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# Reconsidering Development

## “I Would Like to Live a Better Life:” How Young Mothers Experience Entrepreneurship Education in East Africa

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the capabilities, values, and constraints of young mothers participating in a youth entrepreneurship program in Tanzania and Uganda. Entrepreneurship education is an increasingly popular development strategy for vulnerable and out-of-school youth. The ultimate value of these programs rests in the ability of these youth to convert the knowledge and skills they acquire into valued livelihood opportunities. It is therefore important to understand the characteristics, experiences, and needs of the participants, as well as the socio-economic conditions that shape their abilities to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills. Findings from this study suggest young mothers enter the program with more dependents, greater economic vulnerability and more business skills than their peers, and require additional social supports in order to take full advantage of their training opportunities.

**Keywords:** Youth Entrepreneurship Education, Adolescent Mothers, Capabilities Approach

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## **“I Would Like to Live a Better Life:” How Young Mothers Experience Entrepreneurship Education in East Africa**

**Elisabeth E. Lefebvre, Amy Pekol, Brooke L. Krause<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Introduction**

Vulnerable and disadvantaged youth face extraordinary and interrelated challenges to obtaining educational and development goals, requiring a high degree of sensitivity, support, and flexibility from programs that serve them. This study examined the characteristics and experiences of a particular group of vulnerable youth, young mothers, in an entrepreneurship education program operating in rural Uganda and Tanzania. Recognizing that young mothers are likely to experience entrepreneurship education programs differently than many of their peers, this paper applied the capabilities approach (Sen, 1999; DeJaeghere & Baxter, 2014) as its theoretical framework to draw attention to these young mothers, their unique experiences, and the livelihood opportunities they acquire through the program. The purpose of this paper is to analyze how these young mothers differ from their peers in the program, and identify the unique aspirations and expectations of young mothers as well as the mediating factors that influence their ability to realize their goals. Moreover, this paper challenges the common deficit model of adolescent motherhood by acknowledging the ways in which adolescent motherhood can be seen as both a source of inspiration and empowerment as well as a barrier to achieving valued lifestyle goals.

The first section of this paper explores some of the general challenges facing female youth in East Africa. The next section examines how youth entrepreneurship education programs are rising to meet some of these challenges and introduces one specific youth entrepreneurship program operating in Uganda and Tanzania as a case study. We then apply the capabilities approach as a framework for investigating how young mothers experience entrepreneurship education in this particular program. Finally, we make recommendations for other similar initiatives that work with young mothers in East Africa, to improve the outcomes of these programs, as well as the lives of adolescent mothers.

### **Background: Convergence of Disadvantage for Young Mothers in East Africa**

Across Eastern Africa, youth are disproportionately affected by poverty and excluded from educational and economic opportunities. The issues faced by African youth are compounded for young mothers; they encounter the same obstacles—often alone due to the stigma of being a pregnant adolescent or a young mother—plus provide for the welfare of their own children. While the world average is just over 50 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19, in Uganda the rate is 136 births per 1,000, in Tanzania the rate is 129 births per 1,000 (World Bank, 2010). Thus young mothers form a significant sub-population in Tanzania and Uganda where adolescent fertility rates are high. In both countries early pregnancy is a significant precipitating factor in early school leaving for adolescent girls (Kane, 2004). A similar circumstance is depicted in Tanzania’s 2010 Demographic and Health Survey. According to the report 23% of women aged 15-19 had been pregnant, 17% had already had a live birth, and 6% were pregnant with their

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first child. By the age of 19, 44% of Tanzanian women are either mothers or pregnant with their first child (Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Those in rural areas are more likely to start childbearing early, further limiting the likelihood of these youth to attend secondary school. Because of the high numbers of youth who leave school before finishing the primary or secondary cycle, governments have begun to focus attention on improving youth opportunities.

As increased attention has focused on primary and secondary school participation and gender parity—in part because of the Millennium Development Goals—governments have made some effort to increase primary and secondary cycle completion, particularly for girls. In Tanzania and Uganda, government initiatives have focused on lowering the costs of attendance, reducing the distance to schools (particularly in rural areas), addressing teacher shortages, providing necessary sanitation facilities for girls, and preventing early pregnancy, which have all been identified as barriers to girls' education (Kane, 2004). In addition, the Ugandan and Tanzanian governments have undertaken a number of efforts to improve the education and health of young girls and to address the high frequency of early pregnancy.

Each country has drafted a National Strategy for Girls Education in an attempt to foster gender parity in education (Muhwezi, 2003, p. vi). In addition, the Ugandan Government has enacted a National Health Policy, a National Adolescent Health Policy, a National Policy on Young People and HIV/AIDS, a Sexual Reproductive Health Minimum Package, and a Minimum Age of Sexual Consent Policy, and a universal primary education policy, all of which are aimed, in part, at encouraging adolescent reproductive and sexual health (Wallace, 2011, p. 3). Likewise, Tanzania reformulated the Women in Development Policy of 1992 in 2000, which emphasizes gender equality as a part of policies, planning, and development strategies in all sectors of government. The policy provides for women's empowerment by giving more opportunity for women to participate in leadership. Tanzania has also enacted laws to protect women's land ownership, among other things (United Republic of Tanzania, 2005, p. 7-9).

To support the efforts of the Ugandan and Tanzanian national governments, international and local non-governmental organizations have also worked to create gender-sensitive policies, to promote the benefits of girls' education among local communities, and to address issues such as HIV/AIDS. School policies have emerged to facilitate access to education for young mothers. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has focused on establishing national readmission policies for adolescent mothers in Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania to increase access and to allow schoolgirls who become pregnant to remain in school. The policies also rectify a scenario in which a girl may have been expelled under the previous policy (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Mwatha & Chege, 2011). Despite FAWE's success in changing government policy, the lived experiences of adolescent mothers have changed little. As argued by Sommer (2010), simply changing policy is not enough to have an impact on the education of young mothers, many of whom remain outside of the educational system. To address this, most educational programs focus on preventing pregnancies altogether through the promotion of sex education, contraceptive use, and primary and secondary education enrollment (Kane 2004; Mwatha & Chege, 2011).

Despite these efforts, unemployment rates among young women (ages 15-24) remain high, as women struggle to secure and maintain meaningful employment and livelihoods. This could be, in part, due to the fact that few programs focus on youth who are pregnant or who have already born children, and often neglect to take into account their unique needs (Kane 2004; Mwatha &

Chege, 2011). Whatever the reason, the unemployment rate for young women in Tanzania was 10.1% in 2006, almost three percent higher than their male counterparts (7.4%), and in Uganda the youth unemployment rate (4.4%) was double that of the whole population (2.0%) in 2005 (World Bank, 2013). Although women's empowerment initiatives have attempted to redress this situation through both the formal education system, as well as non-formal education initiatives, women, and in particular adolescent mothers, continue to face considerable challenges to their education and employment. Meanwhile, the frequency of adolescent pregnancy has not lessened. Together, this literature indicates that immediate and long-term policies and programs are needed to target and support the continuing education and development of young mothers.

### **Entrepreneurship Education as a Way Forward?**

The rising number of out-of-school and unemployed youth in East Africa—many of whom are adolescent mothers from economically disadvantaged backgrounds—presents an urgent need for effective programs to address their needs. Youth face many challenges to finding employment, as they have limited experience and professional networks. Those who are employed are more likely to have only part-time or temporary work assignments (ILO, 2012). Entrepreneurship education programs are gaining popularity as a poverty-reduction and development strategy assisting youth from vulnerable backgrounds to develop the skills and abilities needed to find or create employment. Attanasio et al. (2009) found evidence from a randomized control trial that subsidizing vocational training for disadvantaged youth had a significant impact on earnings, particularly for women, who earned 18% more after participating in the training. Given the high barriers that adolescent mothers face in accessing formal educational and employment opportunities across East Africa, youth entrepreneurship education (YEE) programs may offer these marginalized girls an alternative way forward in terms of both finding or creating employment and increasing their earning potential and therefore their economic empowerment.

It appears that many YEE programs targeting vulnerable populations are trying to do just that. The Youth Development Initiative (YDI)<sup>i</sup> is one such program. The YDI program offers disadvantaged youth in Uganda and Tanzania an alternative path to formal education to help youth find or create employment. It supports youth learning, earning, and saving through a nine-month learning cycle that includes technical and entrepreneurship skills training, internships, job placement, business start-up support, linkages to financial service providers, the formation of savings groups, and life skills counseling. Youth in the program form learning groups of 10-12 youth, developing deeper peer relationships and aiding each other as they learn leadership skills, technical skills, go through internships and make the transition to the job market. Within these small groups, youth also form savings and lending associations to develop savings practices and support each other as they become entrepreneurs. Furthermore, YDI seeks to build community partnerships and relationships to help improve youth-community relationships, as well as to build local capacity to support employment. Fostering community ownership over the program to help youth is part of YDI's sustainability plan for creating a long-term solution for youth in that community.

The youth in this program range in age from 15 to 26 years old. They are largely from rural (56.9%), male-headed households (46.7%), although a substantial portion lives in female-headed households (38.9%). A small, but noteworthy, percent of these youth (7.3%) reported that they themselves are the head of the household. There is considerably more variability in educational

attainment among the Ugandan—compared with the Tanzanian—program participants. In Uganda, only 22.5% of the participants completed Standard 7, the last grade of primary school after which students take a national exam to determine their placement into secondary school. Only 12.3% of youth participating in the YDI program completed Form 4, after which another national exam determines placement into the final two years of secondary school. Therefore, the vast majority of Ugandan program participants do not have a secondary school certificate. In Tanzania, the majority (57%) only completed primary school (Standard 7). Most participants dropped out of the formal school system early for reasons including: adolescent pregnancy, lack of financial or material resources, and a need to provide economic support to their family. The commonality of early-school leaving amongst these youth—coupled with the fact that in 2009 at the national level, 59% of Ugandan children and 81% of Tanzanian children completed primary school—demonstrate that the program primarily serves disadvantaged and marginalized youth who stand to benefit greatly from participation in an entrepreneurship and skills training program (UNESCO, 2012). Moreover, it indicates a need for non-formal educational opportunities for youth who, for one reason or another, were unable to complete their formal education and may lack necessary skills and certificates to secure formal employment.

A unique aspect of the YDI program is that it has specifically targeted adolescent mothers in its efforts to meet the needs of disadvantaged youth. While most participants are single and without children, approximately 29.7% of the participants, male and female combined, are parents. In its early planning phases, YDI identified young mothers as a particularly vulnerable target group and they were encouraged to participate in the program. The YDI, which is funded by an independent global organization that works to advance micro-finance and youth learning, identifies providing education and training to disadvantaged young mothers as an explicit part of its mission. Reflective of this, of the 214 female participants in the YDI program, 44.8% are mothers, which is considerably higher than the national averages for this age group. As noted previously, at the national level for women between the ages of 15 and 19, 24% are mothers in Uganda and 22.8% are mothers in Tanzania (World Bank, 2006 and 2010, respectively). The high prevalence of young mothers participating in the YDI program provides a rich opportunity to understand the experiences of young mothers, as compared to female non-mothers. The comparison group, female program participants without children, will be referred to as non-mothers in this paper.

As YEE programs such as the YDI respond to the needs of this particularly at-risk group by strategically targeting and enrolling large numbers of young mothers, a new puzzle emerges: how can these programs accommodate and foster the achievement of young mothers? There is currently very little information on how and why young mothers choose to participate in YEE programs or what additional accommodations would best support their participation and achievement. Toward that end, the following section outlines the conceptual framework for this study, followed by an examination of the unique characteristics, experiences, and needs of young mothers in the YDI program.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The capabilities approach, as defined by Sen (1999), offers a framework for conceptualizing human development that extends beyond economic measures to consider individual opportunities, choices, and values. It effectively shifts attention from the means of

development—increased income and economic growth—to what individuals have reason to value and whether or not they have the freedom to pursue these values. From this perspective, income and economic growth are necessary but not sufficient conditions for development. What matters most is what individuals can do and achieve with the various capabilities that are of value to them.

Some important concepts of the capabilities approach include: endowments, capabilities, agency, and functionings (Sen, 1999). *Endowments* can refer to the various human, social, financial, and physical assets that individuals possess (Conway and Chambers, 1992). They can also refer to different types of skills (e.g. vocational skills, financial literacy skills) and supports (e.g. peer groups, professional networks, mentoring) that may be acquired or developed. Although endowments are typically attributed to individuals, DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014) suggest that it may be more appropriate to consider household endowments in the context of East African youth. Although households come in many forms, they have considerable influence on how youth make use of the various endowments of themselves or their households.

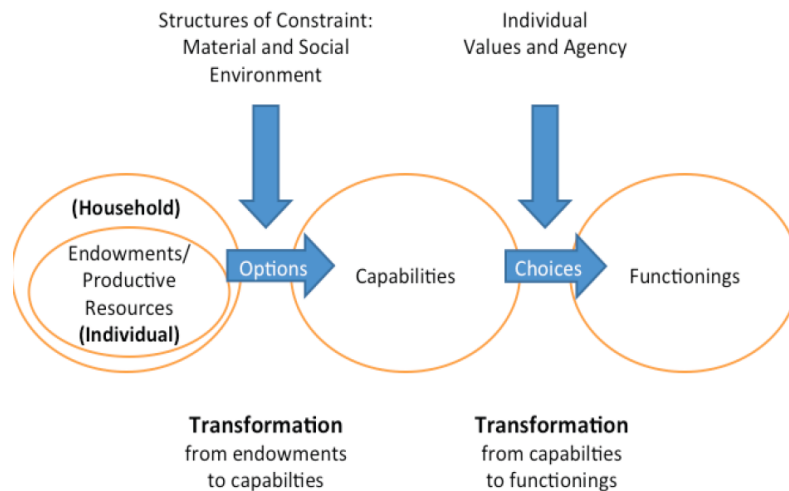
*Capabilities* are what people are able to do with their given endowments (Sen, 1999). They represent options that are often mediated by one's material and social environment. For example, being healthy, educated, and employed could all be considered capabilities that allow individuals the freedom to choose and achieve different *functionings*, or valued lifestyles. The ability to pursue “the various things a person may value doing or being” is what Sen (1999, p. 75) considers a valued functioning. Accordingly, entrepreneurship could be viewed as either a capability that allows one to live a life that he or she values, or it could be a valued functioning in and of itself. According to Gries and Naude (2011), entrepreneurship can be a valued functioning when it has intrinsic value for individuals or represents a form of identity, achievement, or acceptance. When young mothers view entrepreneurship as a means to an end, entrepreneurship serves as a capability that can expand opportunities. Alternatively, where they view entrepreneurship as an end in and of itself—a valued lifestyle choice—entrepreneurship can be considered a valued functioning. Functionings are therefore mediated by one's own values and agency.

*Agency* is an important concept in the capabilities approach and refers to a person's ability to pursue goals that are valued. Gries and Naude (2011) argue that entrepreneurship can only be considered a valued functioning when one has the agency to pursue it as a lifestyle goal. When one is forced into entrepreneurship or self-employment because there are no other suitable employment options due to labor market failures, this is a situation in which a person lacks agency. The distinction between opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship can also be described as necessity versus opportunity entrepreneurship. When individuals are forced into entrepreneurship out of necessity, meaning they have no other choice but to pursue entrepreneurship, this type of livelihood may not be considered a valued functioning or lifestyle choice. For DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014), not only does necessity entrepreneurship imply a lack of choice, but it is also unlikely to promote sustainable development as most forms of necessity entrepreneurship take place in the highly transient informal economy. In order for entrepreneurship to reflect valued choices and sustainable livelihood opportunities, it must be promoted alongside efforts to expand and improve other types of welfare and labor market opportunities in the formal sector.

As such, the capabilities approach challenges the assumption that any two individuals with the same level of endowments and capabilities must have the same level of well-being. Considering

the fact that individuals have different values and abilities to pursue different livelihood opportunities, their chosen lifestyles will vary. Furthermore, an individual's ability to transform skills and resources into livelihood opportunities is shaped by his or her material and social circumstances and agency. The model below (Figure 1), developed by DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014), provides a visual representation of the different concepts, mediating factors, and points of transformation associated with Sen's (1999) capabilities approach, as adapted from Oughton and Wheelock's (2003) Model of Household Behavior.

*Figure 1. DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014)'s capabilities model for explaining capabilities and functionings from youth livelihood programs*



The capabilities approach is a useful framework for examining how young mothers in East Africa experience entrepreneurship education programs, because it draws much needed attention to the unique characteristics of these participants, while also considering the broader social and economic conditions that shape their varied choices and abilities to pursue meaningful and sustainable livelihood opportunities. Analysis of survey and interview data collected during the first year of the program will address the following questions:

1. Do young mothers' experiences in the program differ from those of their peers?
2. What are the aspirations and associated expectations of young mothers in the YDI program and does this differentially impact their experience in the program?
3. What mediating factors influence young mothers' ability to realize their goals and what can programs do to better support them?

## Data & Methodology

To answer these questions, this paper analyzes quantitative (structured surveys) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) data collected from participants of the Youth Development Initiative (YDI), an entrepreneurship training program for marginalized youth. Data collection consisted of structured surveys, administered orally, conducted between February and March 2012 with 461 Ugandan and Tanzanian youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The survey included questions about youths' knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors with respect to employment, finances, life skills, social supports, gender beliefs, and values. This



study used analysis of variances (ANOVA) to examine the differences between mothers and girls who are not mothers with respect to their constraints, knowledge about employment and savings, as well as their future aspirations. Understanding the differences between mothers and girls who are not mothers facilitates a closer examination of motherhood in the context of youth entrepreneurship training programs. Previous studies conducted in Uganda and Tanzania (Atuyambe et al., 2005; Plummer et al., 2009; Sekiwunga & Whyte, 2009; Wallace, 2011) have often examined the lived experiences of young mothers without comparing them to non-mothers, making it difficult to assess whether or not the challenges they face are unique to their status as mothers.

This study also draws on data from qualitative interviews, which were conducted in June 2012 with 32 female youth, 19 of whom were mothers, at three program sites in Uganda and two sites in Tanzania. Interviews were conducted by a team of YDI program staff, along with graduate students from a large research university in the Midwest. Interviews were coded in NVivo using inductive analysis to look for common themes emerging from the interview data. The first set of interviews took place during the first year of program when different program sites were at various stages of implementation some activities were still being rolled out. For example, the Tanzanian sites were further along with vocational skills training and their youth savings groups, while the Ugandan youth had only recently been placed at their training sites. Youth familiarity and experience with different program aspects varied accordingly.

### **Results: How do young mothers differ from their peers in the program?**

The young mothers in this youth entrepreneurship program were different than the other participating girls without children in several ways. In both Uganda and Tanzania, mothers participating in the program were significantly older than non-mothers by a couple of years. The differences in marital status and number of dependents between mothers and non-mothers are also statistically significant. Young mothers were responsible for more dependents than non-mothers. Across both programs, 57.9% of young mothers were responsible for two or more dependents compared to only 19.5% of non-mothers. While this could be expected since they presumably count their own children as dependents, it appeared that they were more often responsible for other children—or elders—in addition to their own. Mothers in Uganda were also more likely to have fewer people living in their household than non-mothers, significant at the 1% level.

Young mothers in the program were 2.6 times more likely to have no education than non-mothers—0.8% of non-mothers had no education, as compared to 2.1% of mothers. Beyond differing household and education characteristics between mothers and non-mothers, these women entered the program with different levels of previous experiences in vocational training programs and internships. While only 7.6% of the non-mothers in the program had previously participated in a vocational or skills training or internship, 17.7% of the mothers had been through a vocational or skills training program and 22.9% had previously participated in an internship across both the Tanzania and Uganda program sites. There are varying degrees of significance, but young mothers are more likely to have participated in an internship, started their own enterprise, and participated in a vocational or skills training program. In addition, at the 10% significance level, mothers in both Tanzania and Uganda are more likely to be employed than female participants without children. These differences contribute to the experiences of mothers and non-mothers as they participate in the YDI program.

Table 1 summarizes the differences in demographic characteristics between mothers and non-mothers through frequencies. These differences were then tested for statistical significance using F-tests (see Table 2).

*Table 1: Frequencies of Demographic Statistics of Mothers and Non- Mothers*

	<b>Tanzania</b>		<b>Uganda</b>	
	<b>Mothers (56 total)</b>	<b>Non-Mothers (40 total)</b>	<b>Mothers (63 total)</b>	<b>Non-Mothers (56 total)</b>
Married	17 (30%)	6 (15%)	23 (36%)	0 (0%)
Father is Head of Household	15 (27%)	27 (68%)	12 (19%)	20 (36%)
Rural	25 (45%)	37 (93%)	29 (46%)	18 (32%)
Responsible for Dependents	36 (64%)	24 (60%)	47 (75%)	4 (7%)
Six or More People Living in Household	29 (52%)	38 (95%)	28 (45%)	41 (73%)
Mother Not Alive	6 (11%)	7 (18%)	10 (16%)	13 (23%)
Father Not Alive	7 (13%)	20 (50%)	29 (46%)	33 (59%)
Previously Participated in a Vocational or Skills Training	7 (13%)	5 (13%)	10 (16%)	4 (7%)
Currently Employed	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	9 (14%)	4 (7%)
Ever started up their Own Enterprise	11 (20%)	5 (13%)	9 (14%)	5 (9%)
Ever Participated in an Internship	10 (18%)	2 (5%)	12 (19%)	7 (13%)
Two or More Income Earners in Household	13 (23%)	23 (58%)	8 (13%)	18 (32%)
Currently Has a Savings Account	4 (7%)	0 (0%)	7 (11%)	3 (5%)

Table 2. Differences in Demographic Statistics between Mothers and Non-Mothers

	Tanzania			Uganda		
	Mothers Mean (St. Dev.)	Non- Mothers Mean (St. Dev.)	F-Statistic (p-value)	Mothers Mean (St. Dev.)	Non- Mothers Mean (St. Dev.)	F-Statistic (p-value)
Age (15-26)	21.75 (2.23)	18.63 (2.29)	43.66 (0.000)	20.41 (2.88)	18.02 (2.23)	26.02 (0.000)
Marital Status (1=single, 2 =married)	1.44 (0.502)	1.11 (0.312)	15.46 (0.000)	1.41 (0.49)	1.00 (0.00)	43.171 (0.000)
Number of Dependents	2.51 (1.65)	1.40 (1.89)	8.76 (0.004)	2.16 (1.63)	0.17 (0.71)	77.465 (0.000)
Number of People Living in Household	7.38 (3.60)	7.13 (4.16)	0.094 (0.760)	5.70 (2.48)	7.48 (3.57)	9.727 (0.002)
Mother Alive (0= no, 1 = yes)	0.85 (0.36)	0.88 (0.33)	0.122 (0.728)	0.82 (0.38)	0.79 (0.41)	0.144 (0.705)
Father Alive (0= no, 1 = yes)	0.83 (0.39)	0.64 (0.48)	3.905 (0.051)	0.48 (0.50)	0.48 (0.50)	0.004 (0.949)
Previously Participated in a Vocational/Skills Training (0= no, 1 = yes)	0.18 (0.39)	0.09 (0.29)	1.560 (0.215)	0.18 (0.39)	0.06 (0.25)	3.841 (0.052)
Currently Employed (0= no, 1 = yes)	0.05 (0.22)	0.00 (0.00)	2.886 (0.093)	0.16 (0.37)	0.06 (0.25)	2.902 (0.091)
Ever Started up their Own Enterprise (0= no, 1 = yes)	0.28 (0.45)	0.09 (0.29)	6.038 (0.016)	0.16 (0.37)	0.08 (0.27)	1.888 (0.172)
Ever Participated in an Internship (0= no, 1 = yes)	0.25 (0.44)	0.04 (0.18)	10.68 (0.002)	0.18 (0.38)	0.06 (0.27)	3.841 (0.052)
Number of Income Earners in Household	1.33 (1.09)	1.38 (0.84)	0.064 (0.801)	0.98 (0.88)	1.16 (1.02)	1.007 (0.318)
Currently Has a Savings Account (0= no, 1 = yes)	0.10 (0.30)	0.00 (0.00)	6.093 (0.015)	0.13 (0.33)	0.14 (0.56)	0.043 (0.836)

*Young mothers enter the program with different knowledge and experiences*

Although young mothers tended to have fewer years of formal education than other female participants, mothers and non-mothers participating in the YDI program reported statistically significant differences in prior business experience. In both Tanzania and Uganda, mothers reported that they were more likely to know how to find employment in their community and to know how to develop a business plan than non-mothers. This finding suggests that young mothers enter the program reporting greater confidence in their knowledge about starting a business or finding employment. Since young mothers were, on average, older than non-mothers in the program, one could hypothesize that this is a result of age. However, the correlation<sup>2</sup> between age and knowledge about finding employment was low at 0.32 in Uganda and 0.23 in Tanzania for mothers. Similarly low, were the correlations between age and knowledge about developing a business plan is 0.29 in Uganda and 0.21 in Tanzania for mothers. This suggests that age is not necessarily the determining factor in young mothers entering the program with higher reported knowledge about starting a business or finding employment.

In both settings young mothers were more apt to set goals for themselves than non-mothers. In Uganda, goal setting was significantly correlated with young mothers' beliefs that "women can start their own business" with a correlation value of 0.443. In Tanzania, goal setting was significantly correlated with "considering all the options before making a decision about spending money," with a correlation of 0.53. This indicates that mothers are better acquainted with the skills and knowledge associated with finding employment or starting a business. Accordingly, these data also suggest that mothers may seek skills and training that extends beyond entrepreneurship training alone. These statistically significant results between mothers and non-mothers are shown in Table 3 below.

*Table 3. Differences between Mothers and Non-Mothers*

	<b>Tanzania</b>			<b>Uganda</b>		
	<i>Mothers</i> Mean (St. Dev.)	<i>Non-Mothers</i> Mean (St. Dev.)	F-Statistic (p-value)	<i>Mothers</i> Mean (St. Dev.)	<i>Non-Mothers</i> Mean (St. Dev.)	F-Statistic (p-value)
Do you know how to find employment in your community?	2.50 (0.75)	1.75 (0.86)	19.740 (0.000)	2.07 (0.72)	1.82 (0.86)	2.883 (0.092)
Do you know how to develop a business plan?	2.25 (0.77)	1.66 (0.82)	12.683 (0.001)	2.13 (0.79)	1.81 (0.77)	4.962 (0.028)
How easy do you think it will be to find employment at the end of this program?	2.75 (0.87)	2.82 (0.86)	0.161 (0.690)	3.45 (0.84)	3.17 (0.89)	3.078 (0.082)
Do you set goals for yourself?	3.60 (0.778)	3.29 (0.889)	3.232 (0.075)	3.67 (0.610)	3.42 (0.821)	3.516 (0.063)

<sup>2</sup> As measured by the Pearson Correlation Coefficient in which 0 indicates no correlation between the two variables and 1 indicates highest possible correlation.

Table 3. Differences between Mothers and Non-Mothers (continued)

	Tanzania			Uganda		
	Mothers Mean (St. Dev.)	Non- Mothers Mean (St. Dev.)	F- Statistic (p-value)	Mothers Mean (St. Dev.)	Non- Mothers Mean (St. Dev.)	F- Statistic (p-value)
Do you take action to achieve these goals?	3.18 (0.813)	2.71 (0.948)	6.191 (0.015)	3.51 (0.69)	3.51 (0.74)	0.000 (0.993)
Do you know how to create a personal budget?	3.03 (0.947)	2.13 (0.935)	21.379 (0.000)	2.55 (0.81)	2.81 (0.99)	2.285 (0.133)
How much do you know about tracking your expenses?	2.90 (0.982)	2.30 (0.829)	10.342 (0.002)	2.36 (0.91)	2.30 (0.94)	0.131 (0.718)
Do you know how to apply for a savings account?	1.60 (1.105)	1.23 (0.632)	4.265 (0.042)	1.96 (1.03)	1.81 (0.86)	0.802 (0.372)
How comfortable do you feel borrowing money from a savings or credit institution?	2.70 (1.043)	1.84 (1.075)	17.286 (0.000)	2.04 (1.11)	1.87 (0.96)	0.739 (0.392)
Before making a decision about spending money, do you consider the options?	3.63 (0.628)	2.86 (0.923)	20.780 (0.000)	3.50 (0.81)	3.57 (0.62)	0.298 (0.586)
Are you confident in your work skills?	3.75 (0.439)	2.50 (1.293)	34.443 (0.000)	2.64 (0.87)	2.67 (0.88)	0.035 (0.851)
Do you believe women can save money?	3.90 (0.379)	3.00 (0.853)	13.803 (0.000)	3.79 (0.41)	3.68 (0.59)	1.188 (0.278)
Do you believe men can save money?	3.25 (0.81)	3.00 (0.85)	2.093 (0.151)	3.57 (0.63)	3.59 (0.64)	0.019 (0.892)
Do you believe women can start their own business?	3.93 (0.350)	3.71 (0.563)	4.386 (0.039)	3.73 (0.45)	3.73 (0.55)	0.000 (0.983)
Do you believe men can start their own business?	3.58 (0.67)	3.50 (0.69)	0.282 (0.597)	3.73 (0.52)	3.70 (0.56)	0.089 (0.766)

All items are on a 1-4 scale, which is specific to each question, but where 1 is generally the lowest / most negative response option and 4 is the highest / most positive response option.

There were several areas in which mothers were significantly different from non-mothers in the Tanzanian context. Mothers report that they were better able to save money, were more likely to know how to apply for a savings account, and were more likely to have a savings account than non-mothers. Mothers were more likely to know how to create a personal budget and to know how to track their expenses. Moreover, they were more comfortable borrowing from a savings or credit institution and more likely to think about all the options before spending money. Young mothers in the Tanzanian program also reported having more confidence in their work skills and in taking actions to achieve their goals than non-mothers. There was no difference in goal setting between mothers and non-mothers in either Uganda or Tanzania. With respect to gender beliefs in the Tanzanian context, young mothers were more likely than non-mothers to believe that women can save money and that women could start their own business.

These findings suggest that young mothers entered the youth entrepreneurship program with greater financial literacy and knowledge about business skills, on average, than non-mothers. This is likely correlated with the finding that young mothers have, on average, more previous experience with similar training programs as compared to non-mothers. Nonetheless, the finding that young mothers enter the program with a different knowledge and skill set than non-mothers has implications for the type of entrepreneurship training they receive.

*Young mothers enter the program with different individual and household endowments*

From a capabilities perspective, young mothers in the program enter with a different set of individual and family endowments than their peer counterparts. Young mothers reportedly entered the program with more business and financial literacy skills than their younger peer cohort. While this suggests young mothers may have an endowment advantage in terms of skills upon entering the program, it remains to be seen whether or not this advantage holds throughout the duration of the program. It is not clear how much more experience these young mothers have or whether they will be able to keep pace with their childless peers in the program due to family obligations. It is possible that non-mothers will catch up to mothers before the completion of the program, and therefore it remains to be seen whether this represents a long-term endowment advantage.

When it comes to household resources, young mothers reported having more dependents in their care, which has major implications for how their individual and household resources are allocated. A number of mothers discussed their struggles meeting the basic needs of their children, including healthcare, clothing, food, Vaseline, and baby powder, without support from the child's father. It is presumed that more household resources are allocated towards meeting the basic needs of dependents, which impacts the actual resources available to these young mothers and how they make use of them. It is interesting to note that young mothers in Tanzania self-report being better able to save than their childless peers. However, it is uncertain whether this reflects a difference in actual resources or simply differences in spending habits, which is an area in which young mothers self-report being more careful or thoughtful in their decision-making. In this area, at least, young mothers seem to be at an advantage, as compared to female non-mothers.

Peer and adult support and professional networks could also be considered endowments. Survey data suggests that young mothers have fewer social supports than other program participants. In particular, they report that peers are less willing to listen to them when they

have problems, and adults are least willing or able to help them in practical ways, or available when they need them. The lower levels of peer and adult support young mothers reported on the survey were not found to be statistically significant, though many young mothers described instances of reduced peer and adult support in the qualitative interviews. Additionally, our findings related to peer and adult support are consistent with previous research on young mothers in East Africa (Atuyambe et al., 2005; Kane, 2004; Mwatha & Chege, 2011; Muhwezi, 2003; Plummer, et al., 2010).

Some described instances of adults and family members favoring the education of males over females. One interviewee said,

*I have two cousins, one male and one female. Both of them finished seven, and they both can go to the secondary school, but the father decide to just send the boy to secondary, because he believed that if he sent the girl, she would get pregnant, and that would be a waste of money. (Tanzanian Youth #1)*

These findings are consistent with two studies that examine adolescent sexual activity and pregnancy. Sekiwunga and Whyte (2009) suggest that competing ideas of adolescent girlhood—pushing girls to stay in school and pulling them toward early marriage—along with tensions between parents and youth, contribute to early sexual activity. Concomitantly, Plummer et al. (2010) found that often girls do not have access to reliable and safe contraceptives, which severely limits their ability to control reproduction. In addition to an apparent gender bias in education—which is often a contributing factor of early pregnancy among females—some young mothers reported instances of being chased away from their home by family members when they became pregnant, or of being abandoned by the child's father, as is indicated in the qualitative interviews. Although mothers may have more entrepreneurship skills than their female peers without children, they lack necessary social supports and endowments, which could form a substantial barrier to their ability to turn their capabilities into valued functionings.

Early pregnancy can also impact the level of support young mothers receive from their peers. As one young mother explained, “you get shy, and you don't want your friends to see you as a stigma, so you end up with stopping the training” (Tanzanian Youth #6). While young mothers reported low levels of peer and adult support, often due to their gender or status as a young mother, it appears that the YDI program is addressing this issue through peer learning and savings groups, counseling, and mentorships. Although females who do not have children face gendered barriers as well, they make take a different form. Youth mothers face significant stigma related to their status as mothers in particular. Interviewees suggest that these programmatic features are a source of support for some young mothers, as many peers, trainers, and counselors have offered support and guidance.

Certainly all of the youth in the YDI program face disadvantages related to the level of their individual and household endowments with which they enter the program. This is to be expected of a program that specifically targets underprivileged youth. However, preliminary data suggests that mothers and non-mothers enter the program with different sets of endowments in terms of knowledge, skills, experiences, and supports. Mothers may have more business skills, but also have more dependents, less materials resources, and fewer social supports. Thus it is essential to tease out the ways in which participation in the program can

either equalize or amplify some of the differences between mothers and non-mothers in terms of these endowments.

### **What are the aspirations and expectations these young mothers?**

The capabilities approach emphasizes the importance of one's values in determining suitable livelihood opportunities and levels of wellbeing. In addition to learning more about who these young mothers are, it is important to gain a better understanding of their wants and needs as they shape their expectations for the program and their vision of what constitutes a good life. The mothers interviewed cited several specific desires for their futures, both as a result of this program, and more generally.

Of the 19 young mothers interviewed, 9 (47%) described their desire for a better life, often in terms of acquiring material goods, becoming self-employed, and being able to care for their children. 47% of young mothers interviewed discussed the importance of self-sufficiency as part of their imagined future, as compared to 23% of female non-mothers. For 32% of young mothers, a better future included opportunities to help their community. When asked about her future goals, one young mother responded,

*I want my life to be better than right now. Today I can't get everything I want, but at least in ten years I want to be able to get everything I want. I want to be able to fight any problem that comes across. I want my children to study in very good schools. (Ugandan Youth #5)*

Another young mother stated, "I would like to live a better life... to build my own house, to have a kid, to have a husband, to have my own job, and my husband also has his job (Tanzanian Youth #3)." Not surprisingly, many young mothers framed their future goals in terms of their goals for their children's wellbeing and futures. Five young mothers (26% of young mothers interviewed) referenced the desire to earn money to care for their children, to pay for their children's school fees in the future, and to send their children to good schools; eight (42%) referenced a desire to be able to support their families. Many of these young mothers view entrepreneurship as a way to realize their goals of caring for their children and providing them with a good education.

Some mothers also expressed a strong motivation to "pay it forward" and support others in their community once they gained employment and were able to support themselves. Almost all mothers (99%) and most non-mothers (95%) reported that they value helping their community very much, considerably, or somewhat, according to survey results. When prompted on what she would like to do in the future, one young mother responded, "I'd like to help others in need after having my job" (Tanzanian Youth #3). Another young mother said, "I've set one of the goals to be one of the best entrepreneurs and help the community and the people around me." (Tanzanian Youth #7). Most mothers felt that employment was essential to achieving these goals of obtaining a better life for themselves and their children, caring for their children, and helping their community. In this sense, the vocational, technical, business, and life skills provided by the YDI program could be considered capabilities for young mothers, as it allows them to achieve their goals and live satisfied and meaningful lives. In addition to viewing employment as a means to achieve their goals, many mothers spoke to the personal satisfaction of being employed and able to earn money. Thus mothers have both external—the



ability to provide for their children's futures—and internal—personal satisfaction—motivations to pursuing employment, either formally, or as an entrepreneur.

Where employment was seen as an end goal in and of itself, or contributed to a heightened sense of self-worth and belonging, it can be considered a valued functioning for these young mothers. For 79% of the young mothers interviewed self-employment, in particular, was identified as an end goal, as compared to 69% of female non-mothers. When asked about their future goals, many expressed a strong desire to own a business and to be self-employed. One young mother viewed entrepreneurship as a part of one's identity and measure of self-worth and accomplishment, stating that her goal was "to be one of the best entrepreneurs" (Tanzanian Youth #7). Another young mother described her future goal as owning her own tailoring business. In describing this goal, she attached great importance and value to her work, saying "I want to be faithful to my work, and sew people's clothes in a very good manner" (Tanzanian Youth #2). Not only is self-employment a means to achieve their goals, but for many young mothers in the YDI program, being an entrepreneur and owning one's own business has great intrinsic value and could therefore be considered a valued functioning, or valued lifestyle choice.

Interestingly, mothers were more likely to value self-employment than non-mothers, as indicated previously. Demographic data indicates that young mothers in the program are more likely to have started up their own enterprise at some point in their lives. Across Tanzania and Uganda, 20.8% of mothers in the YDI program have started up their own enterprise at some point, whereas only 8.4% of non-mothers reported starting up their own enterprises. There are several possible reasons for this: lack of support from families and communities make self-employment seem like a more secure option; few formal employment opportunities limit the likelihood of mothers to secure over forms of employment; and/or self-employment affords young mothers with more flexibility and therefore enables them to care for their children more easily.

Young mothers reportedly value formal employment less than their childless peers—only 70.5% of mothers indicated that they "very much value" being employed, compared to 78.2% for non-mothers. What was less clear, however, was whether self-employment could be a valued functioning for these young mothers, rather than simply a capability. While many young mothers expressed a strong desire for self-employment as either a means to achieve their goals or as a valued lifestyle choice, it is not yet clear how much agency they have in choosing to pursue self-employment compared to other income generating activities. This is significant because the lack of alternative options to self-employment indicate that youth have limited agency in choosing self-employment, and therefore may not value it as a lifestyle goal. However, it does appear that young mothers have high expectations that participation in the program will help them achieve their goals of self-employment and entrepreneurship, and that they see the program as facilitating their goals to be self-employed, self-sustaining, and able to support their children and other family members.

### **What mediating factors influence young mothers' ability to realize their goals?**

The following section explores some mediating factors that limit the ability of the young mothers in the YDI program from achieving their goals. While young mothers face many of the same challenges as their peers, they face an additional subset of challenges, which is

associated with their status as parents. The young mothers indicated that they struggled to meet their most basic needs, did not have adequate childcare, and lacked much-needed social supports, which hindered their participation in the program. Their experiences underscore significant material and social constraints to turning endowments and goals into valued functionings.

Mothers discussed the ways in which their children can serve as barriers to education, employment, and saving money. Such decisions often revolved around the need to provide for their children's basic needs, the lack of available or affordable childcare, and the possibility of child illness. As one mother stated, "I so much base [financial decisions] on home needs, and the needs of my child" (Ugandan Youth #2). Many young mothers indicated that children can also be a barrier to participation in the YDI program. When asked if she had any difficulties in the program in a response typical of other young mothers, one Ugandan female responded, "If my child is sick, I fail to come because the baby is afraid of being taken care of by others except me" (Ugandan Youth #3). Another commented,

*The challenge faced by me as a young mother is different from my peers who don't have kids. My child can get sick, I take her to the hospital. I don't know when she will recover, so I end up with missing some of the training. It's a challenge for me as a young mother. (Tanzanian Youth #1)*

#### *Limited social supports for young mothers*

While most of the young mothers interviewed discussed the importance of adults, family members, and peers, many of the mothers indicated a lack of support on the part of their families, peers, and communities. This finding is consistent with previous research on adolescent mothers in Tanzania and Uganda that has examined the role of social supports in their lives (Muhwezi, 2003; Atuyambe et al., 2005; Plummer, et al., 2010). Most often, girls cite a lack of support from the fathers of their children.

*When some girls get involved in relationships, they end up to be left alone and even after they get married, their husbands run away from them. Most times, this is because these people never think twice before they get married. Still the girls end up [with] unwanted pregnancies, and HIV/AIDS (Tanzanian Youth #5).*

*Q: How about relationships with boys or men? What challenges do you face?*

*A: We have the problems when we are in love with them. At first when you love someone they may tell you that they love you so much, and everything on earth. After some little time, almost one year, again he starts confusing you, betraying you, and after impregnating you, he can decide to change his mind and even leave you, leave you at home when you have nothing, no work, you know nothing, but you have the children.*

*Q: You said that you have two children at home. Is your husband there?*

*A: He is not there, and I don't know where he went (Ugandan Youth #5).*

Adolescent mothers also indicated a lack of support on the part of their families. One young mother stated, "You may find that a girl is getting involved in relationships, when she is still underage, where still she might get unwanted pregnancy. Finally, being chased away from her parents" (Tanzanian Youth #7). Another discussed the 'problem' of pregnancy, using herself as an example: "There is a problem of getting pregnant. I am a good example. In 2010, I got pregnant, and I was chased away from my home, so I went to my uncle's house, but my uncle

also chased me. Then I went to my aunt's house, and fortunately she accepted me to live with her" (Tanzanian Youth #1). Still another mother stated that when you get pregnant "they send you away from home and you have more problems" (Ugandan Youth #5).

Moreover, lack of community support was also discussed; despite the fact that there is no rule requiring a girl to stop training when pregnant, both mothers and non-mothers entertained this as a possibility. In one interview, a mother talked about support from her friends but indicated that a program trainer with YDI told her not to come with her children, despite the fact that she was unable to find adequate childcare.

*Q: How have other peers or adults supported you to achieve your goals?*

*A: Some of my friends that I'm training with help me. At first they told us not to come with our children, so I used to leave my child with another kid who was 10 years old. So in time I was called upon to see my child, so one of my friends talked to the trainer, and they accepted me to bring my child.*

*Q: So the trainer had refused to train you when you had your child with you?*

*A: Yes, because we were not supposed to bring our children, yet we had no house girl to look after our child. (Ugandan Youth #1)*

It is important to note that differences in the responses to questions about social supports on the spoken survey were not statistically significant between mothers and non-mothers. However, the frequency with which adolescent mothers cite a lack of support during the interviews suggests that this is a critical issue for these mothers and should be considered seriously in the design of mentorship aspects of a program.

#### *General constraints faced by all youth*

In addition to the challenges unique to young mothers—such as early pregnancy and marriage, often resulting in fewer educational opportunities, social stigma related to having children outside of marriage, and the economic constraints of additional dependents—these women face the same constraints to employment and self-employment that other vulnerable youth in Uganda and Tanzania face. Even if mothers are able to take advantage of the training provided by the YDI, or other similar NGOs, they are often unable to turn their capabilities into valued functionings because of lack of experience and skills (32%). As one young mother stated, "I think my goal was to start a shop, I was thinking about starting a salon, but I had no money to train" (Ugandan Youth #4). Lack of start-up capital also forms a significant barrier for most participants and was mentioned by 16% of participants in the interviews.

Corruption and the demand for bribes to secure employment are also common challenges, and were addressed by 42% of the young mothers interviewed in our study; 74% of mothers addressed the demand for sexual favors to secure or maintain employment. One mother stated in an interview: "Sometimes a girl goes in to look for a job, and when it comes that she doesn't have the requirements, she has to go into sexual bribes in order to get the job" (Tanzanian Youth #7). For mothers, who are also faced with the task of supporting their children, and have more dependents than non-mothers, monetary bribes can be a significant barrier to employment. As one mother explained:

*I tried [to find work or start my own business], but when I was trying, they asked me about a certificate and experience, experience in what I am asking to do. At times they even requested for money to give me a job (Ugandan Youth #5).*

Another mother, when asked about the challenges she faced responded by saying that adults can be not only unsupportive, but also barriers to success:

*A: At times when you are working in the place you are living in, sometimes adults undermine you. At times they don't want to give you anything because they don't want to see you are succeeding.*

*Q: Because you are young? Are these the adults undermining you?*

*A: Yes. At times, those people don't want to see you succeeding or being happy. (Ugandan Youth #5)*

One young mother reported that harassment was less of an issue for her because of her status as a mother. However, by and large, all youth identified significant challenges to finding employment.

Returning to DeJaeghere and Baxter's model (2014), young mothers indicate that significant social and material constraints—some of which are a direct result of their status as young mothers—limit their ability to turn their existing capabilities into valued functionalities. While young mothers may possess the requisite experiences and skills to be self-employed, numerous external factors limit their capabilities.

#### *Motherhood as empowering*

Despite the many social and material constraints of early pregnancy and motherhood, the experience of young motherhood is not always debilitating. Many young mothers drew strength and greater motivation to succeed from their experiences as mothers. Even when controlling for age—young mothers are, on average, older than non-mother participants—the mothers in this study reported more knowledge about saving money and higher levels of participation in previous training programs when compared to non-mothers. These findings suggest that young mothers in this program may have different needs and expectations than non-mothers. It will be important for the YDI to take inventory of their existing business skills and experiences and consider additional ways to support young mothers who may have more skills than non-mother participants. Moreover, our findings suggest that young mothers may seek to gain skills and assets beyond those specifically related to employment, planning and savings.

What was particularly striking was the heightened sense of empowerment that these young mothers conveyed through the survey and interview data. Despite the tremendous challenges they faced, many mothers exhibited a great amount of determination and strength. In fact, young mothers report being more satisfied with their life than non-mothers. 21.9% of mothers report being quite satisfied with their life versus only 16% of non-mothers. Many young mothers attributed this to their new role as mothers. They also saw motherhood as empowering. Some felt that if they could overcome the challenges of motherhood they could achieve most things they set their mind to do. As one young mother put it:

*Personally, I have overcome these challenges, because I have my own goals and objectives. At the same time, I try to avoid getting involved into relationships, because if I do, I am ready to face*

*what comes along my way. For example, if the husband is not providing the basic needs, I will use my abilities with my job and help myself (Tanzanian Youth #5).*

Many of these young mothers enter the program with some entrepreneurship experience and are very determined to succeed as mothers, as entrepreneurs, and as valued members of their communities. They are undoubtedly motivated, but they need extra support in overcoming some of the increased barriers to participation and employment associated with young motherhood—in particular, access to childcare and other basic necessities, sensitization on the part of program leaders and participants to the stigmatization of single mothers, and increased support to meet the challenges of costs and risks of entrepreneurship. Despite having more business skills and experience than non-mothers, young mothers still struggle to turn those capabilities into valued functionings because they lack the necessary material and social supports. YEE programs that target young mothers from disadvantaged backgrounds will likely need to make substantial programmatic adjustments accommodate the different skillsets, needs, and goals of these young mothers.

### **Discussion & Strategies for Development Practice**

This paper analyzed the unique characteristics, goals, and challenges of adolescent mothers participating in the YDI program. A better understanding of these young mothers will help improve programs like the YDI, which will, in turn, impact their abilities to transform their capabilities into valued *functionings*, or lifestyle choices. We found that although young mothers have many of the prerequisite skills for successful entrepreneurship, they lack necessary material and social supports, thus circumventing their ability to realize their goals and transform them into valued functionings. Thus, suggestions for the YDI, and other non-formal educational programs in East Africa, to better support these young mothers include:

First, *assess and make accommodations for the different capabilities of program participants*. The findings of our study show that these young mothers entered the YDI program more business skills and experience than their peers. This suggests that young mothers may have different expectations from the YDI program than many of their peers. These findings also beg the question of whether there might be other material and social constraints that have prevented these young mothers from previously realizing their entrepreneurial potential. By implementing a pre-assessment to determine the existing knowledge and capabilities of participants, the YDI and other similar initiatives, would be better able to meet the unique needs of each cohort and to avoid repeating the efforts of previous programs that fell short of meeting young mothers' needs. These young mothers may also require additional or different forms of support and training to help them reach their goals.

Second, *consider providing additional material support to young mothers* to ensure that participation in the program does not compromise the ability of these mothers to meet their most basic needs and those of their children. In response to the costs of participating in the YDI program, these youth emphasized the importance of providing them with opportunities to earn money during the training period. Although young mothers seem to have more knowledge about saving money than their counterparts, they still struggle to provide for their children and other dependents. Mothers consistently cited struggles to provide for basic necessities for themselves and their children. Helping participants provide for their basic needs during their entrepreneurship training would not only facilitate increased program participation, but may

also open up the possibility of involvement to even more vulnerable youth who cannot currently afford to participate.

A closely related recommendation is to *improve access to childcare for young mothers*. Many young mothers lack the necessary financial or social support to find childcare on their own. This results in high opportunity costs to participating in the training or working outside the home. Young mothers, which comprise 47% of all females in the program in Uganda and 42% of all females in the program in Tanzania, requested opportunities to make up for trainings they miss when their children are sick, suggesting that childcare options are often limited. Furthermore, young mothers discussed times in which they were unable to secure childcare to enable them to participate in the program and were also barred from bringing their children to the trainings themselves. Creating a free or reduced child-care option on site could improve attendance and participation amongst young mothers. As an alternative option, which has been explored by YDI more recently, programs could also provide home-based training, thereby avoiding the need for young mothers to find and secure child-care.

Third, *create a supportive training environment* for young mothers by employing instructors who are supportive and sensitive to their unique needs and challenges. One of the key challenges of adolescent mothers' participation in youth entrepreneurship training programs seems consistent with Johnstone and Chapman's (2009) definition of the principal-agent problem. "The principal (e.g. politician, ministry official) is interested in a particular outcome (such as inclusive education or quality instruction) but that official has to rely on an agent (teacher or other school official) to obtain these outcomes" (p. 132). The principals in this case are the YDI program staff who have reached out to young mothers in Tanzania and Uganda. The agents, however, are the local community volunteers to are involved in training the youth who in some cases are not particularly supportive of teenage mothers in the youth entrepreneurship training program. When program trainers are unsupportive, young mothers are less likely to attend sessions and receive adequate training. Although the YDI program has a mentoring component, young mothers did not identify any instances of adult mentorship when asked, and in one case, a young mother felt that adults in the community were trying to "undermine" youth (Ugandan Youth #5). This suggests that adult mentoring services could be improved for young mothers, perhaps by recruiting former young mothers as role models.

In addition to creating a supportive training environment, programs must also work to *build community support*, which may include reaching out to parents and peers to ensure their support and investment in the success of youth mothers. Social stigma and a general lack of support from peers and adults can be a barrier to participation for young mothers. When asked if peers had helped her, one mother replied, "Generally, my peers have not helped me," before shaking her head and turning away (Tanzanian Youth #4). Young mothers also gave examples of being pulled out of school and training by their parents, or even being chased away from home because they became pregnant. While young mothers may see pregnancy and child rearing as empowering, it is clear that many members of their community do not. Thus, the YDI and similar programs should work to create a supportive program environment with students, trainers, program staff, parents, and community members who understand and support these young mothers in their training and entrepreneurship endeavors. This could include advising, mentorship, peer groups, and childcare services especially for young mothers.

## Conclusion

In this study we examined the characteristics, capabilities, values, and constraints of young mothers participating in a youth entrepreneurship education program in Tanzania and Uganda. This study fills a gap in the literature on how young mothers from disadvantaged backgrounds envision the role of entrepreneurship in their pursuit of a better life and subsequently experience youth entrepreneurship education. Additionally, it highlights the importance of understanding and accommodating the unique experiences and goals of young mothers participating in youth entrepreneurship training programs.

Findings suggest several differences between mothers and non-mothers in this particular group of youth trainees. The majority young mothers identified self-employment as a desirable outcome for the identity and the lifestyle they wish to achieve. However, these young mothers also identified numerous barriers to both formal and self-employment. Many are consistent with the challenges faced by female participants in general, such as corruption, demand for bribes or sexual favors to secure employment, and the lack of start-up capital or support to start a business. But young mothers face additional challenges such as the unavailability or unaffordability of childcare to attending training sessions, and, in some cases, a lack of support from families, peers, and communities due to the stigma of becoming a young mother. Despite these challenges, the young mothers in this study exhibited a strong sense of self-initiative and a determination to overcome adversity. They started the program with more financial and business knowledge than their peers and are taking initiative to gain additional skills and experiences in order to secure employment or start their own businesses.

With regard to agency, the data suggest that these young mothers are not passive bystanders. They have ambitious hopes and dreams, and in many cases, a heightened sense of purpose and empowerment. Despite their awareness of the significant socioeconomic constraints they face, these mothers display a strong sense of determination. It is therefore important that those who seek to serve vulnerable young mothers understand motherhood as both a challenge and a form of empowerment. Since these young mothers enter the program with different capabilities, values, and constraints than their peers, youth entrepreneurship training programs could better meet their needs by offering programs tailored to young mothers or providing them with additional support services.

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<sup>i</sup> The Youth Development Initiative (YDI) is a pseudonym for a youth entrepreneurship education (YEE) program for marginalized youth.