



# **Bridging opportunities for effective and productive livelihoods of youth prison inmates and ex-inmates in northern Uganda (BOPLYN)**

## **Labour Market Assessment**

Final report

Report

April 2021

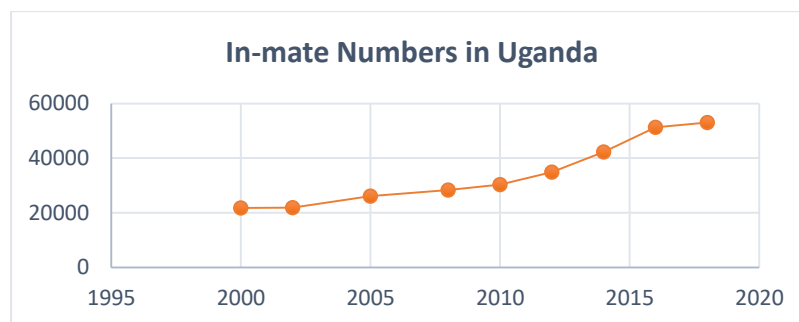
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## 1.0 Introduction

Uganda's recent high economic growth rates have not been accompanied by high growth in jobs. This lack of growth in both formal and informal jobs has stunted poverty reduction in the country. For example, although the economy grew by an average of 4.5% per year between FY15/16 and FY17/18, the number of people living in poverty increased in the same period from 19.7% in FY15/16 to 21.4% in FY17/18<sup>1</sup>. Also, Uganda currently has one of the youngest populations in sub-Saharan Africa. Youth in Uganda constitute 19.4 per cent (approximately 6.7 million) of the total population<sup>2</sup>. Of these, 71 percent live in rural areas while 29 per cent live in urban areas<sup>3</sup>. However, this growing number of potential labor force is not matched by corresponding economic opportunities, leaving many young people to engage in un-productive work and crime. According to the police crime report of 2020, although crime generally decreased, many young people continue being apprehended on cases of theft, assault and defilement among others. The cases were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and the subsequent lockdown of some sectors<sup>4</sup> according to the Inspector General of Police. As such, over the last decade, the Uganda Prisons Service has registered overwhelming number of inmates most of whom are of productive age (18-35 years), increasing at a rate of 10% per annum.



Source: *World Prison Brief*<sup>5</sup>

Studies show that inmates and ex-inmates (including young women) can contribute to local economic development and broader national development when well integrated into society and prepared for the world of work. This also contributes significantly to reducing re-incarceration from repeated offences. However, this is only possible with a labor market oriented skilling program that meets both the demand and supply constraints. The biggest challenge in Uganda remains the mismatch of skills among youth (and even worse for in mates'/ ex inmates) and private sector or potential employers. Previously, private sector growth has been very minimal and informal. The National Strategy for Private Sector Development (NSPSD) FY 2017/18-2021/22 was developed

<sup>1</sup> Price Water Coopers (PWC) Uganda Economic outlook report 2019

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/07\\_2020WORLD-POPULATION-DAY-BROCHURE-2020.pdf](https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/07_2020WORLD-POPULATION-DAY-BROCHURE-2020.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Labor Market Transition of Young People in Uganda: School to Work Transition Report 2015

<sup>4</sup> [Theft and assault top 2020 police crime report - Daily Monitor](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Uganda | World Prison Brief \(prisonstudies.org\)](#)

to set out a comprehensive scheme for coordinating the growth and development of the Private Sector in Uganda to create employment opportunities and spur economic development<sup>6</sup>.

A study by Advance Afrika in Lira and Gulu showed that the general business environment has potential to support business development; particularly in production and trade of farm produce. Retail trade in groceries, household goods and clothes also performed well<sup>7</sup>. As such, Edukans and partners are joining forces to utilize these opportunities and bridge existing gaps in employment amongst inmates and ex-inmates including young women through the BOPLYN project.

### **1.1 Project background and context**

Bridging opportunities for effective and productive livelihoods of youth prison inmates and ex-inmates in northern Uganda (BOPLYN) is a three-year action implemented by Advance Afrika in partnership with Edukans and Uganda Prison Service with support from European Union. The action inspires a contribution towards economic development in northern Uganda by promoting the economic empowerment and participation of youth (18-35 years) prison inmates and ex-inmates in Amuru, Gulu and Kitgum districts. The project focuses on social economic rehabilitation and reintegration of youth prisoners in the 3 districts by partnering with business mentors and private sector actors whose capacity will be strengthened to respond to human rights issues and promote youth employment opportunities and agency.

The overall objective of the action is to strengthen youth engagement in social, economic and political opportunities to realize their full potential and meaningfully contribute to local economic development in northern Uganda by;

- i. Improving youth ex-inmate's business skills and access to economic opportunities
- ii. Improving youth ex-inmate's participation in political activities and access to justice
- iii. Proactively embracing the integration of youth ex-inmates into communities.

### **1.2 Purpose of the study**

For an effective and labor Market oriented skills development program, the BOBLYN project is conducting an in-depth labor Market study to among others; understand the bottlenecks to employment by young ex/inmates, conduct a skills audit from actual/ potential employers etc. The study will specifically achieve the following objectives;

### **1.3 Assignment objectives**

1. Giving a description of the structure and trends regarding the labor market in Gulu Amuru and Kitgum districts.
2. Making labor market projections, providing information on the future labor market and on WBL possibilities in particular;
3. Giving recommendations to build a network with the labor market actors interested in participating in a WBL program.

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<sup>6</sup> The National Strategy for Private Sector Development (NSPSD) FY 2017/18-2021/22

<sup>7</sup> Advance Afrika (2018) Assessment of the Small Business Environment in Northern Uganda: Opportunities, Prospects and Challenges

## **2.0 Methodology**

### **2.1 Research design**

The study employed a cross-sectional study design; with both qualitative and quantitative research methods employed. Interviews were conducted for both inmates, ex-inmates as well as businesses as potential employers. Interviews for inmates and ex-inmates were conducted by the Uganda Prisons Social workers working under the Advance Africa (AA) Program; while interviews for businesses were carried out by AA staff. Data was collected using mobile phones via the KoboCollect application. All interviewers were taken through a day's long training covering data collection ethics, reviewing the questionnaires, practicing the tools on phone, and getting the translations right.

### **2.2 Time period**

This report covers data collected in March and April 2021

### **2.3 Location of the study**

Data was collected from Gulu, Kitgum and Amuru districts.

### **2.4 Survey respondents and sampling**

On the labor supply side, the study respondents included inmates (66%) and ex-inmates (34%). On the labor demand side, 14 businesses were sampled and interviewed.

### **2.5 Data collection methods and Survey tools**

Data was collected on ODK using different approaches including one-on-one interviews at prisons, household for ex-inmates, Key Informant Interviews for businesses and observations. As such, this required employing the relevant tools including individual survey questionnaires, Key Informant interview questionnaire and focus Group Discussion guides respectively. The study also conducted secondary/ desktop review to put the study in context through review of different publications cited here-in.

### **2.6 Quality assurance and ethical considerations**

To ensure quality data was collected, research assistants were oriented on the tool and basic research ethics. All data was collected upon seeking respondent consent and child protection considerations were followed.

### **2.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Analyzing and interpreting data encompassed generating appropriate statistics; for quantitative data. SPSS and Microsoft Excel were utilized for data processing to generate graphs for illustration purposes. For qualitative data, content analysis has been used where possible, some respondents are quoted directly in the report.

Due to the nature of the study; targeting inmates and ex-inmates necessitated a smaller study sample for in-depth analysis. The study area (Gulu, Kitgum and Amuru) are both from the Acholi sub-region and secondary literature points at homogeneous population characteristics. Data analysis and subsequent presentation of findings is therefore not district specific. Where variation is noted, this is mentioned.

## 3.0 Study findings

### 3.1 Characterization of the labor market in Uganda

The labour market in Uganda is characterized by a fast-growing working-age population. According to 2016/17 Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS), Uganda's working age population stood at 19,104,000 of which 78.7 percent were working, up from 9.3 million in 2005 and 11.0 million in 2009. However, despite this growth, the key issue identified is under-employment and poor quality of working conditions. According to 2016/17 UNHS, 13 percent of the persons in employment were living in poor households a decline from 17 percent during 2012/13, a reflection of meagre earnings. Jobs are growing at a slower pace than the population, creating an unemployment deficit. This largely results from a high fertility rate of 5.91 per woman (2010–2015)<sup>8</sup>, which has seen the population grow to 42 million. Men and women were equally active, with the labour force participation rate at 77.9 per cent for men and 79.4 per cent for women.

In Uganda, the agricultural sector employs three out of four of the total employment while this sector contributes with 27% of the GDP. This explains, to some extent, why the labour productivity has been relatively low and the growth has been flat during the last five years. Other sectors employing Ugandans include industry/ mining, education, among others. The National Development Plan II lays out objectives part of which is to create sectoral linkages to maximize out-put through integration.

The labor Market in Northern Uganda was destabilized by civil strife two decades ago; with low investment by private sector due to the insecurity and internal displacement. Although recovery is under way in northern Uganda, it has been a slow and uneven process. The primary effort to consolidate stability and improve the economy in the region has been the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP), which was launched in 2007 and provides the overarching framework for addressing the region's post-war needs. A report by Mallett conducted in Northern Uganda points at limited institutional support, and an almost complete absence of decent work opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

The labor market in Northern Uganda is further characterized by substantial cross-border trade with South Sudan, a rising presence of Indian and Chinese enterprise in the local economy, and the prospect of big agribusiness and natural resource extraction opportunities – is mostly concentrated in the hands of a few (Okiror, 2016; UNDP, 2015).<sup>10</sup> Indeed, a recent SLRC survey of Acholi and Lango sub-regions suggests there have been very few significant improvements in the living conditions of many people in northern Ugandan (Mazurana et al., 2014), and years on from war's end, the local economy still lags.

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<sup>8</sup> UN Population Division / DESA: <https://population.un.org/wpp/DataQuery/>.

<sup>9</sup> Rich Mallett, Teddy Atim and Jimmy Opio (2017) 'Bad work' and the challenges of creating decent work for youth in northern Uganda. Briefing paper 27, March 2017

<sup>10</sup> Okiror, S. (2016) 'How the LRA still haunts northern Uganda'. *IRIN*. Accessed April 15 2021: <https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2016/02/17/how-lrastill-haunts-northern-uganda>

### 3.1.1 Bottlenecks and opportunities for growth in the labor market

Gender gaps in youth labour force participation persist in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), between 1997 and 2017, the gender gap in youth labour force participation reduced from 6.7 to 5.3 percentage points (ILO, 2017).<sup>11</sup> However, females in Uganda continue to face significant challenges in pursuing decent paying and productive jobs in comparison to their male counterparts.

Labor force participation has significantly dropped, especially for the youth. The decline in labor force participation follows the slowdown in trend growth since 2011. Employment has not kept up with population growth, particularly for the youth. While labor force participation has shown some recovery starting in 2016, the youth participation rate has remained flat. The 2016/17 Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) revealed that female labour force participation for 15- 24 year olds was 70 percent compared to 74 percent for males.<sup>12</sup> Young women are much less likely to be working in paid employment and have a higher unemployment rate (of 11.5 percent) compared to 7.3 percent for young men.<sup>13</sup>

Uganda has one of the fastest growing and youngest population in the world. Uganda's population reached 38.8 million in 2018, growing at a rate of around 3 percent, making Uganda one of the top ten countries in the world in terms of population growth. Its population is expected to almost triple by 2050 according to the UN projections. According to World Bank (2018), Uganda will need to create more than 600,000 jobs per year before 2030 and create more than 1 million jobs per year by 2040 to keep up with the pace of labor force entrants.

Opportunities for youth employment are varied, but lie majorly at different nodes of the agricultural value chains. Youth are not particularly interested in the production of agricultural produce due to negative perception (Agriculture is viewed as a dirty job for those that have failed in life), but can participate higher up the value chain in processing, marketing, provision of extension services, inputs service provision among others. In the long term, government education programs should open up more opportunities for youth in other sectors such as ICT, energy among others.

Whereas district specific data is unavailable on growth rates of the different sub-sectors (transating into employment opportunities), the Uganda National Beureau of Statistics shows that the economy grew at a slow rate of 2.9% in 2020 mainly due to the impact of CoVid-19. The table below summarizes the growth trends and the relative share of the GDP per sector.

	Growth rate	% Share of GDP
GDP	2.9	
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & FISHING	4.8	24.8

<sup>11</sup> International Labour Organization (2017) *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017: Paths to a better working future*. (Geneva: International Labour Organization)

<sup>12</sup> Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017). *Uganda National Household Survey 2016/17: Socio-Economic Report* (Kampala: Uganda Bureau of Statistics).

<sup>13</sup> Sarah Ssewanyana, Gemma Ahaibwe and Ibrahim Kasirye (2018) Drivers for early labour market transitions of young women in uganda: evidence from the 2015 school to work transition survey



cash crops	7.2	2.6
food crops	4.5	13
livestock	7.9	3.5
forestry	3.3	3.7
fishing	1.9	2
INDUSTRY	2.2	28.6
mining and quarrying	0.2	2
Manufacturing	1.3	16.2
construction	3.8	6.6
SERVICES	2.9	46.6
Trade & repairs	-0.4	9.3
transportation and storage	-1.3	3.4
accommodation & food services	-8.5	2.8
information & communication	21.9	2.1
financial & insurance	9.8	3
Real estate activities	5.1	7.1
public administration	16.2	3
education	-4	4.4
health & social work	2.4	3.5

## 3.2 Labour Supply

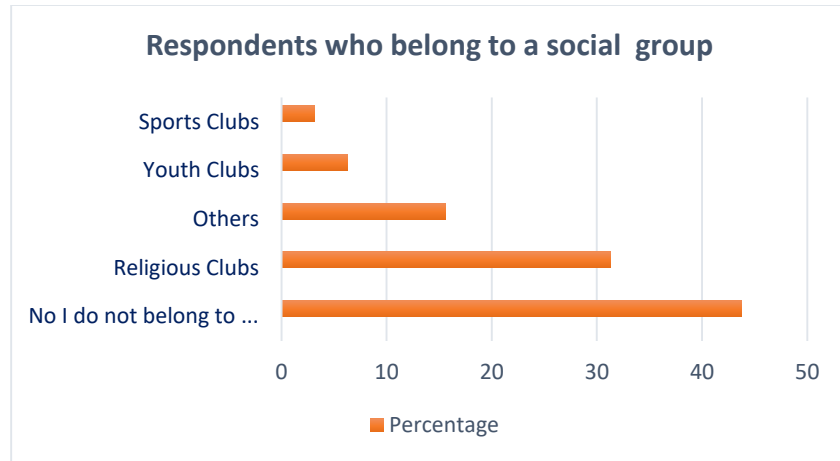
### 3.2.1 Characterization of study respondents

The study sampled potential employees, 16 females and 16 males drawn from the three districts of Kitgum, Gulu and Amuru. Of these, 21 (65.6%) were active inmates while 11 (34.4%) were ex-inmates represented by 30 (93.8%) Ugandans and 6.3% Sudanese. Of the respondents interviewed, 19(59.4%) are household heads while 40% are not.

Worth noting, the respondents interviewed had an average of six dependents in their households. High dependency combined with very high workforce growth mean that to reach the same per capita income growth as countries with lower dependency, Uganda must increase average labor productivity faster, in addition to creating more jobs for new workers. With most workers in agriculture, raising agricultural productivity must be the cornerstone of a strategy for jobs and economic transformation. This must be coupled with faster movement of young workers from agriculture employment into higher productivity industry and service jobs.

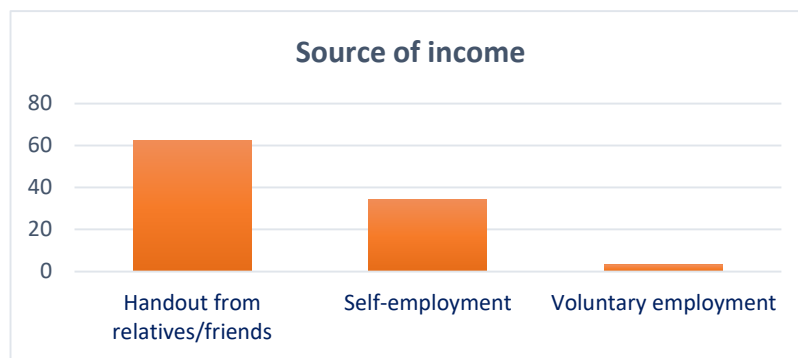
### 3.2.2 Social belonging and communication with peers

Most of the respondents (43.75%) do not belong to any social clubs, 31.3% belong to religious clubs, 15.6% belong to other social associations such as VSLA's while 9.3% belong to youth and sports clubs. The low subscription to social clubs results from the disconnection that comes with incarceration. Ideally, these connections or networks are important for job referrals and other psycho-social support for re-integration into the community.



### 3.2.3 Respondent income sources

Most (89.4%) of the respondents interviewed earned less than Ugx 200,000 per month. The respondents mainly received income through handouts from relatives/ friends (62.5%), self-employment (34.4%) while 3% get from voluntary employment.



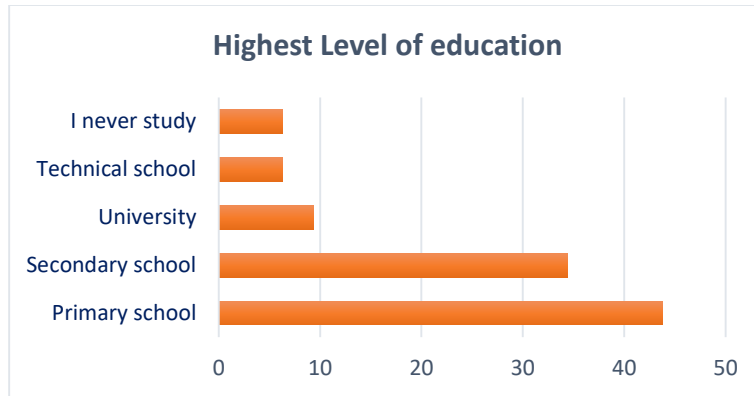
Majority of the respondents (94.8%) have 4- 6 persons and more depending on the income of the respondent.

### 3.2.4 Education and skilling level of respondents

According to the Uganda national Employment policy (2011)<sup>14</sup>, 30 percent of the persons in the work force have attained at least secondary school in 2016/17. Despite recent improvements in primary and secondary enrolment rates (8.7 million and about 1.5 million respectively) the quality of the labour force in terms of employability and productivity has not improved.

This study found that majority (43.8%) of the respondents in the three districts have attained primary education followed by (34.4%) who attained secondary education. Of the respondents interviewed, 9.4% attained university education. 6.3% have attended technical school and the same proportion did not study at all.

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development (2011): Uganda Employment Policy



Of the respondents interviewed, 59.4% had ever received a vocational training/ skills training. However, of these, only 46.9% completed the training. A further analysis of the later shows that only 21% got a job after this training including tailoring, crafts making, hair dressing and driving among others. 5 out of 7 respondents got to know about the job through friends, while others got to learn about the opportunities through church announcements and the media.

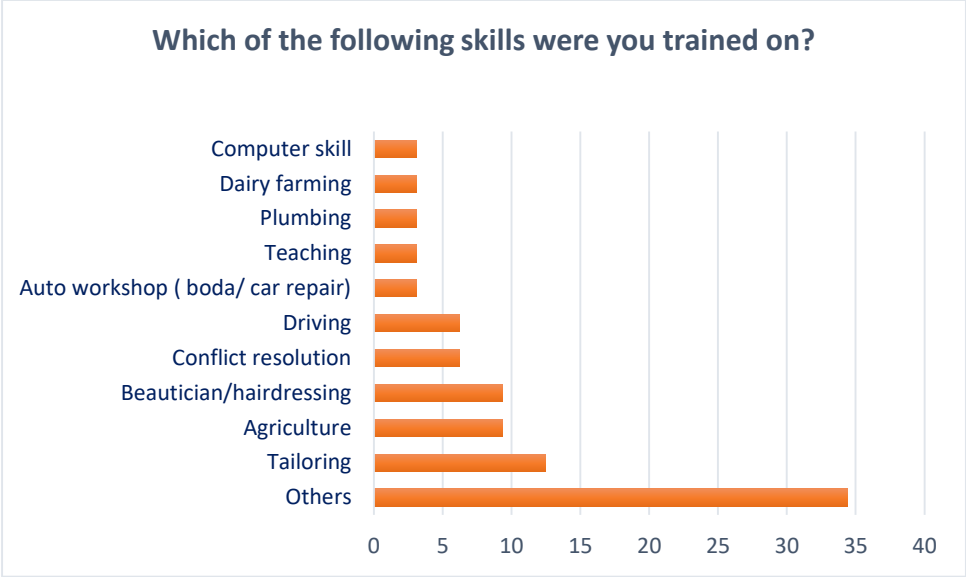
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***They came to church and announced, so I registered and I was taken to train some people. Said a Youth, Gulu***

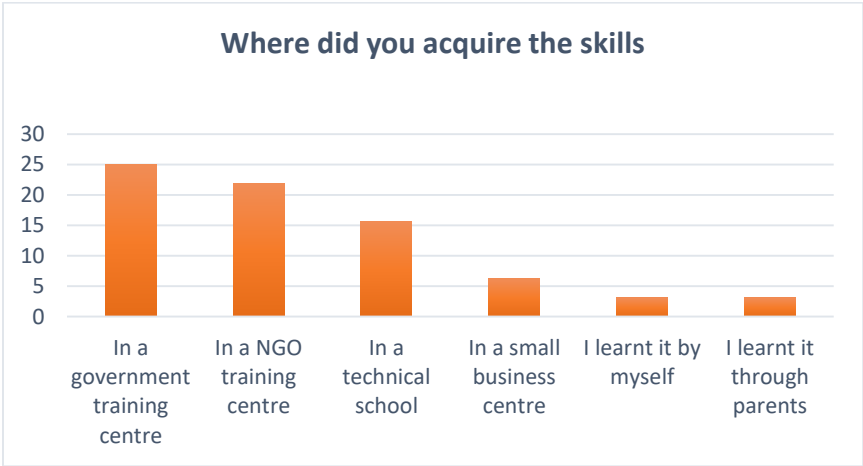
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The respondents who did not complete training cited financial challenges, sickness and imprisonment as the major reasons. Those who did not get a job mentioned high competition, had only just finished training recently while others are more interested in self-employment and others still in prison.

13.3% of the respondents were trained in tailoring, 10% in agriculture, 10% in hair dressing, 6.6% in conflict resolution, 6.6% in driving, 3.3% in repair of auto mobiles, 3.3% in teaching, 3.3% plumbing, and 2% in dairy farming and computer skills.



Other skills trained on include entrepreneurship skills, business and entrepreneurship skills, poultry keeping, baking and catering. Of the skills trained, 33% were obtained from a government training center, 29.2% from an NGO supported training center, 20.8% from a technical school, 8.3% from a small business center, while 4.2% were self-taught and through parents respectively.

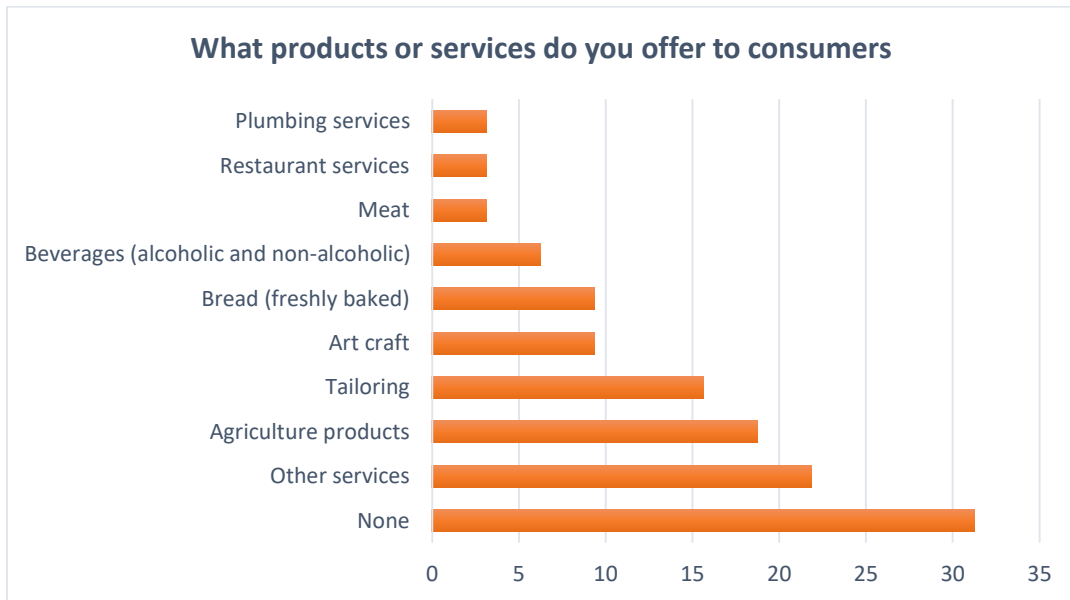


Majority (54%) of the respondents took 0-3 months to learn the skills they were trained on. 25% took 8-12 months, 16.7% took 4-7 months.



### 3.2.5 Products and services offered by respondents

Majority (31.2%) of the respondents do not offer any services or products indicating that they are primarily consumers. 18.8% offer agricultural products, tailoring (15.6%), crafts (9.4%), confectionery (9.4%), beverages (6.3%) and the rest butchery, restaurants and plumbing services.



### 3.3 The Demand for labor in Uganda

The government has promoted private sector led-growth through its privatization policy. As such, the public sector has ceased to be the major employer demonstrated by The national labor policy (2011) Recorded private sector employment has been concentrated in agriculture and fishing (69.4%), manufacturing (5.6%), trade (8.9%), hotels and restaurants (2.0%), transport and communication (2.3%), construction (2.0%) as well as education (3.0%). Other sectors where recorded employment opportunities exist include mining and quarrying, utilities, posts and telecommunications, financial intermediation, insurance, business services, health and social works as well as community and personal services. These sectors provide employment to approximately 9.8% of the working population.

According to the man-power survey-2016/2017, Trade (32%), Hotels, Restaurants and other eating places (26%), and Manufacturing (20%) were the most common business activities in the Informal Sector accounting for 78% of all the activities. Females in the Informal Sector were more likely to engage in Hotel, Restaurant and eating place activities (40%) while their male counterparts predominately engaged in Manufacturing (32%) and Trade (33%) activities 65 percent of Informal Sector businesses used their own savings as the main source of startup capital followed by those who got contributions from others (19%) and those that took loans from friends, relatives and SACCOs (7%)

In a related study by Magoda *et al.* businesses operated in different districts in Uganda, including Gulu were mapped to understand their ownership and nature. Of the 911 businesses surveyed, 463 (51%) were owned by men while 448 (49%) of them were owned by women entrepreneurs. Women-owned businesses are highly involved in selling essential products (retail shops) and operating eating kiosks. Out of the 146 enterprises operating retail shops, 59% of them are operated by women compared to 41% that are operated by men. A similar pattern emerges from the analysis of eating kiosks. Of the 79 enterprises operating eating kiosks, 72% of them are operated by women while 28% are run by men. The study found that the majority of businesses (16%) were selling essential products (retail shops) followed by those operating eating kiosks representing (8.8%). The informal sector has been shown to be heterogeneous, that is, the sector participants are engaged in a variety of activities, ranging from street vending and hawking, to retail trading, implying that the heterogeneity of the informal sector shapes its dynamics and evolution. Given the diverse nature of activities in the informal sector, we can suggest that this sector may be important in providing gainful employment and incomes to the most vulnerable segments of the population as can be seen by the number of women engaged in retail business and eating kiosks.<sup>15</sup> It is worth to mention that ownership of businesses in Uganda is dominated by very small enterprises.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Salmon Mugoda , Stephen Esaku , Rose Kibuka Nakimu & Edward Bbaale | (2020) The portrait of Uganda's informal sector: What main obstacles do the sector face?, Cogent Economics & Finance, 8:1, 1843255, DOI: 10.1080/23322039.2020.1843255

<sup>16</sup> Danish Trade Council for International Development and Cooperation Labour Market Profile 2016

### 3.3.1 The demand for Labour in Gulu, Amuru and Kitgum

To understand the dynamics of labor demand, 14 businesses were interviewed. The demand for labor is mainly private sector driven in the three districts. These are largely Small and Medium Enterprises, 79% of which are sole proprietorships while 21% are private owned. These businesses mainly offered the following services; Capacity building in different skillsets such as carpentry, building construction. In addition, other businesses offered hair dressing, Landscaping services and garden planning, instrument repair and maintenance, printing, metal fabrication, tailoring, music/ entertainment. The products sold by the businesses include; potted plants, spices, braids, weaves, hair ointments, shoes, clothes (and sewing cloth material), bags, belts, wallets, doors, windows, beds etc. Others sell dolls, beddings, water tanks, liquid soap, crafts, spare parts, jewellery among others. The average number of employees is 5, of whom 2 are female. Also, on average, there are 2 male youth (18-35) employed while the female are 2.29

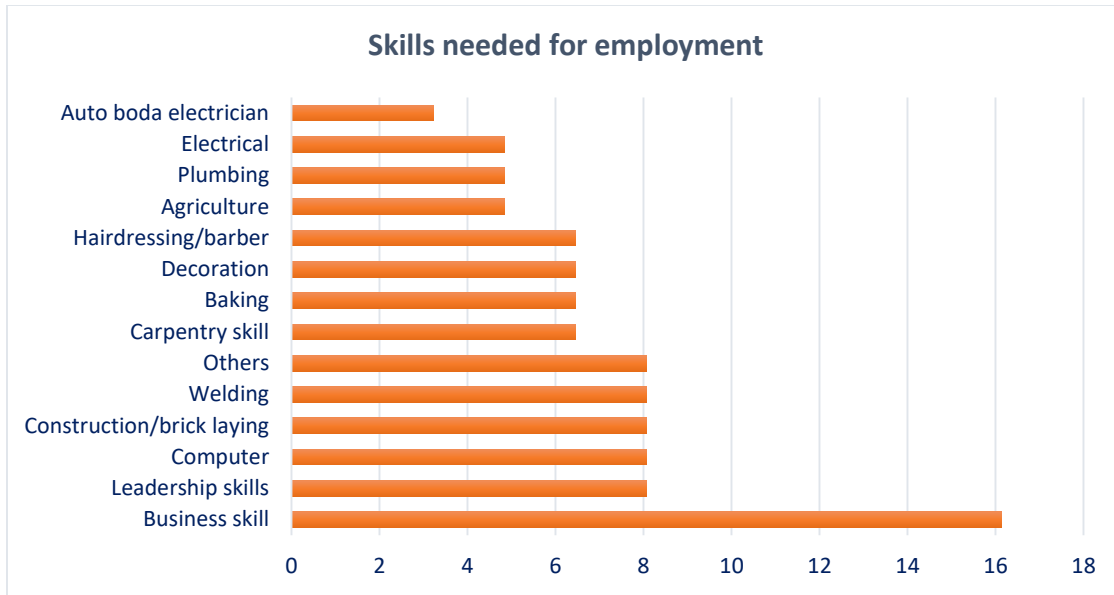
### 3.3.2 Employer perspectives on current employee skills levels

The study found that every 4 out of 5 employees are considered skilled by the business owners while the rest are semi-skilled. However, it is important to note that this was subjective and some of the employees were visibly lacking in customer management skills.

Level of skill	Mean
Skilled	3.57
Semi-skilled	1.21

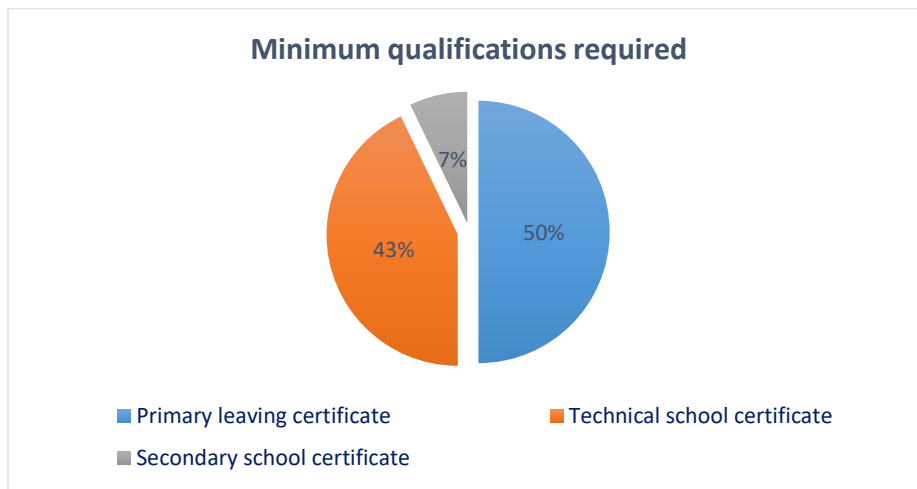
### 3.3.3 Skills needed for employment

Most (16.1%) respondents mentioned business skills, 8% of the respondents mentioned welding, leadership, construction/ brick-laying and computer skills. 6.5% mentioned carpentry, baking, decoration and hair dressing. Other skills needed for employment are plumbing, farming, electrical services.



### 3.3.4 Minimum qualifications for employment

Most of the employees (50%) required primary leaving certificate (PLE) while others required a technical school certificate (42.9%) and only 7% required a secondary school certificate.

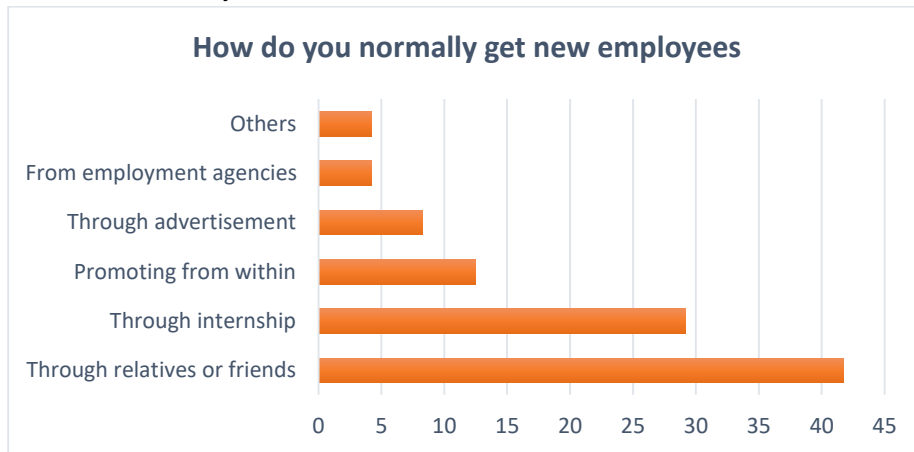


On probing about the qualifications, out of every 5 employees, 3 have completed a vocational training to obtain skills.

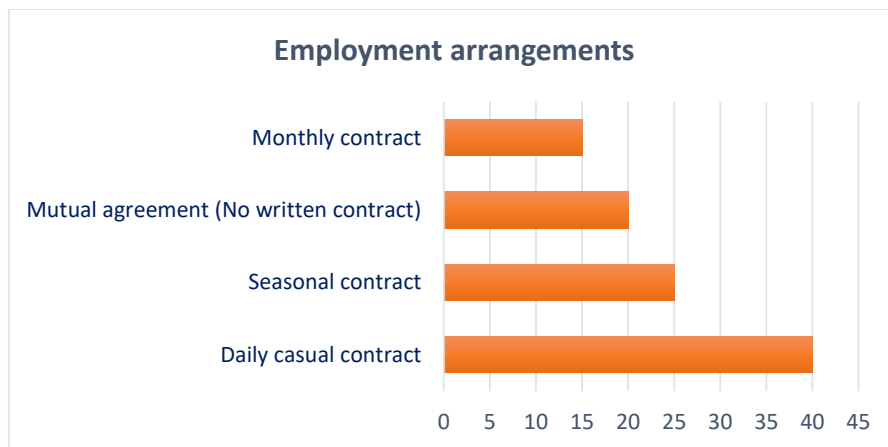


### 3.3.5 Employment Arrangements between employers and employees

Most of the businesses (41.7%) obtain new employees through referrals from relatives and friends (either to help-out or to employ a trusted friend). A further 29.2% employ new people from internships, 12.5% through internal promotions, 8.3% through advertisements while 4.2% through other means such as walk-in job seekers.



A contract may be defined as an agreement giving rise to legally enforceable obligations binding the parties to it. It is a legal requirement in Uganda for the employer to provide an employment contract for each employee. This should clearly state the terms and conditions of employment such as duration of employment, place of work, hours of work, wages, termination, etc.<sup>17</sup> However, like other policies, this is seldom implemented in Uganda's employment space. The survey established that most employees (40%) offered a daily casual contract, seasonal contract (25%), mutual agreement (non-written), monthly contract (15%)



<sup>17</sup> Contracts Act 2010

### **3.3.6 Wages and quality of work**

According to the Uganda National labor force survey report 2017/2018, the median cash monthly earnings of persons in paid employment was 190,000/= (one hundred ninety thousand shillings only). The median cash monthly earnings for males was 240,000/= and that of females was 120,000/=. Urban residents were earning twice as much as the cash earnings of rural residents. Specifically for the northern region (where study area falls), monthly paid employment was Ugx 240,000 while in-kind employment was Ugx 60,000. The report further shows that those in formal employment are paid more than in informal employment. Other work benefits such as annual leave, maternity leave etc are mainly a preserve for the formal sector. The limited employment opportunities implies that few employers are willing to invest in proper working conditions. This is also a poorly regulated area despite the existing labor laws including the workers Compensation Act 2000, the Minimum Wages Act 2000, the Employment Act 2006, the Labor Union Arbitration and Settlement Act 2006 and the Occupational Safety Act 2006. Some, like the Minimum Wages Act 2000, though entrenched in law are hardly enforced.

### **3.3.7 Sectors that have potential for growth in the three districts**

The sectors mentioned include, backyard gardening, art, crafts and shoe making, produce trade, manufacturing/ industry, transportation, (of goods and people), carpentry, restaurant business, hotels, bars and events management, agricultural production and tourism. Those that have potential include poultry, vegetable growing

### **3.3.8 Interventions for employing young people, start-ups**

The research discovered that young people are largely interested in taking on employments with private sector – as well as create their own jobs through startups. For these to be successful, key interventions should be put into place by the development partners. These include provision of startup capital, capacity building in life skills, financial literacy, setting up institutions e.g. farmer groups and supporting them with grants, providing linkages such as those with relevant youth government programs.

### **3.3.9 Barriers to finding employment, starting business and constraints to growth**

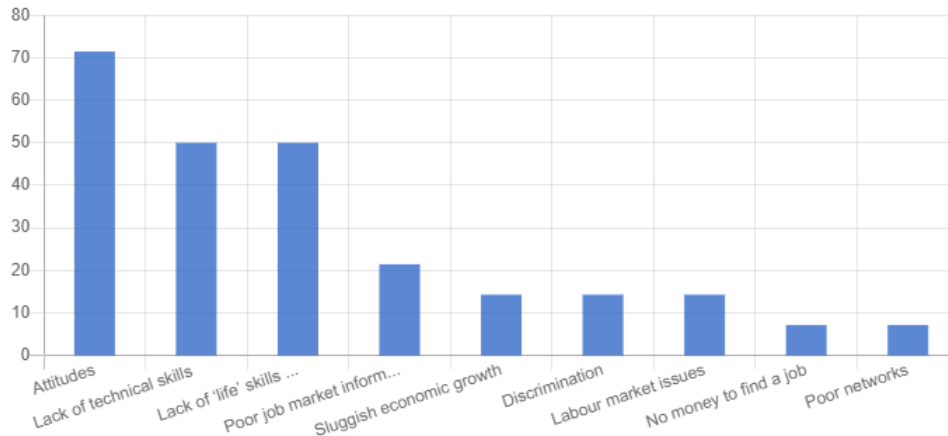
The biggest barrier to finding employment is poor attitude by young people towards work. This was reported in 28.6% of the responses. It is difficult for young people to keep focused to long term business goals. This can be attributed to a lack of entrepreneurial skills and mentorship.

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*Most youths have the tendency to work for quick money and do not want to engage actively in challenging economic activities where the return takes time. Employer, Kitgum.*

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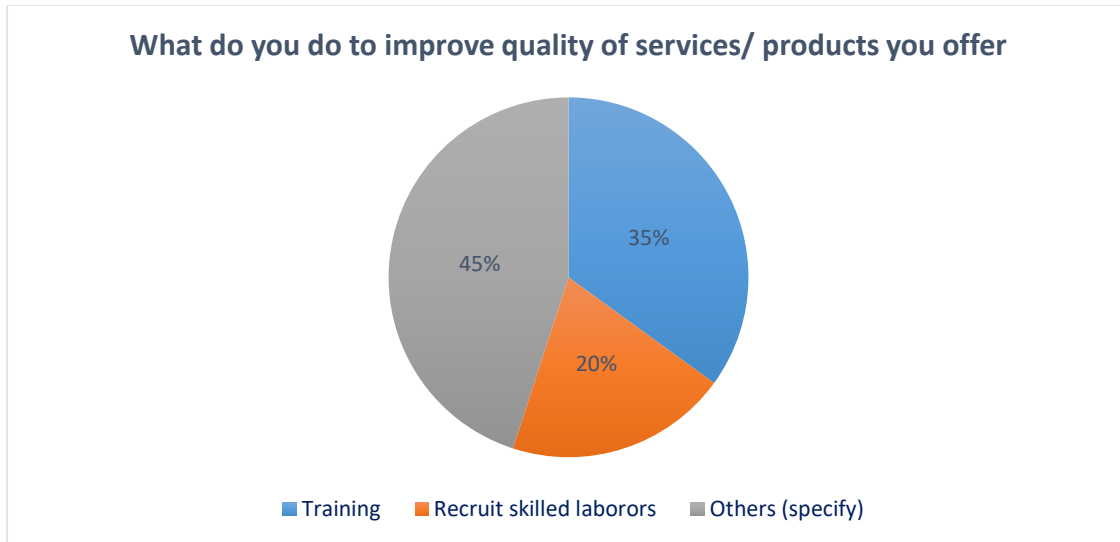
Additionally, 20% of the responses pointed towards lack of technical skills, 20% indicated lack of life skills (employability/ work readiness), 8.6% poor job market information, 5.7% sluggish economic growth, discrimination, labour market issues. 2.9% said lack of money to find a job and poor networks.



The barriers to starting a business (self) employment were not significantly different from those to finding employment. For example, poor attitude by young people is again cited in 19.5% of the responses. However, the biggest challenge identified is limited access to finance (24.4%), lack of life skills (14.6%), lack of technical skills (9.8%), poor market information (7.3%), difficulties in getting licenses and permits (4.9%), social discrimination and land issues among others.

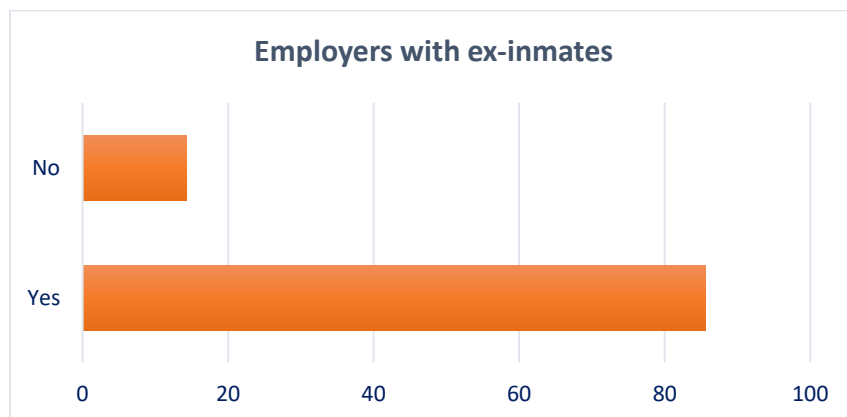
### 3.3.10 How businesses ensure quality of products and services

Businesses owners were interviewed to understand what they do to improve on the quality of products or services offered to consumers. 35% train their staff while 20% focus on recruiting skilled laborers. The vast majority (45%) however, gave varied actions they take to improve quality. These include; conducting surveys understand what competition is offering for improvement, promoting creativity, investing in machinery, quality assurance and consistency, upholding customer care values among others.



**3.3.9 Employers with Ex-inmates in their businesses**

Employers with ex-inmates were 14.3% and these employ 2-3 of them. 12 (85.7%) of the employers were willing to provide an opportunity to ex-inmates through on-job training supported by the project.



However, this opportunity comes with conditions which are outlined below;

**3.3.11 Pre-conditions for employing an ex-inmate**

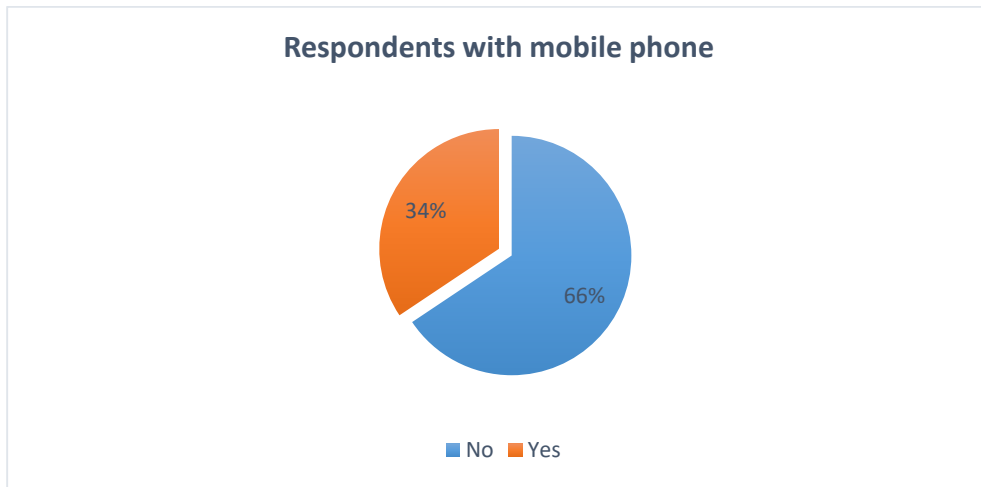
The private sector respondents who indicated that they are happy to employ ex-inmates - outlined the below conditions they would consider before employing them.

- Businesses emphasized discipline of the ex-inmates
- Commitment
- Requisite education level of the ex-inmate
- Should be a reformed person
- Reference from a family member
- Must complete orientation and ready for mentorship
- The trainee must contribute 20% of the capital for ownership

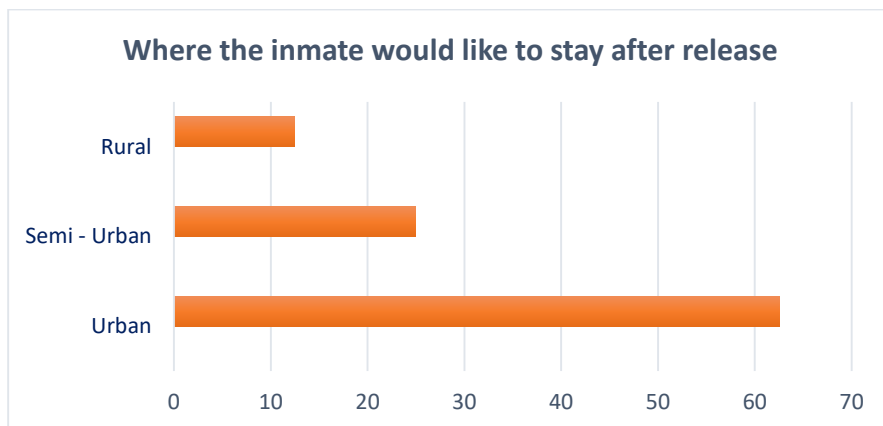
- Must be obedient and patient (No drug addicts)
- Must be honest
- Must have proper identification such as a National ID

### 3.3.12 Linking Ex-inmates to employment opportunities

For inmates and ex-inmates to be linked to employment opportunities, two fundamental questions were asked including their means of communication and where they would like to re-locate after prison. 34% of the respondents have mobile phones and other means of communication. However, it will be challenging to mobilize or reach out to the other 66% who do not have reliable communication means.



In terms of life after release, majority of the inmates prefers staying in urban or semi urban areas, with a few of them wanting to return to villages. Urban or semi-urban areas are considered to have a number of employment opportunities and inmates think they can easily earn a living when within these areas. This points to the fact that inmates would benefit from interventions linked to urban and semi-urban labor markets (businesses in urban settings)



### 3.4 Work Based Learning opportunities

Work-based learning (WBL) is part of the EDU-works approach and one of Edukans' strategies to improve the match between the labour market and the skills that young people require to get (self)employed. They acquire relevant skills that reflect labour market demand and are introduced to a business culture, which helps them to find a job more easily.<sup>18</sup>

Some employers (see annex 1) expressed interest to work with the project to improve on the employability of ex-inmates, youth and women on the program. This includes the creation of a job center for youth where all 14 respondents showed optimism in its ability to open opportunities. They are willing to take some interns/ apprenticeships from TVETs. Particularly, the potential employers perceived it as a one-stop center with free/ subsidized internet access, career guidance and networking. It would also be a space for advertising agencies, opportunity sharing and capacity building.

Employers also suggested interventions such as extending soft loans to young people (by other players), training them in soft skills, financial literacy and broader mentorship programs, provision of equipment/ start-up packs, investing in mindset change as well as linkage to other government programs geared towards employment such as the Youth Livelihood Program.

The openings available from the employers include internship and apprenticeships where students can support in potting of plants, accountants, fashion designers, painters, cleaners, marketeers, hair dressers, mechanical work among others.

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<sup>18</sup> Edukans (2018) Work Based Learning. A guide to implementation

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

The labor market assessment was conducted in 3 districts of Amuru, Gulu and Kitgum districts to understand the dynamics of the labor market from the supply and demand side; to leverage on opportunities available for inmates and ex-inmates including youth and women. The study found that indeed there are huge gaps in the skills required in the labor market and what the target beneficiaries' possess. The situation is made worse by the rapid population growth which is not matched by creation of job opportunities. Whereas the government and its development partners have put in place infrastructure and promoted industrialization, special intervention is needed to target young people and ex-inmates. This will not only enable their involvement and subsequent contribution to a vibrant economy, but will also ensure young people stay away from crime and ex-inmates from re-incarceration and sustainable re-integration into society.

## 5.0 Recommendations

- The study recommends capacity building of primary beneficiaries in entrepreneurship, soft skills (customer care, communication) and other identified technical skills based on the demands of the labor market.
- The project and its partners could consider providing start-up kits for youth/ ex-inmates as part of the infrastructure to drive them to self-employment. They could also be linked to service providers of such equipment through tripartite agreements; with the project as a guarantor for machinery financing. The project should also provide linkages to the youth/ ex-inmates and women to relevant government programs such as Agriculture Cluster Development Program, Youth Livelihood Program among others.
- The study finds respondents buying-in happy to create favorable conditions to establish a Work Based Learning Program. It is recommended that training should be provided to enterprises willing to offer apprenticeship or internship for Work Based Learning on the concept and how it works.
- With majority of inmates wishing to stay in urban areas (63%) and semi urban (25%), it is recommended that any interventions for this group should be linked to urban market settings. Inmates should be provided with practical skills to survive in urban and semi-urban areas but, would also benefit from mindset change so they can explore opportunities in rural settings.
- The project should carry out a Mapping exercise to identify institutions that provide services such as financial services, government support programs, vocational institutions and CBOs/CSOs and link the youths to benefit from these programs. For example, BRAC in Awach can provide financial services to ex-inmates.
- Advance Afrika should ensure it assess the placements needs of the (ex) inmates trained under the action to enable a match in skills to the placement objectives
- Advance Afrika together with UPS must develop criteria for measuring the pre-conditions set for employing (ex) inmates especially the national identification component or provide additional official supporting documents for their time during the placements.
- The (ex) inmates integrated into the placements should further be involved in the mentorship clinics and coaching sessions under the project and be encouraged to form a group to continue learning and develop social capital.



## Annexes

### Annex 1 List of companies willing to take on WBL Program

SN	Business Name	Location	Product offered
1	Greenleaf pots and plants	Koro abili trading center, gulu	Flowers, potted plants and spices
2	Mama Bahita Beauty Saloon	Pece Pawel	Braids, weaves, oil, chemical(relucxers)
3	Biscov holdings ltd	Amuru Sub County, Pagak Parish, Labongo Village	Shoes, bags, belts, wallets
4	Lapyong weldings	Airfield approach road plot 2, p.o box 1503	Doors, windows, containers, beds etc metal fabrics
5	God given tailoring training center	Abili, gulu	Bags, clothes, dolls, pillows, masks etc
6	Hopers tailoring and beauty saloon	Amuru District, Atiak Town Council, Kal Parish, Pagimoro Village	Clothes
7	Mama Don	Sor Samuel Baker Road, Layibi Division, Gulu City	Materials (kitinge, zips, lastic)
8	Jarop Metal and Fabrication	Gulu	Window frames and doors, Water tank stand, Bed
9	OMA Foundation	Commercial Road, Next to Pece Stadium , Gulu district	liquid soap making, Crafts
10	Try Me Wood Workshop	Golden Gate Hotel, Lumumba Avenue, Opposite Pece Stadium Gulu district	Carpentry products - Chairs, tables, beds, Wardrobes etc
11	Northern Star Live Band	Ringroad western side	Music
12	Happy time motor garage	Sir Samuel Baker road	Mechanics
13	Min Olara Beads	Artisan centre Eden road	Paper beads, jewelry
14	Friendship photography	Artisan centre Eden road	Photography and videography



**Selected training photos**

In both images, researchers are practicing the survey on phone. In the first image – AA staff is conducting a mock interview with the Uganda Prisons Social Worker.



**BOPLYN PROJECT- NORTHERN UGANDA**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LABOUR MARKET SURVEY IN GULU**

**Section A. Employer's assessment questionnaire**

Detail of the enumerator:

<b>Questionnaire number:</b>	
<b>Name of enumerator:</b>	
<b>ID Number:</b>	
<b>Area:</b>	
<b>Telephone:</b>	
<b>Date of collection:</b>	
<b>Date of submission:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	

Name of the enterprise/company:

Ownership by type:

Public	private	Sole proprietorship	Partially private	others
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Location:

What products/services does your company offer?

Products	Services

1. How many employees do you have?

Males:	Females: PWD??
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2. How many males and females employees are 18-35 years of age?

Males:	Females:
--------	----------

3. How many of your employees are.....?

Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled
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4. What is the minimum qualification you considered for skilled labour during the recruitment process?

Primary leaving certificate	Secondary school certificate	Technical school certificate	diploma	Degree
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5. How many of your employees have completed vocational training?

6. How do you normally get a new employee?

Through advertisement		Promoting from within	
Through relatives or friends		Through internship	
From employment agencies		others	

7. What kind of employment arrangement does your business offer to young people?

Daily casual contract	
Monthly contract	
Seasonal contract	
Annual contract	

8. What is the top constraint restraining business in Gulu, Amuru and Kitgum (please mark the following from 1 -no constraint- to 10 –biggest constraint-?)

- a. Access to finance
- b. Political risk (expropriation, terrorism, war, transfer and convertibility restrictions, breach of contract, regulatory changes, civil disturbance)
- c. Availability of electricity and water
- d. Transport (roads, airports)
- e. Taxation
- f. Registration of business
- g. Land registration
- h. Dispute resolution
- i. Market Access

9. What sectors do you believe are thriving and which sectors have the highest potential for growth in Gulu, Amuru and Kitgum?

- a. Thriving

.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

b. Potential

.....  
.....  
.....

10. What interventions do you think would help businesses like yours employ more young people?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. What interventions do you think would help more young people to start-up businesses?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. How would you feel about participating in discussions to set the agenda for increasing employment in Gulu? What would prevent you?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Is your company/institution willing to take on some interns/ apprenticeships from TVETs? What openings?If no probe for reason..

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

13. What are the main barriers to young people finding employment in Gulu, Amuru and Kitgum?

- a. Attitudes
- b. Lack of technical skills
- c. Lack of 'life' skills (employability/work readiness skills)

- d. Sluggish economic growth
- e. Over-supply of labour
- f. Poor job market information
- g. Poor networks
- h. Discrimination
- i. Labour market issues
- j. No money to find a job

14. What do you think are the main barriers to young people starting up businesses in Gulu or/Uganda?

- a. Attitudes
- b. Lack of technical skills
- c. Lack of 'life' skills
- d. Monopolistic tendencies in the market
- e. Political interference
- f. Difficulties in getting licenses and permits etc
- g. Taxation
- h. Land issues
- i. Limited access to market
- j. Sluggish economic growth
- k. Transport, energy and water infrastructure
- l. Poor market information
- m. Poor networks
- n. Social discrimination
- o. Limited access to finance

15. Are your costumers happy with the services/products you offered to them?

Yes	No	I don't know
-----	----	--------------

16. If no, what are they saying you lack of? ( ticket one option only)

Business skills	
Language communication skills (friendliness)	
Language barrier	
The service offered are of low quality	
Lack of numeracy skill that would produce argument over the bills/dues	
Lack of negotiation skills	
Lack of management skills	
Others (specify)	

17. What do you do to improve the quality of the products/services you are offering?

My workers need some training:	
I will recruit skilled labourers	
I don't know what to do?	
Others specify	

18. Do you think you can compete with businesses after you have trained your workers or recruited skilled labourers?

Yes	No	I don't know
-----	----	--------------

19. If yes, which of the following skills do you think will help people to start a business or become employed?

Leadership skills		Electrical	
Computer		Hairdressing/barber	
Plumbing		Welding	
Baking		Decoration	
Business skill		Agriculture	
Carpentry skill		Auto boda electrician	
Construction/brick laying		Others	

20. Is the turnover among the youth (age 18-35) for adverts been a problem?

Yes	No	Not sure
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21. If yes, what do you think is the reason for the turnover among the youth?

I don't an idea	
Youth complaint about salary and benefits	
Youth had unrealistic expectation about work	
Personal problem (family, illness and school, laziness etc.)	
Under qualified	
Lack of soft skills	
Others, please explain	

22. Do you think setting up a job center for youth could increase chances for unemployed person to get a job easily?

Yes	No
-----	----

23. If yes, how would it be implemented?

--	--




24. Among your employees, do you have ex-inmates?

Yes	No
-----	----

25. If yes, how many ex-inmates have you employed?

At least 2	3 of them	others
------------	-----------	--------

26. If no, would you be willing to give them an opportunity to work through a on-the-job training supported by the project? Yes/No

27. What would be the preconditions to have an ex-inmate do a industrial attachment at your company?


28. Are ex inmates considered as customers in your business?

Yes	No	I don't think

**SECTION B. EMPLOYEE'S QUESTIONNAIRE**

I. General information about the employee

1. Location.....

2. Gender:

Male	Female
------	--------

3. Where do you live? **Where are you going to live once you are released?**

Rural	Urban	Urban & rural
-------	-------	---------------

4. Do you own a mobile phone or any other communication means?

Yes	No
-----	----

5. If no, how are you communicating with your peers and friends?


6. Do you belong to any of the social clubs or associations?

Yes	No
-----	----

7. If yes, which one?

Youth clubs	Religious clubs	Sport clubs	Others
-------------	-----------------	-------------	--------

8. What is the minimum level of education have attained?

Primary school	Secondary school	University	Technical school	I never study
----------------	------------------	------------	------------------	---------------

9. What is your nationality?

Nationalities	Ticket
a. Ugandan	
b. Sudanese	
c. Nationalities of East Africa	
d. Ethiopia	
e. Eritrea	
f. Others	

10. Are you the head of your household?

Yes	No	I don't know	Not applicable
-----	----	--------------	----------------

11. If yes, how many people depend on your income? (Spouse, children, other family members, etc.)

3 people	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons +
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12. How are under five, 18 -22 years, 23-27 years, 28-32 years and 50 years +?

Under five	18-22 years	23-27 years	28-32 years	50 years+

13. How much income **do you earn per month** on average?

SSP0-100	SSP 101-300	SSP 301-700	SSP 701-2,000	SSP 2,001+
----------	-------------	-------------	---------------	------------

14. What is the main source of your income?

Self-employment	Salary/wages employment	Handout from relatives/friends	Voluntary employment
-----------------	-------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------

15. Have you ever received any vocational and/or skills training?

Yes	No	I don't remember
-----	----	------------------

16. Did you complete the training?

Yes	No
-----	----

17. If no, why didn't you complete the training?

Reasons	Reasons

18. If yes, did you get a job right after the completion of the training?

Yes	No
-----	----

19. If yes, what kind of job did you get and which employment agency?

Nature of job	Employment agency

20. If yes, how did you get to know about the job?

Through radio/newspaper/TV	Through friends	Through website	Others
----------------------------	-----------------	-----------------	--------

21. If no, what is the reason for not getting a job?

The skills I acquired is not relevant		I have just finished training recently	
I have no access to jobs information		Am not lucky	
There is high completion in the labour market		Others (specify here blow)	
The wage rate is too low			
Jobs here are through connection			

22. Which of the following skills were you trained on?

Options	Ticket	Option	Ticket
Agriculture		Construction/ brick laying	
Auto workshop ( boda/ car repair)		Welding	
Beautician/hairdressing		Computer skill	
Blacksmith		Plumbing	
Carpentry		Tailoring	
Teaching		Dairy farming	
Costumers care service		Literacy (reading/writing)	
Financial negotiation		Driving	
Conflict resolution		Ox ploughing	
Heath		Others (specify)	

23. Where did you acquire the skills?

Options	Ticket	Option	Ticket
In a government training centre		In a NGO training centre	
In a small business centre		In a technical school	
I learnt it by myself		I learnt it through parents	

24. How long did it take you to learn the skills?

0-3 months	4-7 months	8-12months	I don't remember
------------	------------	------------	------------------

25. How useful are the skills you learnt to your future employability?

Options	Ticket	Options	Ticket
Useful		Not useful: training wasn't completed	
Not useful: irrelevance to the current market needs		Others	
Not useful: courses are too short			

26. If not useful, how would you like the training to be done?

Suggestions	Labels (for enumerator only)

27. What products or services are you offering to the people/customers?

Agriculture products	
Beverages (alcoholic and non-alcoholic)	
Bread (freshly baked)	
Restaurant services	
Books and computer accessories	
Tobacco and cigarettes	
Art craft	
Meat	
Plumbing services	
Electrical services	
Auto mechanic	
Tailoring	
Carpentry services	
Other (specify)	

### Employer Questionnaire

Which of the following jobs have been available in the last two years?

1. *Front desk*
2. *Administration*
3. *Processing grain*
4. *Machine repair/ maintenance*
5. *Sales*
6. *Casual labor*
7. *Other*

*Specify:*

<b>Skills requirements</b>	
What technical skills are important to your business?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Marketing skills</i></li> <li>2. <i>Computer skills</i></li> <li>3. <i>Financial management skills</i></li> <li>4. <i>Basic literacy</i></li> </ol> Other: _____
Rank these skills in order of importance: 1 Most important 6 Least important	
If Marketing skills and attributes, specify them	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Persuasion skills</i></li> <li>2. <i>Communication skills</i></li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <i>Analytical skills</i></li> <li>4. <i>Creativity</i></li> <li>5. <i>Numeracy skills</i></li> <li>6. <i>Market research skills</i></li> <li>7. <i>Reliability</i></li> <li>8. <i>Trustworthiness</i></li> <li>9. <i>Other</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Specify</i></p>
<p>What soft and life skills are important to your business?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <i>Communication skills</i></li> <li>b) <i>Negotiation skills</i></li> <li>c) <i>Networking</i></li> <li>d) <i>Time management</i></li> <li>e) <i>Team work</i></li> <li>f) <i>Conflict management</i></li> <li>g) <i>Emotion management</i></li> <li>h) <i>Self esteem</i></li> <li>i) <i>Other</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Specify: _____</i></p>
<p>What other requirements do you consider important for a job placement? (Probe for specifics where necessary)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Age</i></li> <li>2. <i>On-job experience</i></li> <li>3. <i>Reference</i></li> <li>4. <i>Local resident</i></li> <li>5. <i>Language proficiency</i></li> <li>6. <i>Education level</i></li> </ul>