



Jake Lyell for LWR

Prossy Namutebi is an LWR-trained VEA, who owns her own farming supplies store in Bukomansimbi District, Uganda and provides technical agriculture consultations to farmers in the region

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF'S APPROACH TO POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Over 70 million youth are unemployed globally and the majority live in rural areas with limited economic opportunities.¹ Recognizing that agriculture is the engine that drives many rural economies, Lutheran World Relief's programming strives to prepare youth living in rural poverty for viable careers in agriculture. Our holistic approach provides the next generation of farmers with the skills, tools, and opportunities that will meet today's needs and the aspirations of future generations.

OUR DEFINITION OF YOUTH

LWR's primary focus is to work with youth between the ages of 15 and 30 years old. We recognize that the needs of youth at age 15 are very different from age 30, therefore sub-divisions within our youth definition are necessary for us to appropriately assess their unique needs and to report on any informative trends.

These sub-divisions are:

- Middle Adolescence: 15 to 17 years old
- Late Adolescence: 18 to 21 years old
- Young Adult: 22 to 30 years old

Equitable access to sustainable incomes and information technologies for youth is a key objective of our work to build fair and profitable livelihoods. We support young farmers in operating farms as small businesses to maximize their earnings while strategically diversifying their sources of income to increase their resilience to the shocks they may face. We train youth seeking employment opportunities in rural areas as service providers who assist their communities by providing advice on best practices in agriculture, either as self-employed entrepreneurs or as employees. Our programs also link youth to the private sector, improving their opportunities to find formal work. Through our apprenticeship and diploma programs, young people gain certifiable skills and become productive members of the agricultural community.

Often what makes it difficult for youth to work in agriculture is the limited understanding of what the occupation options can look like, beyond traditional farming roles. Lutheran World Relief is working to create a less standardized view of agricultural careers through programming and investment in agriculture education for both on- and off-farm occupations.

¹ Content attributed to International Labour Organization (2017) in Making Cents International's "Lutheran World Relief Assessment Report" by Eliza Chard and Christy Olenik (2018), p. 3.



Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

Since 1945, Lutheran World Relief has been successfully tackling poverty in some of the world's hardest-to-reach places. We provide relief in emergencies and help families restore their lives. We partner with communities to build and grow rural economies that are beneficial to the poorest farmer. By investing in people, their skills, and strengthening their ability to adapt, we help them build the resilience they need to thrive.

INCREASING YOUTH AGENCY

Lutheran World Relief acknowledges the importance of strengthening youth voice and choice to establish personal goals and influence and act upon these goals for their future. Our programs help youth build agency through an applied learning approach which enables them to learn skills one day and use them the next. When applying these new skills, youth pass along the training they received to community producers. This programming model helps young people bridge the gap from learning to action.

We conduct participatory youth assessments when designing projects, choosing activities based on interviews with young people about their goals and perceived barriers to working in agriculture. In our Youth in Sustainable Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Project in Indonesia, youth shared that a disadvantage of working in agriculture is the lack of income between growing seasons. We responded by incorporating seasonal crop varieties into the project's design to provide income throughout the calendar year. We also provided additional requested guidance on financial management and off-farm activities such as coffee processing and barista training.

Another central component of LWR's youth programming is the development of soft and life skills through skill building activities within individual, peer and community settings. In Central America, our cocoa programs aim to give youth tools to express themselves, respect diverse opinions, and develop empathy. Through our Diploma in Cocoa Management for Rural Youth Project in western El Salvador, young people have built competencies that prepare them to navigate the job market with increased confidence and self-efficacy. As a result of these interventions, over 25% of youth enrolled in the program have successfully found employment within 6 months of graduating.

BUILDING YOUTH ASSETS

Lutheran World Relief strives to provide youth with access to resources and opportunities to gain the skills and competencies they need to achieve their desired goals and thrive in agriculture-based economies.

Through our Investing in New Ventures of Entrepreneurial Students in Tanzania (INVEST) Project, we partner with the Ministry of Agriculture's technical agriculture institutes to strengthen course curriculum to include market-ready skills and training and to expose students to real-world careers in agriculture through full-paid internships. The revised curriculum, approved and signed by the Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture is now being implemented in 36 technical agricultural institutes, reaching over 25,000 students. In

recognition of the difficulty youth often have in gaining critical investment capital for their entrepreneurial ideas, this project also includes a start-up challenge fund each year for students.

In our Strengthening Youth Capacities in Entrepreneurship and Coffee Project in Honduras, young people are increasing their qualifications and subsequently their job opportunities by learning about key issues and acquiring marketable skills in the coffee industry, such as:

- Production and post-harvest techniques
- Job search resources in the productive sector
- Coffee quality and certification

AMPLIFYING YOUTH'S CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY

Not only are young people the future of their communities, their ideas, talents and labor are needed now in many struggling, aging rural towns and villages.

Through our Sustainable Enterprises for Equitable Development (SEED) Project in Uganda, we helped position youth to meet the critical community need for quality seeds and inputs, extension services, and bulking services. Young village enterprise agents (VEAs) offer services to local farmers including chemical application, harvest and processing, and collective marketing. Each VEA offers his or her services to a minimum of 120 area farmers to provide inputs and at least two services, providing a variety of revenue streams for youth. VEAs are reporting a huge demand for their products and services with some reporting that they sold out of their entire stock of agro-inputs within the first week of opening. Farmers have started reserving their inputs and supplies from VEAs in advance of the planting season in order to ensure that they will be able to access the goods. We've applied a similar approach in working with the children of cacao farmers in Guatemala through our Strengthening the Competitiveness of Small-scale Cocoa Producers Project.