childhood dream for most of the youth although most ended up in
professions that were not their childhood dream, including agriculture.”

3.3 Youth transitions

3.3.1 Events that trigger the transition

Marriage, loss of parents or guardians, completion of school, failure of examinations and initiations
triggered both female and male youth transition in the study area.

Marriage

For both male and female youth, marriage introduced them into adulthood. One of the respondents
from Masasi had this to say:

“In many cases, socially when you get married, regardless of your age, you automatically become an
adult, since you now have responsibilities to take” (female, 20 years of age, key informant, Masasi,
13th November 2019).

Marriage was either planned or unplanned. Planned marriages result from an agreement between
two people and their families, for example, when a young man follows established procedures to get
married to a young lady. When a young male and female need to get married, they tell their families.
A special person, normally from the male’s family, commonly known as mshenga is sent to the girl’s
family to break the news and request their consent. If here family accepts, they issue a list of things
to be fulfilled by the male’s family including dowry payment. When the procedure is completed, the
wedding is held according to both families’ preference (religious, or traditional or government).

On the other hand, unplanned marriages occur either without one party’s consent, or one or both
of them are forced to get married. Such marriages vary from place to place. For example, in Mtwara, this
type of marriage is called “ndoa ya mkeka” (mat wedding). This occurs when a girl’s parents realise
that their daughter is in a relationship with a young man. The parents immediately bring the two
together and request a religious leader (normally a Muslim sheikh) to officiate the marriage of the
two on the spot. This is why it is called a mat wedding, because it requires no elaborate preparations.

In Mbozi District, respondents got married not because they had a plan, but because their peers got
married. Staying unmarried while most of your peers had married was considered as being socially
left behind as the following remarks show:

I: How did you reach a decision to get married and start your own family?

R: It was automatic. You live in a community with your peers. When they get married and you are also
grown up, it is a must you should marry.

I: Ooh. So does it mean that the community expects you to do as your peers?

R: Exactly. That is what triggered me to marry. If my former classmates with whom we
completed class, seven together got married, why should I remain a bachelor? I cannot just sit back
and watch. So I also had to marry (65-year-old male LH respondent, Mbozi, 12th November 2019).

In Songwe, specifically in study villages in Momba District, forced marriage was different than in
Mtwara. It is started by a young man whose proposal to marry is rejected by the young lady he
believes “should be his wife”. The young man organises some lads to ambush the girl and take her
by force to his house, usually done at night when it is difficult for her to escape. If the girl spends
the night in the boy’s house until morning, the society considers them husband and wife. Procedures
to officiate it come in later and that is how the girl unexpectedly enters into an unplanned marriage.

This is when a young male or female gets married below the age of 18. In Momba for example it was
common for youth to get married as early as 15 or 16 years of age. Early marriages, especially for
girls, were part of planned marriages in Mtwara and Momba. Marriage for some females was a way
out of trouble as the following remarks demonstrate:
“I got married because I was living a very hard life at home, so I believed marriage would help me escape a hard life” (35-year-old female life history respondent, Masasi 14th November 2019)

**Loss of parents or guardians**

Another event that commonly affected the transition of both male and female youth was the loss of parents or guardians. The bereaved children had to assume family responsibilities such as taking care of the siblings and at times paying for their school fees. This mainly involved older children in the family. In other cases, loss of parents meant a lack of support for the orphans left behind.

“It is a very difficult experience and I have experienced it. I lost my mother at an early age; the situation killed my dream to continue with education. At that tender age, my mother had left me with my young siblings. The situation got worse because my father was irresponsible and useless to us. He had affairs with other women and finally entered polygamy” (70-year-old male KII respondent, Mbozi, 11th November 2019).

**Completion of school and failure to continue with education**

Completion of school or failure to continue with education also triggered the transition of both male and female youth for whom finishing school meant a change of roles and responsibilities in their families and communities. On the other hand, failing examinations left the youth with no more schooling options, leading to the same status as that of a person who had completed schooling. However, in Mtwara, failure in examinations was forced by parents:

“I remember the day when we were going to sit for the standard seven exams. In the morning my parents told me ‘If you do well on this exam and pass, it is up to you. We have no money to support you, our financial situation is very bad. If you pass you will have to support yourself.’ I was demoralised so I went to school to write the exam, but I intentionally did it badly (43-year-old male KII respondent, Masasi 14th November 2019).

An example of how the lack of educational opportunities forced youth to enter into early marriage in Songwe is described in (Box 2).

### Box 2: The lack of opportunity for education forced a young lady into marriage

Lydia was born in Kamsamba village and started her primary education there. When she reached class three, she lost her brother. Her father decided to take her to his uncle who was living at Chitete, some kilometres away from Kamsamba. Her father feared that she too would die because he was not living well with his neighbours. So Lydia’s father told her that she would continue with her education in Chitete. However, when she reached Chitete, things did not go as expected. Her uncle received her, but he was not interested in educating her. He said to her “I cannot educate you here. Come and join us. Let us start working.” So, they started working on the farm. After her uncle’s treatement shattered her dream of getting an education, Lydia decided to get married, to relieve herself from being a labourer in her uncle’s house. In her life history, she said,

“I wanted to study. That was my desire. I wanted my uncle to support me in my education dream because I wanted to be a nurse. But you know that was my uncle, not my father. I believe if he was my father, I would have completed my studies. I felt very bad but continued working on the farm. I then decided to get married at the age of 15” (37-year-old female life history respondent, Momba 14th November 2019).

At the age of 37, she was the mother of five children and continued to work as a farmer in Chitete village.

Even though the government has expanded investment in education, e.g., building community secondary schools, many rural youths have not benefitted because parents are less aware of the importance of education in preparing an individual to live better in society.

**Initiation**

As a rite of passage, initiation is another common event that transitioned male and female youth. In Songwe, the initiation ceremony is quieter for female youth and is are done at the family level. Girls were instructed by their mothers and boys by their fathers or guardians on how to handle themselves as adults and how to take responsibilities in the community. In Mtwara, initiation (jando for male youth and unyago for female youth) was more pronounced and valued. The ceremonies were accompanied by celebration and accorded high social value (Box 3).

### Box 3: Unyago and jando, rites of passage

**Unyago, female initiation**

Unyago is a traditional training for girls approaching puberty. It is an important step for a girl child from childhood to adulthood. The state of ukubwa starts before adolescence. It is a social transition to adolescence and early adulthood. **Unyago** starts with an opening ceremony and ends with a big party where the girl is introduced again to the community. Typically, there are four weeks between the ceremonies. The girls spend the weeks in isolation from the community and from men’s eyes in a room, and only female family members kungwi (trainers) and washikamkonos (older girls who have passed through unyago previously) can visit the girl. During this isolation time, she is taught through songs and dances by washikamkonos. These lessons are about respect towards the elderly, life skills, personal hygiene, family life, sexuality and sexual practices. She learns how to please her future husband sexually and how to take care of his needs. The kungwi have a great impact on what the girls will learn since they are the primary decision-makers and experts in the unyago ritual knowledge. There are two time periods for unyago, mid-December to mid-January (the common one) and from mid-June to mid-July. There is no set age to determine when the girl is sent to unyago. The right time is when the first visible markers of puberty occur, and when she is a bit mentally mature. The typical age for unyago is between 8 and 12. Whatever is taught during unyago is kept secret. The kungwi tells the girl never to let anyone know what was discussed at unyago.

**Jando, male initiation**

Jando is a traditional initiation for boys in Mtwara region. Unlike unyago, jando rituals is centred on one main ceremony, the circumcision. It does include some of the teachings of cultural norms and expectations of adult life as well as punishment of the initiates for past deeds. This aims at transforming them into more responsible and obedient individuals. **Jando** is primarily conducted during June-July and occasionally December-January.
Specific events triggering female youth transition

For female youth, early pregnancy and parenthood prompted transition. Some female youth unexpectedly got pregnant before marriage, shattering their dreams and changing their roles in society. One of the respondents who was a victim of early pregnancy in Masasi, said:

“After getting a child, I told myself now I am grown up. I have to settle and live a different life from how I used to live before” (35-year-old female respondent in Masasi, 14th November 2019).

A similar situation was experienced in Songwe. One respondent in Mbozi District shared her testimony:

“I got deceived by a young man who ended up impregnating me at an early age. When I told him, he denied that he was responsible for my pregnancy. I was very sure he was the father of the child I was expecting. He refused. This traumatised me and I was psychologically perturbed. However, I had no option but to accept reality. I nurtured the pregnancy and gave birth to a baby boy. I struggled to raise him, and I educated him single-handedly up to secondary education” (44-year-old female life-history respondent, Mbozi, 12th November 2019).

Early marriages and early pregnancies increased the number of young mothers in the study area, especially in Mtwara. By getting pregnant early, a woman ceases to be a youth and even if her age legally allows her to access benefits stipulated in social, political and legal frameworks for youth, including access to funds meant for youth. Socially she is no longer a youth, while a boy in the same age brackets, even if he is responsible for the pregnancy, is still referred to as a youth. While marriage opens up space for females to access resources such as land in the newly formed family, it may also lead to the loss of resources in her family. The loss of parents or guardians, completion of school and failure of examinations also prevent young people from accessing available opportunities like government funds and training.

Specific events triggering male youth transition

Three main events trigger male transition. The first was the acquisition of wealth; once a person had accumulated wealth such as land, a house, a business or had started farming, he was regarded as an adult. He was accorded the respect that is usually given to elders. For example, one would be called mzee (elder) even if chronologically he had not reached the elderly age category. Moving away from the village for employment, business or to settle in a new area or to start a new economic activity also triggered transition. In Mtwara, for example, male youth moved out of their village to start sesame farms in other villages. In Songwe, male youth moved to neighbouring towns to search for business opportunities, e.g., some moved from Mbozi and Momba to Mbeya city, Tunduma border town, Sumbawanga, Chunya, Dar es-Salaam and Morogoro. They moved out to become independent. One was also considered to have transitioned if there was a change in what they said or did. Some parents used their children’s conversation to detect whether they showed signs of adulthood. For example, if a young person gave a piece of constructive advice to parents or elders, that person was considered an adult as these remarks show:

R3: If the child has been brought up by both parents, one of the things that indicate adulthood is the type of messages the child communicates with the parents. For example, one can advise parents who need to make an important decision. Now, if the advice is in line with what the community regards as the best way of handling the situation, the parents will conclude that their child is now an independent thinker and a grown-up. For example, a son may tell the father, “dad we are living in this small house, why don’t we build a bigger house?”

R2: Yes, you may hear another one saying, “daddy, don’t beat my mother, it is not good to live like that” (20s–50s mixed FGD, Mbozi, 11th November 2019).

Events that triggered transition often kept youth from living their dreams. For example, early pregnancy and marriage forced a woman to assume family responsibilities at the expense of becoming a nurse, school teacher, or a doctor. Loss of a parent or guardian or failing one’s examinations curtailed young people’s progress with education. Failure in primary school examination would result in an individual missing an opportunity to attend government schools. Besides, the failure by most parents to pay for private secondary schools seals the fate of their children to pursue their studies. Normally the children help with farm labour and their dreams are curtailed.

3.4 Existing opportunity structures and challenges

3.4.1 Existing opportunity structures

Existing opportunity structures in the study area are land and irrigation potential, transport and communication infrastructure, potential markets, the presence of various organisations and enabling policy environment. Other opportunities include the potential for diversification of economic activities, social-cultural systems, input distribution system and support services. Nevertheless, the four districts are not uniformly endowed with these opportunity structures (Table 3).

Natural resources – land and irrigation potential

Land is generally available in the study area and it can be accessed through purchase, rent, or inheritance in all districts and through government allocation except for Mbozi District. Nanyumbu and Masasi had more land available. For example, a 30-year-old male KII respondent said:

“Getting land is a very simple issue. The land is abundantly available. You can get it by clearing the bush or you can buy or inherit” (Nanyumbu, KII, 13th November 2019).

In Mbozi, fertiliser is an important input for crop production while in other districts chemical fertilisers are not commonly used. However, to maximise production, fertiliser is important. Mbozi District has permanent rivers which can support small-scale irrigation of gardens. In Nanyumbu and Masasi Districts communities were using shallow wells which had sufficient water for domestic use. Such wells could be used for small-scale irrigation as confirmed by the following extract from a mixed age sex FGD:

“We have rivers and streams. If we get water pumps which can help us pump water to our plots it will be helpful. Most of us have small canals, but ... water cannot reach the plots” (20s–50s mixed FGD, Mbozi, 11th November 2019).

Transport, communication and energy infrastructure

In Mtwara, the two districts are linked with a good road network and are accessible all year-round. Also, the area is well covered by good mobile phone networks. In Mbozi in the Southern Highlands, roads and communication networks were good. However, in Momba District the main road linking the district headquarters with the Mbeya-Tunduma highway was the only road passable all year round. Telephone coverage in this area was poor. Besides, Nanyumbu and Masasi districts are close to Mtwara Airport and Mtwara Marine Port, while the two districts in the Southern Highlands are close to Songwe Airport. All villages in the study area had a supply of electricity, improving the potential for processing agricultural products.
Table 3: Specific opportunities per district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Existing opportunities</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mbozi</td>
<td>Land and irrigation potential</td>
<td>Mbozi has several permanent rivers. The land is relatively expensive, but can be inherited, bought, or rented. Farming requires fertiliser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport and communication infrastructure</td>
<td>Roads are passable all year round and the district has good mobile phone networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential and existing markets</td>
<td>Crop aggregators, e.g. Rafael Group for groundnuts, NFRA buying maize, functioning cooperatives (AMCOS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organisations</td>
<td>TARI Uyole, TARI Naliendele, ADP Mbozi, TaCRI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mombi</td>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Land is available and is still naturally fertile. Land can be inherited, bought, rented or allocated by the government. Animal manure is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport and communication infrastructure</td>
<td>The main road into the district headquarters is good. Secondary roads are only passable during the dry season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential and existing markets</td>
<td>Rafael Group buying paddy near Tunduma border town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organisations</td>
<td>TARI Dakawa, ADP Mbozi, Rafael Group, Africa Rising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanyumbu and Masasi</td>
<td>Land and irrigation potential</td>
<td>The land is abundant, accessed through government allocation, inheritance, purchase or rent. Shallow wells can be dug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transport and communication infrastructure</td>
<td>Roads are passable all year round and the district is covered by good mobile phone networks. Mtwara Port and Airport are near the two districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential and existing markets</td>
<td>The districts are near Mtwara Port, several AMCOS, crop aggregators. OLAM Tanzania buys crops from the Districts, linked with Mtwara, Lindi, Dar es-Salaam and Tanzania-Mozambique border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organisations</td>
<td>Cashewnut Board of Tanzania, IITA, Swiss Aid Tanzania, TARI Naliendele, Aga Khan Foundation, myAgro, Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), Nanyumbu Development Foundation, CAVA, NAYODEN and AMCOS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Existing and potential agricultural products’ markets

Mbozi and Momba districts had several existing market opportunities such as Rafael Group (groundnuts and rice). The National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) had cereal buying stations in Mbozi District. Agricultural produce had a reliable market in Mbeya City, Tunduma border town and Tunduma international grain market and functioning Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS). Respondents also mentioned individual crop buyers in Songwe. In all areas, there were local markets organised weekly. In Nanyumbu and Masasi, AMCOS were well established. Respondents also said that crop aggregators such as OLAM Tanzania bought cashewnuts and sesame. As in Songwe, individual crop buyers were present in the area. Also, proximity to major towns like Lindi, Mtwara, and Dar es-Salaam provided potential markets for agricultural produce from the study area.

Research and development organisations

In the study area, various organisations were active in agricultural research and development, including Tanzania Agricultural Research Institutes (TARI) and Tanzania Coffee Research Institute (TaCRI), both government owned. Others such as ADP Mbozi, myAgro and Aga Khan Foundation to mention just a few, were NGOs. International organisations such as the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Cassava Adding Value for Africa (CAVA) and Swiss Aid Tanzania were operating in Mtwara. Although few organisations directly targeted the youth, Nanyumbu Youth Development Network (NAYODEN) was specifically targeting youth in Nanyumbu District.

Agricultural support systems

Extension services were mainly public. Input distribution systems were also in place. In most areas, extension workers were stationed at the ward level. Farmers reported that although they were at the ward level it was possible to get their service on demand. For inputs, most of the agro-dealers were found at the district headquarters except for Momba District where such services were not available at the District headquarters. Farmers in Momba had to travel to Tunduma town or nearby Mbozi District to get inputs.

Conducive policy and political environment

Tanzania has a National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture (NSYIA) which helps to create an enabling environment for attracting youth to agriculture and to minimise challenges that they face. Some of the strategic objectives of the strategy include facilitation of land acquisition, finances, agricultural machinery and other support services and enhancing the marketing of agricultural products (United Republic of Tanzania 2016).

The existence of funds for women, youth and disabled in district budgets was another opportunity. The National Food Reserve Agency (NFRA) had cereal buying stations in Mboizi District to get inputs. Nonetheless, in all areas, the youth indicated that not all of them benefited from the fund. First, the funds are limited compared to demand. Second, the mode of access requires beneficiaries to be members of registered groups which the youth said was difficult. Third, most of the youth were not aware of the existence of such a fund.

Tanzania is a peaceful and politically stable country, with no civil wars or ethnic conflicts. This political stability is crucial for youth to engage in agricultural activities without interruptions. Movement of people and goods from one point to another is possible as long as established laws and regulations are observed.

Other opportunities

Respondents said that there was potential to diversify economic activities and that socio-cultural systems support youth access to productive resources such as land, extension services and finances.
For example, in Mtwara there is a possibility of growing crops (cassava, cashewnut, groundnuts, sesame, pigeon peas, green gram, cassava, sorghum and horticultural crops), livestock keeping (poultry, goats, and rabbit), petty businesses and beekeeping. In Songwe, participants mentioned that youth can involve themselves in crop production (maize, groundnuts, sorghum, paddy, beans, sesame and horticultural crops), livestock keeping (dairy cattle, oxen, pigs, poultry, goats) and petty businesses.

Despite these opportunities, agriculture is a viable choice only for those who can access land and other inputs. For many young people, lack of access to land, capital and other inputs prevents them from considering agriculture as a dream job. Access to land is critical for building livelihoods from agriculture. Ownership and control over land are critical in creating diverse employment opportunities in agriculture (Kidido and Lengoiboni 2019). Youth need equitable access to land to achieve prosperity.

Inheritance was the main means by which young people obtained access to land, especially in Mbozi, although customary practices favoured boys. Another means was through purchase, but few youths had saved enough money to buy land. Credit markets were still underdeveloped in the study area. Access to long-term credit was impossible because most youths did not own land or other assets to use as collateral. Leasing land may have been an option, but it was not always possible for lack of resources and land leasing was still poorly developed. There was a lack of knowledge on land rights by youth, so they were unaware of legislation and policies they could use to access and secure land. The availability of opportunities is not enough to help youth engage in agriculture, but favourable support systems should be in place to enable youth to gain access and control of key resources like land that are needed for economic prosperity.

In Mbozi the social system also supported skill development as indicated by the following extract.

“I wanted to be a doctor but was unable to afford it. I realised that my educational journey and dream job was stuck. I could not proceed. My uncle came to my help. He was a talented watch repairer. He took me and taught me how to repair watches and I have been earning my living through this job” (a 65-year-old LH respondent, Mbozi, 12th November 2019).

Social relations can provide some opportunities, but this was not the case for everyone. Most were not reached by any social safety net. In the past it was common for relatives to give a helping hand and assist someone (even non-relatives) to realise their dreams. Such a spirit is less evidenced today, as confirmed by the following remarks from a life history narrative in Masasi with a 64-year-old male respondent:

“Nowadays people are too individualistic; everyone is considering his or her children and close relatives. There is a saying that kita mtu ataubeba mzigo wake mwenyewe (Everyone should shoulder own responsibilities)” (Masasi, life history, 14th November 2019).

A growing individualism is eroding the social relations which were instrumental in the past. Parigi and Henson (2014) argue that many factors drive changes in the organisation of social relationships.

3.4.2 Challenges faced by youth in tapping agricultural opportunities

Several challenges faced the youth in tapping agricultural opportunities. In order of importance, these were constraints related to markets, inputs, loans and credit, climate change and inadequate knowledge and skills in agriculture. Respondents also mentioned low crop yield, pests and diseases, the death of parents and the HIV pandemic, cashewnut dependence syndrome and cultural practices.

Markets

Key market constraints were limited access to profitable markets, low prices of agricultural products, poor access to market information, market informality and lack of standard measurements. In Mtwara, for instance, the lack of market for groundnuts, green gram and pigeonpeas discourage farmers so much that some decided to stop producing the crops. This was also observed in Mbozi where the market for maize, groundnuts and horticultural produce (tomato, capsicum and vegetables) was limited. In Momba, farmers did not have a reliable market for rice and sesame. Generally, youth access to the market is limited. However, rural female youth face additional constraints in accessing markets, because their freedom of movement is sometimes limited by cultural norms.

“There are so many challenges affecting what we do here in the village. However, for us as youth, we mainly face the challenge of the market. This is what fails us. We have big dreams, and we want to become economically independent, but the main challenge is the market. You may find that when you sell your products there are no standard measurements. Someone may come with a bucket to buy tomato at a very cheap price” (FGD 20s and 30s, male participants Mbozi, 11th November 2019).

Another added that

“Another challenge is price fluctuation. When youth harvest and sell, the prices of their crops fall. This makes them fail to recover the money they used to buy inputs to the extent of missing money they need for seeds and fertilisers for the coming season. Therefore, that is the main challenge that leads to youth’s failure in benefiting from farming” (20s-40s mixed FGD participant, Mbozi 11th November 2019).

The other reported market constraint was the low price of crops, which respondents blamed on the lack of market information and of middlemen (brokers). Except for cashewnut in Mtwara and coffee in Songwe, markets were informal, unreliable, with trust and the use of unstandardized measurements. Farmers felt that only the middlemen were benefitting.

The market is a critical challenge and a driver for production in agriculture. This was loud and clear in discussions in Mtwara where they gave an example of pigeon peas in 2014/2015 when the market was good and the price was around 2,000 to 2,200 shillings per kg. Almost everyone was producing the crop. But today there is no reliable market, and the price is 200 to 300 shillings. The crop is no longer popular.

Inputs

Youth have limited access to inputs such as agrochemicals, fertiliser, poultry feed, quality seeds, and tractors. They report this limited access as a major constraint to engaging in agriculture. Major issues were inaccessibility, high cost and poor quality. In most villages there were no agro-dealers who sold inputs. In Momba for example, farmers had to travel to Mlowo Township, a little over 90 km from their villages to buy seeds, fertiliser, and pesticides. The long distance was one of the demotivating factors in using agro-inputs among the farmers (ACT 2012).
“The youth must have the capital to boost agricultural production by buying agricultural inputs (fertilisers, pesticides) in addition to being optimistic as the key attitude. Access to quality inputs can help youth to improve their productivity” (FGD 20 to 40-year-old mixed FGD participant, Mbozi, 11th November 2019).

Increasing access to farm inputs, implements and extension services for productive agriculture was perceived as essential by respondents.

### Financial Capital - Loans and credit facilities

In all four districts, there are few loan and credit facilities in rural areas. Also, the conditions to access loans were unfriendly, e.g., high-interest rates, requiring fixed assets such as collateral, the requirement that youth should access a loan in groups and have a good track record. Because of such difficulties, some youth opted to get loans from individuals, which at times were exploitative, with extremely high interest rates and short repayment times. In some cases, loans from individual lenders had to be repaid in kind (crops) regardless of the prevailing price during harvesting.

I: Do you have access to loans in your area?

R6: It is common for people to get loans in December because it is a farming season. At this time, farmers have no money. If someone takes 100,000/= they will have to repay 200,000/= in June. This money can be borrowed from individuals. Now if your crops dry up, and you have neither cows nor goats, you will be forced to sell your farm at a loss. This has happened to some of our people here in Tindingoma. So, people have been selling their farms at a throwaway price to pay their debt. There is even one incidence where both husband and wife took individual loans and when they failed to repay, they ended up selling their house (female participant in a mixed age, mixed FGD, Momba 13th November 2019).

I: Has this happened here in Tindingoma?

All: Yes!

I: Really?

R9: Yes. People have sold their houses and left the village. You have to find out where to go, but the debt must be paid.

Although there was an option to get loans from the SACCOS and VICOBA, most youth, especially males, were not members of such groups. Youth were afraid to take loans fearing the consequences should they fail to repay; people who failed to pay their past loans lost their properties or valuable assets. Others feared getting loans from SACCOS or VICOBA because they feared the risk of losing their investments due to poor leadership. For example, one of the life history participants shared an experience where she struggled to pay the loan, but lost her shares when group leaders disappeared with the money:

“My child was in secondary school. I joined a group and managed to obtain a loan for my son’s school fees. I only borrowed 25,000/= shillings ($11). At one point I was not able to repay the money. Our chairperson encouraged us to try our best and refund the money. We did that. I finally paid 35,000/= shillings. When I was about to borrow again our chairperson disappeared with all the money. Now I don’t want to hear anything about lending groups. No! I don’t want it at all!” (44-year-old female life history respondent, Mbozi, 12th November 2019).

Natural disasters such as droughts or floods and lack of insurance services were another reason youth abstained from taking agricultural loans. A 36-year-old female respondent reported that:

Table 4: Challenges hindering youth from tapping agricultural opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Key challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mbozi</td>
<td>Markets, Inputs, Access to financial services, Pests and diseases, HIV orphans, Entrepreneurship and financial literacy, Markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mombasa</td>
<td>Markets, Inputs, Access to financial services, Climate change, Pests and diseases, Inadequate skills, low knowledge of agriculture, Low crop yield, Entrepreneurship and financial literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanyumbu and Masasi</td>
<td>Markets, Inputs, Access to financial services, Climate change, Pests and diseases, Inadequate skills, low knowledge of agriculture, Low crop yield, Entrepreneurship and financial literacy, Cultural practices (such as expenses for initiation), Cashewnuts syndrome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inputs such as seeds and fertilisers were sold at high prices and few farmers could afford them. For instance, in Momba FGD participants reported that because of the high cost of inputs, farmers were forced to enter unprofitable contracts with crop buyers as evidenced by the following extract.

“When you realise you cannot afford the cost of inputs due to high costs, traders come and supply you with the inputs you need. However, they give you a condition that you must sell your crops to them. Therefore, even if you get a better market, you are forced to keep the crops and sell at a low price to the person who supplied you with inputs” (FDG, Mixed-age, Mixed Sex, Momba, 13th November 2019).

Participants reported that seeds were sometimes adulterated, e.g., groundnut seeds known as Ziada in Momba. Although this variety was preferred by many farmers, they claimed that they often got “fake” (poor quality) seeds with poor germination, leading to increased cost of production. Thus, youth felt that successful agriculture required not only sufficient capital, but also access to quality inputs at affordable prices. Poor quality inputs lead to poor yield, and low incomes. Poor quality inputs aggravate poverty as farm investments result in losses (Shao and Edward 2014), discouraging youth from getting involved in agriculture as shown in the following extract.
“Agriculture is a risky business. There are no insurance services. What will happen if you take a loan, and you lose your crop due to drought or any natural disaster? But if there is insurance you can be comfortable because you do not expect to lose your assets to pay the loan” (KII, Masasi, 15 November 2019).

Focus group discussions revealed three critical issues constraining youth access to credit and loans: 1) high-interest rates, 2) short repayment period compared to the long agricultural season, and 3) lack of collateral.

Climate change

Climate change was mentioned by respondents as a challenge. For instance, in Momba District drought caused crop failure in some years and floods sometimes destroyed crops, especially paddy, besides restricting mobility. In Mtwaras prolonged dry periods affected agricultural production. When asked about strategies they were using to cope with climate change, few youths in either study area used any strategy. Few were familiar with early planting as a strategy.

Inadequate skills and knowledge in agriculture

Youth had limited knowledge and skills in agriculture, specifically good agricultural practices (GAP) and marketing. Since agriculture is knowledge-intensive, lack of good agricultural practices hinder productivity. Lack of marketing skills prevented the youth from accessing reliable markets, standard measurements, and good prices as most were forced to sell their produce to buyers available in their localities. They were also limited in animal production and agro-processing. This was partly due to the lack of extension services, available only at the ward level. Other areas where youth reported limitations were entrepreneurship and financial management skills. There was a general lack of transferrable skills such as the development of business plans and financial record-keeping. Low crop yields and pests and diseases were also mentioned in all study areas.

Cashewnut dependence syndrome

In Mtwaras, during the cashew harvesting season there is a lot of money in circulation in the area, which boosts the trade of food crops and other products. As a result, communities placed less importance on other crops or other economic activities. Consequently, people in Mtwaras are less aggressive in agriculture compared to their counterparts in Songwe.

The circulation of money during the cashew marketing season triggers ceremonies such as jando and unyago where a lot of money is spent, leaving people them almost broke at the end of the season. Also, income from cashew is connected to a practice commonly known as kusafisha ghala, meaning “store cleaning”. This means replacing the old stock with new stock including furniture, utensils, and in worst cases wife replacement. This triggers divorces and promotes the marriage of new wives, resulting in early pregnancies and motherhood.

3.5 Youth engagement in agricultural value chains

3.5.1 Youth perception of agriculture

Generally, the youth had a positive perception of agriculture, regardless of where they lived (urban or rural), what they were currently doing or their level of education. Despite perceiving it as being a tough undertaking with a long gestation period, they considered that it had the potential to support their lives. This is testified in the following remarks made by some of the respondents during interviews.

“Yes, I can confidently say agriculture is beneficial and one can entirely depend on it to run his life and family. For example, in our community, many people have benefited from agriculture by building good houses, even running a business like a school, a dispensary, paying fees to their children etc.” (20-year-old female KII respondent, Nanyumbu town, 13th November 2019).

Another female respondent added:

“If you compare boda boda, hair salon and other activities with agriculture, agriculture is more paying as there are many mouths to feed” (female, 36 years, living in Masasi town and born in Mbeya city).

Another respondent in Momba had this to say:

“In our community, agriculture is the mainstay of our livelihoods. Youth who are actively engaged in agricultural production have better living standards. The prosperity of some youth forces others to work hard to escape from abject poverty. To earn more income, youth have started thinking outside the box and are creating more opportunities; for instance, when the land ownership is a hurdle, youth opt to rent” (FGD female participant. 20-30s, Momba, 13th November 2019).

Contrary to the common belief that youth do not like to associate themselves with agriculture, the youth saw agriculture as a profitable enterprise. This finding contradicts the study by Agena (2011) who found that in Uganda agriculture was unattractive to the youth partly because it had been used in schools to punish errant children. On the hand, the current study found that a few youths perceive agriculture negatively and see it as something hard, meant for the old generation and outdated.

In the current study, elderly respondents considered today’s agricultural practices as less arduous due to improved technology including tractors, planters, and weeding machines. In sum, the youth expressed interest in agriculture, but were not fully aware of the income-generating opportunities across various value chains. They associated agriculture with high opportunity costs, barriers to entry, and low returns. More importantly, youth were of the view that there is inadequate support and encouragement from parents and society for them to engage in agriculture. There is, therefore, a need to capitalise on youth interests and demonstrate the various opportunities and income-generating potentials found in the agriculture sector. Parents and society should be positive about agriculture and assist youth to invest in it, using appropriate technology.

3.5.2 Potential cereals and grain legumes with the highest potential for youth engagement

The potential of cereals and grain legumes for youth engagement are shown by district in Table 5. For Songwe Region, potential cereals and grain legumes were groundnuts, common beans and maize in Mbozi District and sorghum, paddy and sesame in Momba District. For the Mtwaras Region, they were mainly sesame, green gram, pigeon peas and groundnut.
Table 5: Cereals and grain legumes with the highest potential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mbozi</td>
<td>Groundnuts</td>
<td>Does not need high initial capital. The market is available. Soil and climate are conducive. Farmers have experience, and there are promotion initiatives, e.g. TARI Uyole. Seeds are available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beans</td>
<td>Market is available. Conducive environment. Farmers have experience growing them and access to seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maize</td>
<td>Ready market (NFRA, neighbouring countries, e.g. Malawi, Zambia). Seeds are available, Experienced farmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>A staple food in the area. Experienced farmers. It is an appropriate staple food crop for this dry area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momba</td>
<td>Paddy</td>
<td>Ready market. Promotion initiatives, e.g. TARI Dakawa with demo plots. Experienced farmers. Appropriate during the rainy season. Fertile land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sesame</td>
<td>Ready market and fetches high prices. Does not require intensive use of labour and inputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunflower</td>
<td>Does not require intensive use of labour and inputs. Drought-resistant crop. There are buyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanyumbu and Masasi</td>
<td>Green gram</td>
<td>Fetches high prices. Drought-resistant. Does not require intensive use of labour or inputs. The crop has been produced for many years except recently when the market has been unreliable. Conducive soil and climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pigeon pea</td>
<td>Fetches high prices. Drought-resistant. Does not require intensive use of labour or inputs. The crop has been produced for many years except recently when the market has been unreliable. Conducive soil and climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groundnut</td>
<td>Does not need high initial capital. Market is available. Soil and climate are conducive. Farmers have experience. Promotional initiatives, e.g. TARI Naliendele. Seed is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunflower</td>
<td>Does not require intensive use of labour and inputs. Drought-resistant. Buyers available. There were promotion initiatives, e.g. Aga Khan Foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.3 The entry points with the highest potential for CRP-GLDC and why

**Potential value chains**

Groundnut, sorghum, green gram and pigeon pea have the highest potential in improving youth livelihoods in the study areas. For Momba District sorghum is the priority, because it is suited to the climate, it is a staple food crop in the district, and farmers have experience producing it. For Mbozi groundnut should be given priority because there is a market for it, the soil and climate are conducive, farmers have experience and there are promotion initiatives in place, e.g. TARI Uyole. In Masasi and Nanyumbu green gram and pigeon pea should be given priority, because they are commonly produced in the area and are popular among the youth. Unfortunately, in the last three years, their markets have deteriorated. However, these are crops that do not require a large investment of labour and inputs. The second priority is groundnut, which is supported by a conducive climate, the availability of seed and research on oilseed crops by TARI Naliendele.

**Capacity building required**

For youth to harness and realise the potential in these value chains, several capacity building interventions are required. For groundnut and sorghum, these are: youth organisation (formation of groups and networks), changing of youth mind-set by demonstrating that agriculture is a viable source of livelihood. Training is needed on modern agricultural practices including the use of quality seeds, improved farming equipment, fertilisers and manure, pest and disease management as well as postharvest loss management. Other areas of training are processing, storage, marketing and general entrepreneurship and financial management. Diversification of economic activities such as horticulture, livestock keeping (poultry, pigs) and beekeeping is also proposed. There is a need for enhancing access to quality seeds, inputs and loans using youth-friendly mechanisms. Lastly, training on soil and water management, including soil conservation and small-scale irrigation is also recommended. The bottom line is that youth must be educated on agriculture as a business and improve their skill through practical approaches.

Other value chains which are not within the CRP-GLDC, but have potential are cashewnut, cassava, sesame and sunflower for Nanyumbu and Masasi Districts. Sesame, paddy and sunflower were potential in Momba while in Mbozi potential value chains are sunflower and beans. For paddy, cashewnut and sesame the main entry points are small-scale processing, post-harvest loss management and marketing. For sunflower, entry points are production, processing and marketing. In general, market opportunities for agricultural produce should be expanded and youth need training on value addition so that they get better prices.

3.6 Qualities needed for youth to succeed in dryland agriculture

Qualities needed by youth to successfully engage in dryland agriculture were hard work, perseverance, an entrepreneurial mind and being economical in terms of expenditure. Other qualities are indicated in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Qualities needed for youth to succeed in dryland agriculture.](image-url)
3.7 Resources needed for youth to succeed in dryland agriculture

The current study shows that for the youth to be able to tap opportunities in dryland agriculture, they require financing or loans, access to extension services, agricultural equipment, seeds and fertiliser and land (Figure 3). There is a need to expand and strengthen services involving revolving funds and savings and credit cooperative organisations (SACCOs) where youth can access loans. Affordable loans with low-interest rates and youth-friendly alternatives to collateral will encourage youth to invest in agriculture.

Figure 3: Resources needed for youth to succeed in dryland agriculture.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

There is no single criterion used to define youth. They are defined by age, social responsibility, physical maturity and bodily changes, economic independence and whether they are still in school or not. Youth covered in this study mostly live in rural areas and are engaged in agriculture (both crop and livestock), and food vending. Males also drive motorcycle taxis, boda boda. Youth perception of agriculture is generally positive. However, disincentives for engaging in agriculture include limited access to credit, inputs and markets as well as inadequate entrepreneurial skills and knowledge of agriculture. Very few youths are involved in leadership and participate in decision making at community level.

Youth of both genders aspire to lead a good life, which is mostly shaped by role models in society. Education is seen as the means to attain a good life, so youth prioritise attaining higher education. Both male and female youth aspired to becoming doctors or teachers. Female youth gave high priority to getting married to a well-off partner, besides getting formal employment as a nurse or a secretary. Male youth were interested in becoming soldiers, farmers or transporters. Agriculture and agribusiness were mentioned as priority by male youth. Most youth wish to live in urban areas due to the availability of social services and economic opportunities. Even though agriculture is the main source of livelihood in rural areas, low returns make it unattractive, hence the push to live in urban areas. However, agriculture is often the second option for those who are not able to live their dream of an education, a good job and life in the city.

Events triggering the transition to adulthood for males and females are marriage, loss of parents which forces them to assume family responsibility, completion of school and rites of passage. Early pregnancy triggers female transition into adulthood. For males, wealth acquisition changed their status from youth to adulthood. Existing opportunity structures include availability of land, transport, telephone and electrical infrastructure, agricultural product markets, agricultural support system (e.g. extension services, input shops, research institutions, AMCOS, financial institutions) as well as conducive policy (e.g. youth development funds) and a stable political environment.

Cereal and grain legume value chains with the highest potential for youth engagement are groundnuts, beans, and maize (Mbozi District), paddy, sesame, sunflower and sorghum (Momba); green gram, pigeon peas, groundnuts and sunflower (Nanyumbu and Masasi Districts). To successfully engage in dryland agriculture, youth need hard work, perseverance and an entrepreneurial mind. But they also need credit, extension services, inputs and land.

4.2 Recommendations

The strategy to support youth engagement in dryland agriculture, and make it attractive and profitable, should focus on identified value chains which are sorghum (Momba), groundnut (Mbozi), groundnut, green gram and pigeonpea (Nanyumbu and Masasi Districts). To successfully engage in dryland agriculture, youth need hard work, perseverance and an entrepreneurial mind. But they also need credit, extension services, inputs and land.
References


This work was undertaken as part of, and funded by the CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals (GLDC) and supported by CGIAR Fund Donors. https://www.cgiar.org/funders/

About CRP-GLDC

The CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals (CRP-GLDC) brings together research on seven legumes (chickpea, cowpea, pigeonpea, groundnut, lentil, soybean and common bean) and three cereals (pearl millet, finger millet and sorghum) to deliver improved livelihoods and nutrition by prioritizing demand driven innovations to increase production and market opportunities along value chains. http://gldc.cgiar.org

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