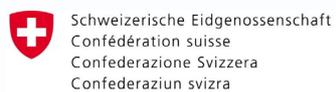




GENDER ACTION RESEARCH: OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT (OYE), ZIMBABWE

December 2020



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC



Sweden
Sverige



List of abbreviations

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDO	District Development Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LFCLS	Labour Force and Child Labour Survey
LSP	Local Service Provider
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OYE	Opportunities for Youth Employment
RDC	Rural District Council
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToR	Terms of reference
ZDHS	Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey

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Report on gender action research

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

This report presents findings of a gender action research for the Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) project in Zimbabwe being implemented by SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. The research was conducted in two districts of Goromonzi in Mashonaland East Province and Umguza in Matabeleland North province. The gender action research sought to acquire deeper insights into how young women and young men are perceiving and experiencing ways of translating their human capital into productive forms of their aspirations and how gender and age relations influence the directions and prospects of these aspirations. The first section of the report provides a brief background to the OYE project in Zimbabwe, introduces the key research questions for the study, and details the research methodology. The second section provides an overview of the research locations; while the third and fourth sections focus on the research findings, conclusions and recommendations respectively.

1.2. Context

According to the Zimbabwe 2012 Census, there are 4,702,046 youths aged 15-34 years in Zimbabwe. These youths constitute 36% of the national population and represent 56% of the economically active population. In 2019, Zimbabwe's national unemployment rate for youth was 21 per cent, higher for females at 22 per cent than for males at nearly 20 per cent.¹ Table 1 below shows the rate of youth unemployment by gender and location.

Table 1: Youth unemployment by gender and location

National	21%
Males	20%
Female	22%
Urban	17.2%
Rural	24.6%

Source: LFCLS, 2019

Table 1 Youth unemployment by gender and location

Data from the 2019 LFCLS indicates that unemployment is higher in rural than in urban areas (24.6 per cent and 17.2 per cent respectively). The unemployment rate in rural areas for females (24.1%) and males (24.9%) was almost the same, while there was a significant difference in urban areas where female unemployment at 21% was 7% higher than that of males (14.2%). This indicates that females face more challenges compared to males when seeking employment in urban areas. The majority of Zimbabwe's youth, including those with good qualifications, fail to secure formal and informal employment, largely due to a mismatch between their education and the requirements of the labour market in terms of skills and experience². Although national statistics on youth employment show that there is not much gender disparity in unemployment rates, young women face more complicated hurdles in seeking employment compared to their male counterparts. These include sexual harassment and abuse, discrimination

¹ Labour Force and Child Labour Survey, 2019

² British Council 2020 Next Generation Zimbabwe

(particularly in male dominated technical trades) and time poverty for pregnant and lactating young women. It also appears that employers have a bias against pregnant and lactating women because of their need to go on maternity leave among other factors³.

The Government of Zimbabwe has crafted a draft National Youth Policy (2020-2025) which highlights Skills Development as well as Employment and Entrepreneurship as key areas of intervention. The efforts by SNV to create opportunities for youth employment, entrepreneurship and skills development to ensure the active involvement of young people in development processes are therefore relevant to the country context. The ministries of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises and Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation have been undertaking youth empowerment initiatives through provisions of loans to youth across the country. However, the loans were difficult to access for most young people as the loans were perceived to be reserved for politically connected and financially secure youth, thereby excluding young people, especially young women. Some of the young women complained about being subjected to sexual exploitation in order to access the loans (ZAYIMO, 2018, Youth Empowerment Bank, 2019).

As a result of high unemployment levels, the majority of economically active youth are likely to be in jobs they did not train for while others end up underemployed or in vulnerable occupations. The LFCLS indicates that 65 per cent of youth age 15-35 years in precarious employment were males in both rural (69.8%) and urban areas (59%). Young women are affected by unemployment and underemployment mainly because of restrictive social norms that confine women generally and younger females to domestic or unpaid care work within and outside their homes. This gender action research however established that although young women are still heavily involved in unpaid care work, they are also involved in productive activities in and around their communities, contrary to the observation by Woodon et al (2017), Dammert et al (2018), Sayi and Sibanda (2018) that young women are trained in submission to await an adequate suitor while under the protection of their families. The males are the majority in "precarious employment" because they are pressured by social norms to venture into dangerous occupations such as artisanal mining to demonstrate that they are 'men'. Young men are often pressured by social norms to demonstrate the ability to fend for themselves and implicitly a future family. This situation has also forced some youth to cross the borders to seek employment, often illegally and under hostile conditions.

Youth unemployment results in a number of risky behaviors that are gendered such as drug abuse among young men as an avenue for countering boredom and forgetting their troubles, and transactional sex among young women. Drug abuse is closely linked to high crime rates. Among women, youth unemployment is associated with having multiple sex partners in exchange for money and having inter-generational sexual partners. Age mixing (that is young girls and teenagers having sex with men at least 10 years older than them) as a source of livelihood has become common. This was reported to be common in Goromonzi, where teenage pregnancies were reported to be high. For example, in 2015, 17% of young women age 15-19 reported having sex with a man 10 years older in the past 12 months (ZDHS, 2015). This presents the risk of contracting HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This partly explains the high HIV prevalence for women, particularly adolescents and young women. In 2018, around a third of all new HIV infections in people above the age of 15 in Zimbabwe were among young people under the age of 24. There were 9,000 new infections among young women, more than double the number of new infections among young men, which was pegged at 4,200.⁴

The challenge of providing adequate, quality and decent employment for the majority of young people in the SADC region and particularly in Zimbabwe is certainly daunting and multifaceted. A majority of jobs and self-employment including household enterprises, are in the informal sector and hence access to finance specifically tailored to meet the needs of young people is pivotal, yet woefully inadequate. Young men and women in the two study districts raised the issue of access to finance as one of the major barriers to tapping into locally available opportunities since most of the opportunities for informal self-employment require resources. Meanwhile, the agro-based nature of the Zimbabwean economy presents unique opportunities to harness the potential of young people to; (a) innovate in the face of climate change and explore the potential for creating green jobs (especially

³ Ibid

⁴ Ministry of Health and Child Care 2019 Zimbabwe Population Based HIV Impact Assessment

at the nexus of energy and agriculture) that will contribute to overall sustainable growth; (b) and to identify opportunities in agro-processing, and service provision in specific value chains as revealed in Goromonzi and Umguza districts.

Owing to youth unemployment and its related challenges, coupled with the fact that Zimbabwe's population is youthful (a broad-based population pyramid), government policy and development initiatives across all sectors place an emphasis on the socio-economic empowerment of young people. The 2013 Constitution in Section 20:1c stipulates that youth shall be afforded opportunities for employment and other avenues for economic empowerment. The Draft National Youth Policy (2020-2025) has major objectives focused on i) achieving equitable access to relevant education and skills development for all youth ii) increasing the employment and entrepreneurship opportunities of young people as well as steering coordinated responses by relevant stakeholders (government and non-government) involved with youth socio-economic empowerment. In addition, the country has a stand-alone Ministry whose remit is to implement the youth policy and coordinate different programs at national and sub-national levels including the setting up of enterprises and availing of targeted funds⁵. However, progressive policy provisions remain hampered by lack of meaningful and sustained implementation.

1.3. The Opportunities for Youth Employment Project

It is against the above background and context that SNV is implementing its Opportunities for Youth Employment (OYE) model in Zimbabwe. The model is market based and operating in Agriculture, Energy and Green Jobs sectors, informed by the agro-based nature of the Zimbabwean economy. A market scan was conducted to inform the interventions, beginning with the identification of concrete opportunities for (self-) employment for which young women and men are invited to express their ambitions.⁶ This entails that opportunity identification should take into account attractiveness and accessibility for young women and men, whereby obstacles such as lack of employable skills and missing market linkages as observed in the case of Zimbabwe are tackled by the OYE project. The model not only creates jobs but also places high importance to learning from experiences, evidence from what works and what does not work, especially looking at enhanced empowerment initiative, opportunity grabbing, leadership and resilience among the young women and men that engage with OYE project. OYE projects – including those previously implemented in countries such as Tanzania, Rwanda and Mozambique have demonstrated the pivotal importance of contributing to empowerment of young women as this study was able to confirm, by giving special attention to gender equality and endeavoring to tackle specific challenges that young women specifically face to meet their ambitions. Such efforts include:

- Market scans (opportunity identification) with a solid gender lens with particular attention to opportunities in value chains that are particularly accessible, attractive and safe for young women.
- Ensuring that the self-selection is based on ambitions that tally with identified opportunities in agriculture and sustainable energy, avoiding that young women drop-out because of preference of other trades.
- Ensuring that (self-) selection of young women already has an explicit component of encouragement. Considering women and young female role models at this stage.
- Encouraging young women to combine the opportunities in agriculture and sustainable energy with additional "female" trades e.g. hairdressing.
- Taking into account accessibility criteria for young women in training delivery, including locality (close to homesteads), allowing young women to take along their babies into training sessions, ensuring a safe and welcoming environment, whereby young women are not dominated by their male peers; the latter requires special responsibilities and competencies among trainers and coaches.
- Involvement of more female role models in training and coaching.
- Promoting female only WhatsApp groups promoting peer-to-peer coaching and learning.
- Encouraging female-only saving and lending groups, as these groups also have high potential for peer to peer learning and inspiration.

⁵ https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Environmental-and-Social-Assessments/ESMP_Summary_-_Zimbabwe_Youth_and_Women_Empowerment_Project.pdf

- Enhance the practice of “household dialogue” from SNV’s Balancing Benefits approach in order to get family support for young women to take part in the project activities, and giving them space, safety and respect in order to be empowered to engage in self-employment, empowerment that eventually will be beneficial to households (including parents and husbands).
- Providing additional coaching and mentoring for young women in self-employment.
- Engaging successful OYE female youth at mobilization stage

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to acquire deeper insights into how young women and young men are perceiving how to translate their human capital into productive forms of what they aspire. The research also sought to explore how young people’s wider (gender and age relations) societal and cultural environment influences – in both positive and negative/restrictive ways – the directions and prospects of these ambitions and aspirations.

1.5. Key Considerations for the Study

1. The gender action research was not only focused on “female exclusion/inclusion” but also on the ways in which young men are facing challenges to translate their human capital in productive forms of “masculinity” allowing them to escape poverty, claim status and provide for (or take part in establishing) their households.
2. As regards age-gender relationships, the study aimed at acquiring solid understanding of how young women and young men are influencing each other (same age level gender relations/interactions) as well as how they are part of age-gender hierarchies in social-cultural contexts being influenced by parents (M/F) and male and female age domination/subordination.
3. Identification of how young women and men themselves have defined their main thresholds/obstacles and themselves seeking solutions/ways forward (despite currently discouraging factors outside their personal control).
4. The focus of the study was on (self-) employment prospects/ambitions in relation to: Agriculture /agribusiness along wider value chains (service/input supply, production, processing, marketing, sales and retail); agriculture related (renewable) energy and existing or perceived innovations in these sectors.
5. The study did not set out to evaluate the OYE project, yet various references are made to project experiences that have proven gender relevance.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This gender action research was designed to be a qualitative study aimed at gathering insights into the aspirations of young women and young men in the two targeted districts of Umguza and Goromonzi and how these aspirations are influenced by their social, cultural and economic environments. Through qualitative data collection methods, the study sought to gather and capture the perspectives and experiences of young women and men, key stakeholders and community members on opportunities of young women and men in agriculture and green energy and how this intersects with the social, cultural and most importantly, gender dynamics in the two districts. The qualitative methodology was employed in the current study because it is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations.⁷

The research also employed a participatory mixed-method or a pluralist method approach to integrate data from different data gathering methods. The use of mixed methods not only offer diverse perspectives to the research issue but also promotes participation of different groups of stakeholders, allows multiple voices to be heard, provides a more holistic picture of the research issue being investigated and allows for triangulation of data for reliability and validity as data from different sources can be compared and any inconsistencies followed up on. Data from multiple sources provide means to develop defendable, convincing and workable conclusions about the action research.

The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is a strategy to add rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to the inquiry. Denzin (1978 in Lindlof 1995: 127) identified four basic types of triangulation which are data triangulation (use of a variety of data sources in a study); investigator triangulation (use of several different researchers or evaluators); theory triangulation (use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data) and lastly methodological triangulation (use of multiple methods to study a single problem). This gender action research used all the four in order to get a clearer picture of the study phenomenon in order to promote transformative change among young people through the research results.

A participatory ethos was adopted in this research to ensure participation of all the key stakeholders at various stages of the research process. Participation ensures ownership of the research results and facilitates adoption of proposed strategies. The consultants played a crucial role in creating the space, environment and opportunity for conversations to happen where all opinions were accepted as valid and respected. Group discussions were comprised of same age range respondents, to provide liberating experiences especially for young women, by giving them an opportunity to voice their lived experiences. The consultants were vigilant in observing tacit signs of power dynamics amongst the participants. At community level, a deliberate attempt was made to ensure that the voices of the marginalized and socially excluded young men and women were heard by ensuring that mobilization brings them on board. The FGDs were conducted by a moderator and a note taker. The moderator was responsible for guiding the discussion allowing for free-flow according to youth interests while the note taker was responsible for taking field notes.

The action research outcomes were presented and validated in December 2020 with key stakeholders including the National Youth Council, the Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre, Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Women Affairs, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) Zimbabwe.

⁶ Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide © 2005 by Family Health International

2.2. Data Collection Methods and Tools

The following methods were employed to collect data during the study.

▪ Desk Review

A review of documents and reports was conducted to enable the consultants to have a deep understanding of the project. The review provided background information for the Gender and Age Analysis. Documents reviewed included government laws and policies on gender equality and youth empowerment such as the National Youth Policy, the National Gender Policy, the Zimbabwe Youth Development Report, the Youth Situation Analysis and Investment Case, the OYE Zimbabwe Market Scan report, country reports and other relevant published and unpublished literature in Zimbabwe. Information from KIIs and FGDs was used to complement that which was collected through documents review considering issues of lack of recency characterizing some of the existing literature.

▪ Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KIIs were conducted with key stakeholders at district level to capture their views on youth employment opportunities in their respective districts as well as on gender dynamics that act as barriers or enablers to youth employment. Stakeholders interviewed included District Development Officers (DDOs), district officials from ministries responsible for women and youth affairs, heads of Vocational Training Centers and local service providers (LSP) working with young people in the respective districts. The key informants were identified with the assistance of the LSPs working with SNV upon sharing criteria for identification of such. A key informant interview guide was used to interview the identified key informants.

▪ Focus Group Discussion with community members

Participatory FGDs were conducted with separate groups of young men, young women (15-35 years), and male and female family elders to assess their perceptions on gender equality and youth empowerment in their communities using an FGD guide. A total of 14 FGDs were conducted in the two districts, distributed in each district as follows:

- 2 FGDs in a rural location; one combining young men and young women and another with adult men and women.
- 3 FGDs in a peri-urban location; one with young men alone; one with young women alone and one that combines adult men and women.
- 2 FGDs in an urban location; one combining young men and young women and another with adult men and women.

District	Gender		Marital Status		Level of Education			Employment Status			Age	
	M	F	Married	Single/ Divorced/ Widowed	None	Primary	Secondary & above	None	Self employed	Formally employed	15- 35 years	Above 35 years
Umguza	28	32	25	35	2	2	56	41	18	1	38	22
Goromonzi	26	31	22	35	0	2	55	38	17	2	42	15

Table 2 Demographic profile of FGD participants in the two districts

FGDs were used to gather data on existing employment opportunities for young people in the respective districts and the influence of gender dynamics on these employment opportunities. The FGDs focused on the following key issues:

- **Agency:** individual and collective capacities (knowledge and skills), attitudes, critical reflection, assets, actions, and access to services (in relation to claiming their rights)
- **Relations:** the expectations and cooperative or negotiation dynamics embedded within relationships between people in the home, community, and groups.
- **Structures:** the informal and formal institutional rules that govern collective, individual and institutional practices, such as environment, social norms, recognition and status.

Participants were asked to reflect on the questions asked by the interviewers, provide their own comments, listen to what the rest of the group had to say and engage in a conversation. The strategy was to elicit ideas, insights and experiences in a social context where people stimulate each other and consider their own views along with the views of others. In analyzing the gender equality situation among young people in the communities and how this shapes their aspirations, the current study utilized both the USAID's Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment framework as well as CARE International Gender Analysis Framework which focuses on the following Core Areas of Inquiry.

- **Area of Inquiry # 1: Gender Equity and Equality Problem Analysis:** using the Problem Tree Analysis participatory tool, FGD participants identified key gender equality and equity challenges that they face, and the "root" causes of those challenges. The participants were also granted the opportunity to discuss the implications of that inequality on young people's aspirations through a participatory process.
- **Area of Inquiry # 2: Gender Roles, Responsibilities and Time Used:** Gender roles and responsibilities at household and community level are influenced by gender norms. Specific household duties may present opportunities, constraints and status for individual young men and women. The research examined how unequal responsibility for care, productive and reproductive work leads to time poverty among young women and how this affects access to services, resources and opportunities including employment and ultimately shapes their aspirations. Under this core area of inquiry, some of the issues considered were as follows:
 - Time use patterns between young men and young women, paid and unpaid work within and outside the household, as well as leisure time and their implications on their aspirations.
 - Gender roles and responsibilities including social and gender norms and stereotyping in agriculture and energy value chains and how these shape the choices and decisions taken by young men and women in terms of (self) employment
 - Use of improved production options and technologies such as energy by male and female and how these impacts the labour burden and young people's aspirations.
- **Area of Inquiry# 3: Patterns of Power and Decision-Making:** Within a society, power and decision-making varies from household to household and family members are affected by these decisions and practices. For this study it was critical to understand power dynamics; how decisions are made within a household, the involvement and participation of young men and women in household decision making and how this affects their aspirations.
- **Area of Inquiry #4: Access to and Control over Assets and Resources:** Access to and control of productive assets has implications on how young men and women can pursue their aspirations. It is important to understand how gender and age relations influence control over and the benefits derived from productive assets including investments in energy and agriculture. Issues of ownership of key productive assets and access to finance in different household types were interrogated. Due to the lack of property and collateral, young people's access to loans and financial services is limited. The research examined the relationships and structures that determine unequal control over resources including finance, not only within the household but at community level, with a particular focus on potential barriers to participation for young men and women.
- **Area of Inquiry# 5: Meaningful Participation in Public Decision-Making:** As equal members within a community it is important that young men and women have the space to meaningfully participate in public decision-making including community committees. The ability to participate goes beyond token

representation for underrepresented groups. Meaningful participation involves environments where individuals may actively contribute to decisions and where they can take part in leadership. The gender and age analysis examined the critical decision-making structures at community level and tried to understand the factors that limit young people's ability to participate meaningfully and the implications of their limited participation on their aspirations. The analysis also examined factors that can promote young women's leadership and participation and mechanisms that promote meaningful participation by women.

- **Area of Inquiry #6: Gender Based Violence (GBV):** Violence is an expression of relationships under strain. It is an impediment to women's equal decision-making, and it can be a negative side-effect of women's empowerment. It is important to address issues of gender-based violence, both as a common feature of people's lives and a consequence of efforts to address individual empowerment. The research assessed attitudes towards GBV and identify resources within the communities developed to address GBV and that can be drawn on to prevent and address GBV. This core area of inquiry considered GBV at the intra-household and community-level, as well as responsiveness to this challenge.

Underlying these core areas of inquiry are Laws, Policies, Regulations, and Institutional Practices as well as Cultural Norms and Beliefs which were examined during the research. Information on the following key issues were also gathered:

- Gendered risks to the realization of full economic empowerment of young women
- Habits, cultures, practices and other factors that impact young men and women's aspirations.
- Aspiration for change among women on matters of finance.

- **Visual methods**

Visual methods are a critical tool for collecting data. Consultants used the camera as an information-gathering instrument. During field work, photographs were taken of various phenomena linked to the study such as the structure and organization of markets and trades and other interesting youth empowerment related phenomena. These photographs were used to concretize observations by the research team and to support the data.

2.3. Tailoring the Study for COVID-19

A key component of the proposed study design was to ensure the protection of the respondents and the research study team. Coronavirus (COVID-19) presented a substantial risk to the targeted research participants. The following set of measures were put in place to address COVID-19 related concerns:

- The research team and all participants were provided with protective masks and had their hands sanitized before participating in interviews and FGDs
- Social distance of at least one two meters was maintained during interviews and FGDs
- The social norm of shaking hands was prohibited
- Contact details of all participants were recorded for easy contact tracing in case of a suspected COVID 19 case.

3. Findings

3.1. District Geographical Profiles

This section presents the geographical profiles of the two districts from available literature, as a background to some of the employment opportunities and challenges identified by young people in the two districts, presented later in this report.

3.1.1. Goromonzi District⁸

Background and geographical location

Goromonzi Rural District Council (RDC) is one of the ten local authorities in Mashonaland East province. It was established in 1992 following the amalgamation of Bromley-Ruwa rural; Arcturus rural and Goromonzi-Kubatana district councils. It was established in terms of the Rural District Councils Act Chapter [29:13] and draws its mandate from the same Act and other principal and subsidiary legislation cited in the strategic plan.

Goromonzi RDC shares its boundaries with Seke district to the south; Marondera district to the east; Murehwa district to the north east; Bindura district to the north and Shamva and Mazowe districts to the north-west. The district shares its entire western boundary with the capital city of Harare.

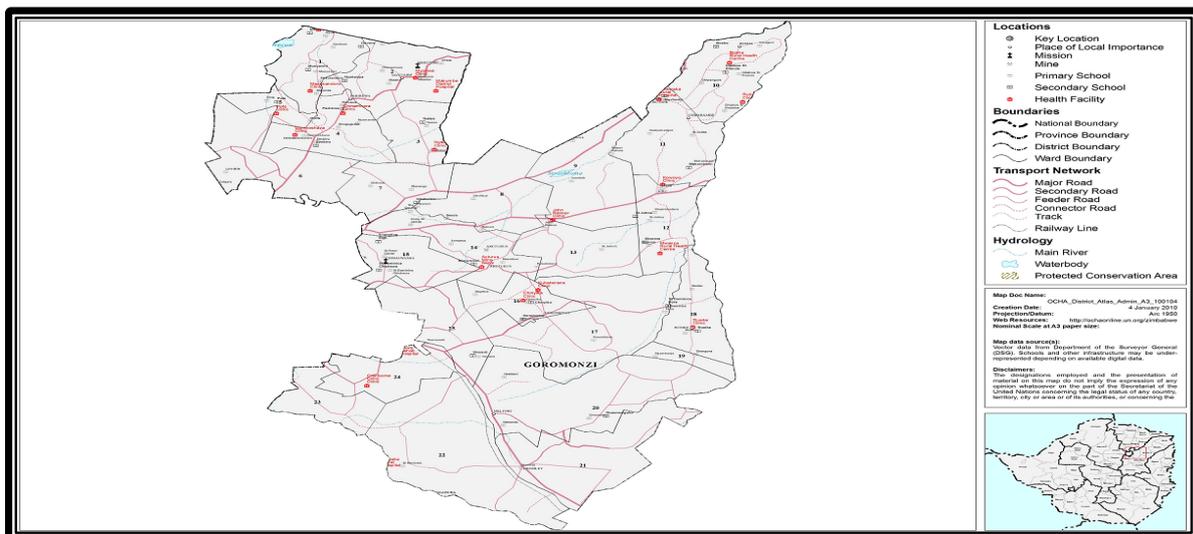


Figure 1 Map of Goromonzi

Land Use and Ownership

Land tenure in the planning area is characterized by freehold, communal and state ownership. The four major land use categories in the planning area are Large Scale Commercial Farming Areas (LSCFA) including residential agricultural areas; communal lands; Small Scale Commercial Farming Areas (SSCFA) and urban areas. Large- and Small-Scale Commercial Farming Areas are big and meant for commercial production while communal lands are small and mainly subsistence oriented. The main development nodes in the planning area are Chinamhora (centered on Parirewa and Borrowdale Road extension),

⁷ Official Website for the Goromonzi Rural District Council: <http://www.goromonzirdc.org/index.php?page=about>

Arcturus Farms, Chikwaka and Chinyika (centred along the Enterprise Road, Juru District Service Centre and Arcturus Mine) Bromley ICA (along the Mutare Road and Ruwa and portion of Chinyika and the farms around Goromonzi Rural Service Centre). There is potential to increase the proportions of urban, small scale farms, residential/ agricultural and resettlement land in the planning area at the expense of LSCFA's and to introduce more equitable land tenure and other land use innovations such as horticulture, game farming and holiday homes.

Population

The district has a population of 224 987 (2012 Zimstat National Census figures). There are 113 661 females and 111326 males in the District. The percentage of females is 50,5% while that of males is 49,5%. The population density for Goromonzi district is 9 people per square kilometre. The average family size for Goromonzi is 4 people per household. The dependency ratio is 45% with an active population of 55%. The population is predominantly rural (75%) with urban areas accommodating 25% of the district's population. Recently, the district has witnessed an influx of illegal settlers in communal areas around rural service centres. The majority of the district's population lives in communal areas (53, 17%) while 42.36% live in commercial farming areas.

Road infrastructure

The total road network in the district is 1 606km. There is presently no well-established and efficient road hierarchy to link and create a well-defined administrative, social and economic entity of the planning area. This is exacerbated by the lack of public transport.

Water

Communal farming in the planning area is predominantly seasonal and dependent on rainfall while some commercial farms supplement rainfall with irrigation. There is need to improve irrigation facilities for communal areas. The development of water resources in the planning area has not received serious attention. There is potential for the expansion of irrigation and water reticulation for urban settlements from the abundant raw water sources. Protected wells and boreholes in the communal and commercial farming areas serve as sources for domestic water although a high number of people are still utilizing unsafe water. There is an advanced proposal to construct the Kunzwi Dam on the Nyaguyi River which will supply water to Goromonzi, Ruwa and Harare.

Energy

Wood fuel is the most common and accessible source of energy for domestic use in the planning area. The present extent of electricity distribution network in the district does not cover the larger part of the communal lands. Deforestation continues to deplete firewood as a source of energy especially the communal and resettlement areas. There is need to introduce other modes of efficient energy in order to prevent deforestation at the same time, plant more trees and improve conservation measures to avert future scarcity of wood supplies. The district has plenty of sunshine throughout the year which presents great potential to invest in solar projects and other alternative sources of energy.

Agriculture

The main economic activity in the planning area is agriculture. The major farming activities are crop cultivation; livestock rearing; vegetable and dairy production. Most of the farming is currently subsistence, however, there remains great potential for both intensive and extensive commercial farming particularly in the field of horticulture, tobacco and maize production.

3.1.2. Umguza District

Background and Geographical location

Umguza District is found in the southern part of Zimbabwe within Matabeleland North province. It is one of the seven administrative districts in Matabeleland North province. Its area surrounds the City of Bulawayo. It is bounded by Matopo and Umzingwane Districts in the South East, Bulilima and Tsholotsho in the west, Kusile and Bubi in the North. Figure 2 below shows the geographical map of Umguza.

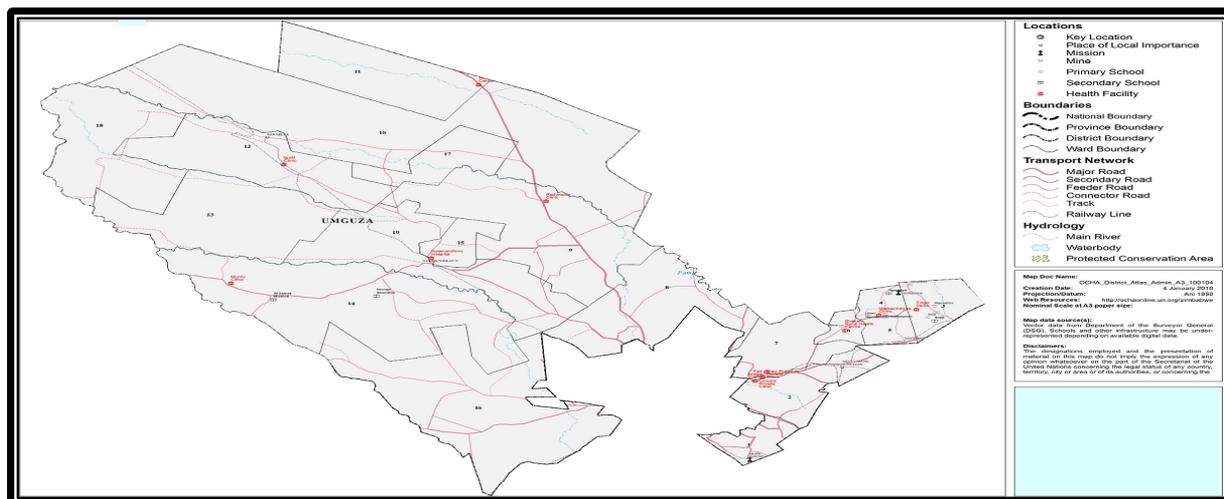


Figure 2 Umguza District, Ward boundaries

Land use and ownership

The district is located on the edge of the Kalahari basin hence the arid climatic nature which is primarily suitable for animal ranching with cattle being dominant as well as small ruminants such as goats, sheep and donkeys. Insufficient rains means that households also rely on other livelihood activities which include fishing activity in the dams, gold panning, selling of wild fruit & handicrafts, and remittances from migratory labour within and outside Zimbabwe.

Population

Umguza population was estimated to be 89, 687 in 2012. Of these 47,091 were males while 42 596 were females. The percentage of females is 47,5% while that of males is 52,5%. The district has 19 545 households and an average of 4.5 individuals per household. It has 19 wards and of these 7 have a considerable number of commercial farmers.

Water

Umguza district is situated in a semi-arid region. Umguza district sits on the Nyamadlovu Aquifer, which is a big source of underground water in the district. Underground water is easily available in the district and several boreholes have been drilled. Most of the people rely on boreholes and deep wells.

Agriculture

Despite being a dry area, most of the people in Umguza district are engaged as farmers. The land in the district is not fertile and unsuitable for maize production, although farmers still attempt to grow the crop despite climate change and poor yields. Livelihoods in Umguza district are based on inconsistent and erratic rain-fed cultivation of sorghum and millet, legumes such as cowpeas, round nuts (Bambara nuts), and mixed with animal husbandry. Sorghum and millet do well in this region as they require less rainfall. Many of the farmers in the district are subsistence except for some areas with irrigation, where they grow commercial vegetables for sale. Repeated dry seasons in recent years have resulted in reduced agricultural production activities but opened up opportunities for diversification. For instance, the dry climatic conditions in the district also dictates the need for diversification into other livelihood activities such as agricultural products value addition and investment in renewable energy. There is also potential for irrigation fed agricultural production in Umguza district but most of the water bodies have shorter periods of water retention.

3.2. Opportunities for Young Men and Women in Agriculture and Green Energy in Goromonzi and Umguza districts

This section explores through both secondary literature, particularly the OYE market scan report as well as primary data from the study, the opportunities for young men and women in agriculture and green energy in the

two districts. It also focuses on the extent to which they have managed to exploit the opportunities as well as the various factors that act as enablers or barriers to the exploitation of the identified opportunities.

Agricultural production opportunities in Goromonzi and Umguza districts

Goromonzi district is endowed with fertile rich soils suitable for intensive and extensive agricultural production which both young women and men can participate in. The district falls under Agro-Ecological Zones 1; 2A and 2B. Region I is ideally suitable for intensive diversified agriculture and livestock production, mainly dairy farming, which is dominated by adult men whereas young men and women remain largely excluded. Region 2 supports crops such as flue-cured tobacco, maize, cotton, wheat, soybeans, sorghum, groundnuts, seed maize and burley tobacco, grown under dryland production as well as with supplementary irrigation in the dry months. Region 2 is also suitable for intensive livestock production based on pastures and pen-fattening utilizing crop residues and grain. The main livestock production systems include beef, dairy, pig and poultry, all of which except poultry are dominated by adult men.

As in Goromonzi district, in Umguza, opportunities in animal production that seem to be dominated by adult men and women were identified on the basis that the region is semi-arid, hence ideal for animal production, which is one of the main sources of livelihoods in the district. It was reported that both young women and men have opportunities to benefit from the knowledge on animal husbandry that exist in the district as many families rear small livestock such as goats, pigs and chickens while others keep cattle for beef and dairy and young people actively participate in these activities, supporting their families. Owing to the gender roles that characterise animal production, young men and women are exposed to different knowledge about different animals and the OYE project can help expose both young women and men to the same knowledge on both small and large livestock production. In both districts, men are dominant in the production of large livestock such as cattle and pigs, while women are more visible in poultry and goat production. A study on the utilisation of the Women Development Fund (WDF) by women in Umguza District was conducted in 2014⁹ and the results are as shown in figure 1 below.

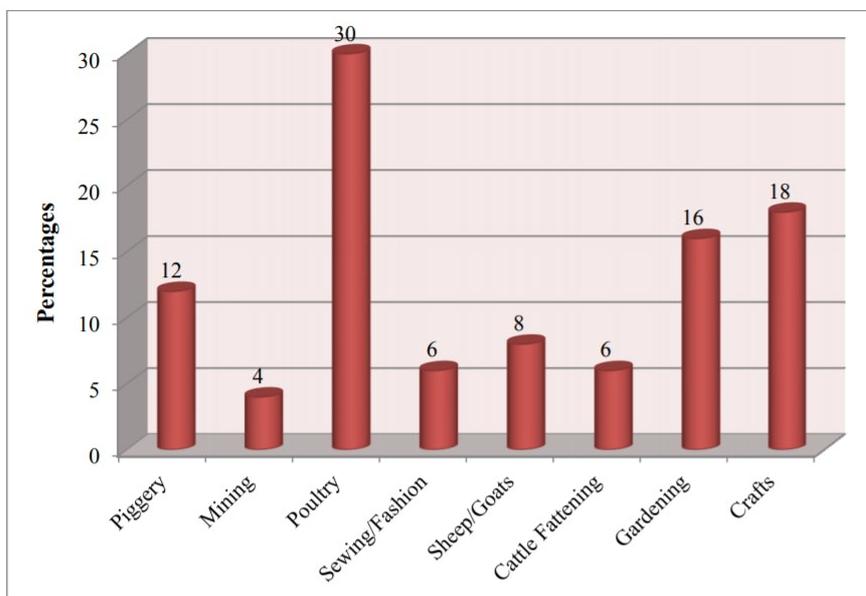


Figure 3 Utilisation of the Women Development Fund by women in Umguza District

Source: Selome and Tshuma, 2014

The study revealed that the most preferred income generating project by young women who accessed the WDF was poultry (by 30% of the women who accessed funds), followed by crafts (18%), gardening (16%) and piggery (12%). Only 6% of the beneficiaries ventured into cattle fattening. Traditionally, large livestock belongs to men

⁹ Selome and Tshuma. 2014. Micro Finance and Women Empowerment in Zimbabwe: A case of Women Development Fund in Umguza District. International Letters of social and Humanistic sciences, SciPress, Switzerland

while small livestock is predominantly owned by women and hence women and young women are more inclined to venture into small livestock production because of both capital investments needed for large livestock production and because of the gendered ownership patterns of livestock in the two districts.

As with Goromonzi, horticultural production also provided opportunities for employment for both young women and men in Umguza. With adequate irrigation, the area produces quality products such as tomatoes, onions, potatoes and other vegetables particularly in commercial farms (which are however mostly owned by adult men while young women in particular provide labour). These horticultural products have a ready market in nearby Bulawayo. Participation in the marketing of these products is dominated by men, women and young men - young women were reported as not active in marketing of these products as they remain behind to take care of household chores.

Underground water is easily available in the district and several boreholes have been drilled to provide water. However, a survey of the water situation in 14 of the wards revealed that there were 266 boreholes and 33 deep wells, and of these only 80 boreholes (30%) were functional¹⁰. Underground water presents opportunities for horticulture production for both young women and men. Goromonzi and Umguza's close proximity to Harare and Bulawayo cities respectively were noted as providing a huge market for both animal and horticultural products whose value chains both young women and men aspired to participate in. Given the two districts' agro-ecological zones, a number of opportunities in agriculture and green energy value chains were identified by key informants, young people and community members who participated in FGDs. Value chains identified in agriculture included the following:

District	Animal production	Crops/Horticulture	Other agricultural activities	Gendered Aspirations
Goromonzi	Poultry (indigenous chicken, broilers and layers), piggery, dairy, beef, goats	Tobacco, maize, cotton, soya beans, sorghum, groundnuts, potatoes, vegetables, tomatoes, onions, flowers, mushroom	Fish farming, beekeeping	In both districts, both young women and men participate in small livestock production, small scale horticulture and agriculture production and they aspire to grow their businesses in these areas. A few resourced young men participate in beef, tobacco and cotton production. Young men in Umguza aspired to join dairy farming
Umguza	Poultry, (indigenous chickens, layers, and broilers), goats, beef, piggery, dairy	Millet, sorghum, legumes e.g., cowpeas, round nuts, vegetables, tomatoes, onions,	Fish farming, beekeeping, selling mopane worms	

Table 3 Agro-based livelihood activities in Goromonzi and Umguza districts and gendered aspirations

Considering the fact that the two districts are agro-based and all those in rural areas have agriculture as the main source of income, it was reported that improvement in this sector through renewable energy to access water for irrigation, processing of food products and preservation and storage of food products will add value and reduce the labour and time poverty that it comes with especially for women and young women who are traditionally responsible for manual irrigation, manual food processing and preservation. Value addition of horticulture

⁹ Parliament of Zimbabwe 2011 Umguza Constituency Profile

products will increase markets and improve incomes, reduce wastages and improve livelihoods for the benefit of both young women and men.

For both districts, the agricultural opportunities identified differed for rural, urban and peri-urban locations and for young women and men. The differences were informed mostly by the demands of the income generating project in terms of land size as well as the availability of water for irrigation and forests. Availability of forests was mentioned in reference to beekeeping and harvesting and selling of mopane worms. The size of the land informs the nature and size of the projects that are permitted by the respective local authorities. In both districts, key informants and community members pointed out that for meaningful returns, opportunities in tobacco, cotton, sorghum, soya beans, flowers, piggery, beef and dairy require large land sizes, which are typically found in peri-urban and rural areas, with a bias towards rural areas. Accessing this land is a challenge for young people, and worse for young women, especially unmarried young women because of the belief that they would get married and leave the area.

Availability of water bodies in peri-urban and rural areas from which water can be harvested free of charge for irrigation purposes by both young women and men was another factor presenting opportunities for these projects in peri-urban and rural areas.

Some young women were already harvesting water for the production of potatoes, maize, vegetables, mushroom and goats which are female dominated. These activities were seen as less demanding in terms of land and water, so they were identified as ideal for urban locations due to land challenges and water costs. Metal fabrication of farming equipment as well as transportation are dominated by young men because young women lack the technical skills, and the trade is regarded a male one.

Although some of the opportunities identified such as flower and tobacco production were noted to be good empowerment opportunities for young people, there was a recognition that these crops were capital intensive and require large tracts of land and high technical aptitude to produce quality products that can compete on both the domestic and international markets which young women and men differentially possess due to different backgrounds linked to gendered cultural expectations.

Green energy Opportunities

Apart from the opportunities for youth employment in agricultural production and agribusiness mentioned above, the study participants in both districts identified opportunities in the renewable energy sector. The two districts district enjoy abundant sunlight throughout most of the year and thus provides an ideal opportunity for investment in solar energy. Since Goromonzi district has plenty of water bodies and Umguza has underground water sources, young people, key informants and community members in the two districts argued that solar energy could be used to power agricultural production in irrigation in rural and peri-urban areas and the provision of light in all areas, rural, urban and peri-urban considering the high costs of electricity in the country. Key informants reported that most households in urban, peri-urban and rural locations in the two districts rely on wood for cooking fuel, which places a heavy burden and increases the amount of unpaid care work on women who are traditionally responsible for fetching firewood. In 2012, 63% of the households in the country used wood as the main source of fuel for cooking, 2% paraffin and 31% electricity (ZIMSTAT, 2012). In 2017, 34% of households in Zimbabwe had access to electricity, with 81% of them being in urban areas and 10% in rural areas.

Participants in FGDs in Goromonzi district concurred that solar energy presents one of the greatest and most feasible opportunity for youth employment due to its high reliability, lack of moving parts, quick installation and dismantling procedures and its compatibility with urban, peri-urban and rural settings, although the participation of women, especially young women across the value chain was reported as still low. The Ministry of Youth also noted that with the launch of the Renewable Energy Policy in 2019, government's thrust is towards a renewable energy sector that focuses on future-oriented technologies and new paths toward sustainable development which combines visions of innovation and green growth. The Renewable Energy Policy (2019) makes reference to gender equality and youth participation. Some of the objectives of this policy are to have a robust financing mechanism for funding capital intensive Renewable Energy (RE) projects; to increase local participation and community involvement in projects generating energy from RE sources, empower children, youth and women through skills

development workshops, training programmes, awareness campaigns, local participation in RE projects and campaigns, well designed schemes for key areas, better employment opportunities and others. The Renewable Energy Policy recommends involving women entrepreneurs and representatives in energy planning and policy formulation and other initiatives in RE development, improve women’s access to technical education, design of training programmes and children and youth participation in the construction of RE plants entrepreneurship promotion and awareness campaigns. The OYE project can complement government efforts in these areas and also building young women’s leadership capacity for them to effectively participate in energy planning and policy formulation in order to amplify the voices of young women in these platforms. From a policy perspective, young women are strategically positioned to benefit from solar energy interventions for self-employment. The current gap is on capital requirements and skills to effectively participate in this value chain as will be discussed later in this report.

Potential for youth employment opportunities in renewable energy identified as ideal for young men and women in both districts during the research included:

Opportunity	For young women	For young men	Comment
Solar maintenance and repairs	✓	✓	Both young men and women reported that if trained and supported financially, they can participate in this.
Waste management (recycling of plastics)	✓	✓	Both young women and men reported having been involved in these activities before
Solar powered irrigation schemes		✓	The availability of water is key to the success of agriculture which is the mainstay in the two districts. There is dire need to have reliable water supply for the agriculture sector in the face of climate change and this much needed water can be supplied through solar powered irrigation systems. Young women reported that although they can participate in solar powered irrigation, there is need for a shift in land ownership patterns if they are to benefit meaningfully. The current land and equipment ownership patterns benefit men primarily.
Supply of solar powered ICT infrastructure		✓	Young women reported that their knowledge and skills gaps in ICT and its related infrastructure presents challenges for them to be involved in ICT related opportunities.
Marketing and trading of solar PV Lanterns and charging systems	✓	✓	Most households in rural Goromonzi and Umguza as well as other un-electrified urban and peri-urban households have resorted to using solar lanterns to meet their lighting requirements as well as charging cellphones, and for radios and television sets. A study by Koen of the University of Amsterdam estimated a market for solar lanterns and solar

			charging systems in Zimbabwe at US\$60 million.
Supply of solar PV balance systems such as batteries, solar inverters and charge controllers.	✓	✓	Some young men and women, though few, are already involved in this business.
Supply of solar PV Mini-grids	✓	✓	The Ministry of Youth representatives in Goromonzi district revealed that the government's efforts through the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) are to increase access to energy in rural institutions such as schools, clinics, and small businesses which have no electricity which can be supplied through mini-grids in average size of 1kW.

Table 4 Youth Employment opportunities in renewable energy

Key informants, adult and young men in both Umguza and Goromonzi added that employment in renewable energy is not just located in the energy-producing sector. The renewable energy value chain encompasses the manufacture and distribution of renewable energy equipment; renewable energy project development; construction and installation work associated with the development of renewable energy capacity; operation and maintenance of renewable energy facilities; and a range of cross-cutting activities that contribute to more than one of the other value chain stages. Renewable energy value chains for large and small-scale renewable energy sub-sectors include grid and non-grid connected infrastructure and these present different employment and livelihood options or opportunities, as well as challenges that need to be considered in order to meet young women and men's needs and interests along the renewable energy value chain – from employment, business owners to consumption.

Some of the young people, particularly young men in Umguza district are already selling solar products but the major constraint is capital to fund their businesses.

Other Opportunities

During the study young people also identified other areas for youth ambition outside the agriculture and green energy sector that youth in the two districts are either already exploiting or can exploit to boost their income. The following were common in the two districts: hair dressing, dressmaking and candle making by young women and carpentry, metal fabrication and brick making by young men. The participation of young men and women in these activities is influenced by their traditional gender roles.

Savings and lending schemes were identified in both districts as dominated by women and ideal for provision of capital outlay for those willing to start businesses. The OYE initiative to encourage female-only saving and lending groups for peer to peer learning and inspiration will therefore help address the gap of access to finance by young women owing to their exclusion from both formal and informal finance mechanisms.

Despite the existence of opportunities for youth employment in Goromonzi and Umguza districts, young women and men in these districts have managed to exploit the identified opportunities only to a limited extent due to various barriers presented in the following section. They reported that most of them are involved in horticulture products and chicken rearing which are less capital intensive, less demanding in terms of water and land, and they sell these at local markets only because of accessibility challenges for young women with regard to more distant – and more profitable – markets. In Goromonzi rural, young men reported that they produce tomatoes which they sell at the Domboshava Showgrounds market and at Mbare Musika in Harare for those that can afford to travel to Harare.

3.3. Gender Barriers to Taking Up Opportunities in the Two Districts

A number of gender-related and gerontocratic barriers to the exploitation of the identified agricultural and green energy opportunities by young people were identified in the two districts. Below are the barriers cited by location:

Barrier	Urban	Peri-urban	Rural
Lack of capital	✓	✓	✓
Lack of mechanical resources (tractors, combine harvesters, and planters)		✓	✓
Market linkages challenges owing to expensive or unreliable transportation system			✓
Lack of the necessary technical skills (knowledge and skills gap)	✓	✓	✓
Lack of role models of young people who are doing well in the agriculture and energy sectors	✓	✓	✓
Limited access to land	✓	✓	✓

The above barriers were noted to be affecting both young men and women. Young women were regarded as more disadvantaged due to limited access to and control over productive resources such as land, farming implements and financial resources; limited access to information and lack of business skills to run sustainable projects.

Gender and lack of technical skills

Lack of technical skills in the energy and agriculture sectors for the youth in the districts is related to the unavailability of qualified trainers. In Goromonzi, most of the agricultural training is supposed to be provided at government supported Vocational Training Centres such as the Ruwa Skills Training Centre and by government extension workers. This is no longer being done effectively because of the high level of demotivation among these workers related to poor remuneration and poor working conditions among civil servants. This leaves a gap in adequately addressing the training needs for young women and men.

A related challenge is the limited availability of courses or programmes in renewable energy in Zimbabwe's institutions of learning both at short course and undergraduate level. The University of Zimbabwe introduced the Renewable Energy Masters programme in 1996 but the programme was discontinued in 2012 due to lack of human and financial resources. Following a stakeholder workshop on Higher Education for Renewable Energy in Africa, the University submitted a request to the EU-Renewable Energy Cooperation Programme for the resuscitation of the programme and the programme was resuscitated but it is not being fully subscribed. A scoping mission that analysed the support needs for the resuscitation of the programme established that the challenges for the programme at the University of Zimbabwe included lack of qualified staff and outdated curriculum and laboratory equipment among others.

Regarding access to agricultural extension services, it was revealed that extension methods used have a bearing on who accesses the information. In both Goromonzi and Umguza districts, extension officers identified the following methods of extension used:

Group extension

- Master farmer training
- Agricultural shows
- Field days
- Demonstrations
- Commodity groups

Individual extension

- Farmer visits

Mass media extension

- Print and audio

It was observed that young married women prefer group extension, to other methods of extension owing to the fact that it is done in public since most of the extension officers are male. This method includes master farmer training, agricultural shows, field days, demonstrations and commodity groups such as horticulture groups. These platforms were reported to be female dominated, an opportunity that the OYE project can capitalise on.

In both districts, there were however concerns that where women attended farmer trainings, in some cases it was difficult for them to tell their husbands about the knowledge gained, as husbands felt that their authority is undermined when they receive information from women. When the men attended the training, they did not share the knowledge with their families yet some of these men participate minimally in the production process. It was further reported that the individual extension method, particularly farmer visits, is common among de jure female headed households¹¹ compared to de-facto female headed households¹² and male headed households. De jure female headed households have the freedom to invite male extension workers compared to de facto female headed households who are afraid to be labelled as seducing the extension officers. Young women in Goromonzi, remarked,

"Not all women are free to approach a male extension worker, even amongst single women, but the situation is worse for the married"

It was further revealed that in the setup of the married, the husband's educational level counts. The less educated the husband, the less likely the household would use the individual extension method because the husband would feel threatened and his ignorance exposed by inviting the extension officer. In male headed households, it is the responsibility of the husband to invite the extension officers where individual extension services are required. Mass media extension is common among both young men and women.

Extension workers reported that training of women requires more time because of competing gender- based demands. Women have to take care of their reproductive roles such as feeding and preparing their children for school before they are able to attend extension training programmes.

"The challenge these days is that once you get married, our husbands leave most of the household chores to us. While we do most of the reproductive roles such as cooking, fetching water and firewood, we are also involved in productive work because you have to assist your husband in fending for the family." (FGD with young women, Goromonzi).

The burden is even heavier for young women who are single parents or those who have absentee husbands who are working for long periods away in neighbouring countries or in different locations in the country. These young women have to fulfil their reproductive roles and also work for the family leading to time poverty among this group.

As one of OYE's gender mainstreaming strategies, the timing of extension services and training is therefore crucial and must be structured to enable women to attend to both the training and their gender roles and responsibilities. Lactating mothers and those with young children should also be provided with facilities at the training venues to cater for their children while they attend the trainings. Some married young women reported that they would not be able to attend training sessions that are convened outside their places of residents that would require them to spend several days from their homes. This was partly because their husbands would be uncomfortable to let them stay away for so long and partly because their children will not have anyone to look after them. Gender roles and responsibilities can therefore sometimes act as a barrier that prevents young women from benefitting from targeted skills training programmes.

¹¹ de jure female headed households are households headed by women because of divorce, death of husband or woman never married

¹² de facto female headed households are households headed by women because the husband has migrated for work,

Gender and access to land and other productive assets

In Zimbabwe, women constitute about 65% of the rural population yet they received less than 18% of the land that was distributed during the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Women face many obstacles to viable farming such as access to land and resources, due to a number of reasons, many of which are gender-specific, linked to their cultural roles and responsibilities and the expectations that come with these. Due to patriarchy, young women are excluded from ownership and access to key productive resources and services. In Goromonzi for example, only 10% of women were allocated land under the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. A report by the Women Farmers Land and Agriculture Trust shows that about 30% of married women who were jointly allocated land during the Fast Track Land Reform Programme lost the allocated land upon divorce from their husbands.

Being partly peri-urban settlements surrounding Bulawayo and Harare, Umguza and Goromonzi experience high levels of competition for land partly caused by the expansion of the two cities. Most of the land is owned by elders and land developers, leaving young people with limited access to land as noted below during and FGD discussion with young women in Hope Fountain.

"We as young people are interested to venture into agriculture, but the challenge is the availability of agriculture land. Most of the land is owned by elders and they cannot easily let off go their land to allow us to run our agricultural projects. This is particularly difficult for us young women because the expectation is that you get married and you go and utilize your husband's land. Some of us are not married and have children, we want to support our children through agriculture but it's difficult to do so when you don't have access to land. For the boy child, it is better because they get allocated part of the family land unlike us." (FGD with young women in Hope Fountain, Umguza)

Young unmarried men in both districts in rural, urban and peri-urban areas also expressed their difficulties in accessing arable land from their elders. They complained that when one is still single, they are not considered an adult and hence they are not prioritized in the allocation of communal land. Within the family set up, preference is given to young married males over single young women and men. Traditionally, communal land belongs to men and hence land is regarded as one of the assets belonging to men. Although young men have access to land through the arrangements described above, total control of the asset rests with the elders.

"We face challenges in accessing land as young people especially when you are unmarried. When you are still unmarried you are considered to be under the guardianship of your parents and therefore not in need of your own land. You are considered a minor. You are supposed to use that which belongs to your parents. The challenge then is that you do not have the independence to grow the crops you like as that decision is made by the parents. Sometimes you tell the parents that you are wasting time by growing maize that does not do well here, they will tell you that they grow what they want because it is their land. So, what can you do in that case? When you do not have your own land, it is difficult to engage in agricultural production" (FGD with young men in Hope Fountain, Umguza)

In terms of access and control of resources, the research revealed skewed asset ownership patterns in favour of men despite government policy on joint registration, through Statutory Instrument 53 and other constitutional provisions, particularly Section 3 of the 2013 Constitution, on non-discrimination of women regarding ownership of assets and other aspects of life. Females especially young women (both married and unmarried) are more disadvantaged than their male counterparts in terms of access to land, size of land, use of improved seed, and access to household tools and equipment. Young people in Goromonzi noted that their parents' unwillingness to relinquish control of the land significantly constrained their ability to exploit the abundant opportunities in agriculture and renewable energy presented by their district. When competition for resources intensifies, the least powerful such as young men and women are vulnerable to exclusion.

In both districts the study established that, in male-headed households, both young men and young women have limited access to resources of production, but young men control certain resources, particularly those that are traditionally regarded as belonging to men. Married young men are regarded as heads of households and breadwinners and therefore should own and control resources and large assets that will enable them to adequately provide for their families. Productive assets owned and controlled by young male heads include farming

implements such as ploughs, scotch-carts and large livestock such as cattle and women cannot lend these in the absence of the man. Small livestock, such as goats and chickens, as well as kitchenware belong to women in general and married women in particular. Hence young women have access and control of these small livestock to an extent that they have the flexibility to dispose them without the need to consult or get permission from their husbands.

"There are certain assets that are regarded as men's such as land, ploughs, scotch-carts and cattle, generators, television, radio, bicycles and cars. A real man is supposed to own these assets, but as young people, some of us do not have these assets, and we are working towards acquiring these. There are those assets that are regarded as women's such as kitchen utensils and small livestock. These belong to women and they control them. They might consult their husbands about these assets but the final decision on these assets is theirs"

(FGD with young men in Goromonzi)

Both young men and young women who participated in FGDs in the two districts concurred that although there are assets that are designated to be belonging to men or women, couples consult each other when making decisions about those assets. However, in a situation where there are differing decisions regarding a particular asset, men generally have a final say on those assets that are regarded as traditionally belonging to men while women also make final decisions on those assets that traditionally belong to women. At times however, these women are overruled even for those assets that are regarded as belonging to them. Single young women who stay alone have more freedom to control assets that they own.

The research established that power dynamics within households varied with age. Women tend to have increasing influence on decision making as they grow older. FGDs with older men and women in both districts revealed that when these older women got married years back, they were supposed to leave major decision making to the husband, but as they grew older they played an increasingly active role in decision making. They revealed that traditionally men who consulted their wives on major decisions were considered weak and were derided by their relatives and the community, but this is gradually changing. Younger women reported that their husbands consult them on most decisions as there is an increasing awareness among the younger generation that it is important to do joint decision making within the household. This change was attributed to gender equality awareness programmes in the districts being spearheaded by the Ministry of Women Affairs and NGOs and CSOs. It was also established during the research that youth in most cases are not involved in decision making, unless they are contributing something to the household economy. As long as they are still dependent on their parents or guardians, they have a limited voice.

In Goromonzi rural, young women cited the changes that are taking place in their lives as a result of their participation in the OYE project, especially linked to family dialogues. An FGD was conducted at the homestead of the in-laws of a young woman who is a beneficiary of the OYE project. She was responsible for mobilizing people for the FGD because of her role in the project, contrary to the belief that young women, especially when married and residing with in-laws cannot meaningfully participate in both household and community development initiatives. She reported that the in-laws involve her in household decision making because of their involvement in the OYE project.

Generally, men have control over high value household assets, while women have control of assets of lesser value. In agriculture, as the agriculture product increases in value in terms of quantity produced or in terms of market value, men tend to take control over the marketing of the product. For example, cattle generally belong to men while small livestock belong to women. Crops that have high value such as potatoes, tobacco and maize and vegetables grown on a large scale are regarded as men's crops. Small nutrition gardens that bring in small income are usually controlled by women. Data shows that crops that are for household consumption and that bring little cash belong to women, whereas those that bring 'good cash' are men's crops. This classification tallies with the gender roles that are expected of men and women as providers of the family and preparer of food for the family respectively.

Proceeds from the sale of agricultural products are usually decided upon jointly by husband and wife, in the case of married young people. However, in cases where priorities on the use of the income generated from agriculture differ, it is usually the man's decision that prevails.

"After selling our crops, decisions on how to use the money we get can be a challenge. Men tend to prefer bigger assets such as cattle, ploughs and even cars while women tend to prefer household assets such as kitchen utensils, lounge suites, small livestock and other assets that they are in control of. So, in most cases it is a negotiated process, but if there are differences as a woman you end up giving in' (FGD with young women in Umguz)

Thus, the study revealed that young women have less access to and control over resources compared to their male counterparts who enjoy many cultural privileges. Young men also have authority in the household over their siblings, particularly female siblings. In the absence of the father, they have the authority to discipline their female siblings even when the mother is there. An adult son is a father figure in the absence of the father, and he takes over the social roles of the father.

In Goromonzi, young women complained that it is difficult for them to access agricultural inputs distributed by government. A study by the Women Farmers Land and Agriculture Trust (2016) revealed that women were failing to access farming equipment and agricultural inputs distributed by government because of corruption and this has resulted in women being seriously disadvantaged in terms of accessing productive assets. The women also complained that there is a general misconception among government officials that a farmer is a man. "We believe we were segregated because of gender. We are not recognised as women farmers; they do not take us seriously'. Young women in particular face this challenge of discrimination as there is a patriarchal assumption that they will be represented by their husbands.

Gender and lack of capital

It is a fact that ownership of assets (including land) guarantees access to certain services and enhances youth empowerment and participation. Most young people, both men and women in all locations, except for those from well up families, lack collateral security to guarantee loan applications. Most financial institutions demand collateral security for one to access loans and this acts as an inhibitive factor for most youth in the two districts who would like to venture into business. Young people in Zimbabwe in general have lacked access to loans because of lack of collateral, which is linked to ownership of assets (ZIMSTAT 2015). Lack of startup capital was noted to be a hindrance to exploiting business opportunities in the two districts. Although a number of funding opportunities had opened up in the two districts, these opportunities could not be fully exploited by young people because of the conditions set out to access the funding as noted by the Ministry of Youth in Umguz:

"Start-up funding is one of the major challenges that youth face in this district. As a ministry we tried to make funding available to youth but very few took up the offer because of the conditions for accessing the loans. For the government grant that we had for youth we received only 90 applications and only 41 youth got the funding. The conditions for accessing the grants included having a registered company, providing proof that one has been paying tax to government and providing a bank statement for the past 6 months. Most youth do not have these things and they therefore lost out on this great opportunity" (KII, District Development Officer)

Both young men and women reported that they lack funds to run their green energy and agro-based start-ups. There is a lack of long term finance particularly for the RE sector and, young people are seen as a credit risk by many financial institutions. RE products like solar have a high up-front and out-of-pocket costs and long payback periods which deter them from installing solar energy technology. Some projects need Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) to be conducted first and these require lots of money.

A key stakeholder from the Ministry of Women Affairs remarked,

Women have traditionally lacked collateral because of lack of control over resources and have therefore not been able to access loans as men. Owing to this, the government has established the Women's Micro Finance Bank to assist women with access to funds. The challenge of collateral is a gap which government itself has identified and is working towards addressing. (KII, Goromonzi)

It was revealed that the situation for young women is worse than that of young men as they face double exclusion related to both gender and age.

Although the Zimbabwe Women's Bank and the Empower bank for youth were created to address financial exclusion of women and young people respectively, both young women and men interviewed were concerned about the loan amounts offered by these institutions, which they felt were low for projects particularly in the energy sector and agriculture that are generally capital intensive. Furthermore, an unstable economic and political landscape also present challenges for young people in terms of planning and predicting their business trajectory due to policy inconsistencies, an unstable currency and political risks related to land ownership.

Gender and market related challenges

Focus group discussions with participants in rural, urban and peri-urban locations in the districts revealed that young women dominate the small scale physical local markets. Moreover, because they are already involved in marketing and are aware of the dynamics in these local markets, OYE's empowerment initiatives can build on this foundation. They produce crops in small quantities that need to be sold, but the long distances needed to be travelled does not make it sustainable in terms of time, energy and cost for transporting. Market opening hours raise issues of security hence women tend to market their products locally while the majority of men have access to external and high value markets. Women therefore realize less income compared to men because they market low value products and have limited access to high value markets because of the market opening hours and the cost of accessing the markets.

It was also reported that the markets exclude women because they are masculine and aggressive. Focus group discussions with young people in Goromonzi rural revealed that owing to women's reproductive roles, they sometimes fail to go to the market because it would mean spending time away from home.

They reported,

We sell our produce locally. That disadvantages us because the crops would be in surplus so the prices would be depressed. We are forced to sell our produce locally for a number of reasons; the type of transport that is used to go to the market and how people sit in those lorries. A 'good' woman, especially a married one cannot be seen getting into those lorries, particularly considering our dressing., young women can wear trousers Going to the market is more expensive for a woman than a man because men can sleep in the open and in night clubs and can afford going for days without bathing. If as women we have to go to the market, it means we have to budget for accommodation. People can spend long periods of time at the market. For a woman who is responsible for household welfare, it means you are forced to leave children unattended to for the duration you are away. You do not know whether children have eaten, bathed, gone to school and more importantly whether they are safe. So, when it comes to deciding on who goes to the market, we think of all these factors and where we cannot find someone to take care of children, we choose to remain behind. (FGD with young people in Goromonzi)

In Umguza, young women noted that vegetables fetch a much higher price in places such as Victoria Falls but they neither have the means nor the time to travel those distant markets because of their reproductive roles at home and most husbands will not allow their wives to be away from home for long periods.

We know that vegetables fetch a much higher price in places such as Victoria Falls, Binga and Hwange but as young mothers we are constrained to reach out to those markets. Its difficult to travel with your children or to leave them behind so we end up only accessing the less lucrative nearby markets where competition pushes the prices of agricultural commodities down. We are also concerned with the issue of security because most of the time you have to travel at night using haulage trucks and if you are alone, you risk being sexually abused. FGD with young women in Umguza)

Women in Goromonzi rural reported that the mode of transport used which include tractors and overloaded trucks are not friendly to women particularly those carrying children on their backs. They revealed that the cars leave at night because of the market opening hours and this posed security risks mostly to young women. In Umguza, the issue of transport costs was a major challenge. In an FGD with young men and women held in Ntabazinduna,

participants indicated that they are fairly close to the city of Bulawayo where good markets exist, but they do not have money to transport their produce to the market.

Interviews with older men revealed that women lack market information and negotiation skills so they can be easily cheated by middlemen, hence men prefer to go to the market.

3.4. Other Gender Related Barriers

This section presents other social, cultural and gender dynamics identified in the two districts and the influence of these dynamics on young people's ability to harness the opportunities for employment in Goromonzi and Umguza districts.

3.4.1. Cultural norms and values

Across the two districts, men are culturally regarded as heads of the families. This is rooted in the patriarchal norms and values that determine family power structures in the two districts. Men, and some women too, justified men's dominant position over women from both a traditional and religious perspective.

"When we marry our wives, we pay lobola (bride price) to the parents of the woman and the woman comes to stay with me and this means the woman belongs to me. She should respect me and do as I tell her although we acknowledge that she should also have space to make decisions. From a biblical standpoint, the bible says a woman should submit to her husband. So, this is how it is" (FGD with men in Umguza)

Because of traditional perceptions of masculinity, young men are reluctant to share in the household roles such as cooking, cleaning and childcaring even when they are unemployed. This has brought a heavy burden on women who in some cases have to perform both reproductive and productive roles to fend for the family. This often brings tension in the households as young women accuse their husbands of being lazy while the husbands perceive the demands by their wives to participate in household chores as a sign of disrespect.

Young women on the other hand noted that unemployed men feel insecure when their wives are earning an income, and this is often a source of Gender Based Violence. They revealed that the desire of every man is to support his family and be assisted by his wife but not vice versa.

As part of their gender roles, both young men and women engage in productive roles such as horticulture, vending and small and large livestock production. Engaging in these roles has equipped both young men and women with the necessary agency and skills to take up these roles as employment opportunities.

"We as young men have been taught to look after domestic animals such as cattle, goats and chickens and we have also been taught to work in the fields producing such crops as maize and horticultural products such as tomatoes, vegetables and potatoes. So we have basic skills that we can use to create employment for ourselves should we get adequate financial support". (FGD with young men in Goromonzi)

The same situation obtains for young women who have acquired skills such as cooking and horticulture production as part of their productive and reproductive roles. As noted by the Ministry of Youth in Goromonzi, most horticulture farmers in the district are women and their domestic roles such as cooking and feeding the family strategically position them to exploit opportunities in the food industry. Although these skills have been developed through routine gender roles, there is need for further technical training and business coaching in those skills that the young men and women already have so that there is graduation from subsistence mode to viable commercial entrepreneurship that will create employment opportunities for the youth.

The research also revealed that certain cultural values and norms act as barriers for young women in their quest for utilising employment opportunities in agriculture, agribusiness value chain and renewable energy. For a woman to start any project she has to get approval from the man and sometimes the man refuses to support the woman in the activity. As revealed during an FGD in Umguza, some men are afraid that if the project succeeds the woman will make more money and the man will be relegated to be the "woman" of the home. Research participants noted that men feel threatened by an empowered woman and they therefore tend to discourage their

women from participating in projects involving other men but allow them to participate in projects with fellow women. This barrier to women's participation in projects is more pronounced among married women than their unmarried counterparts. Due to cultural and social norms, many people believe that women are inferior to men and hence they lack self-esteem to participate in agriculture and green energy projects. In Goromonzi, it emerged that cultural norms and values such as 'son preference' discourages young women in general, particularly unmarried young women, from participating in agro-based projects due to preferential treatment given to their brothers at their expense in terms of allocation of resources at household level.

FGD participants also revealed that youth who stay under their parents' roofs cannot have a project that they fully own and control as long as the youth is staying with the parents or guardian. Proceeds from the project will be shared in the households and the youth might not have full decision-making powers on use of income generated. The youth noted that this can be demoralizing if the youth can no longer see the gains of their labour or can no longer reinvest in the project because the profits would have been used to support the whole household.

Furthermore, the time-consuming workload for women affects them in several ways. Women in the two districts disclosed during FGDs that their reproductive roles such as childcaring, caring for the elderly and the sick, cooking and cleaning mainly confine them to the home environment. This makes it difficult for women, particularly those that are lactating and with young children to attend training programmes that are conducted away from their villages.

Social norms that view modern energy technology businesses as work for men were regarded as limiting opportunities for women to engage in sustainable energy entrepreneurship. Some young women in Umguza interviewed for this study stated that they would want to get into solar dealership, installation and technical support and repairs, but they were concerned that it will be difficult for them to get business as there is stereotyping of technical work as not being suitable for women.

A young woman remarked,

"We really would like to venture into solar business as installers and dealers. But we are afraid that no one will engage us because many people think that women cannot do such technical jobs. It's just like being a motor mechanic. How many people, including women, can entrust their cars with a woman mechanic? It's difficult and it's something that we are afraid of. We need training so that we can prove that we are equally capable" **(FGD with young women in Umguza)**

In Goromonzi district where the OYE project has supported both young men and women in many areas including poultry, sewing, agriculture and to be solar agents, the reception by the community has been positive. One older man in Goromonzi rural remarked,

"The OYE project has also empowered us through our children, the difference between an OYE beneficiary and a non-beneficiary is very conspicuous. The community is appreciating the trainings and the project in general. It has transformed our children's thinking and our thinking as well. We used to overload girl children with domestic chores to ensure they are not idle. Now they are busy with income generating projects and we are happy. We are happy with whatever project they are supported with, as long it empowers them. We now know more about gender equality, we appreciate women going on roof tops installing solar, as long as they have appropriate dressing" **(KII, Goromonzi District).**

Research participants concurred that cultural norms and values that often act as barriers for young women can be addressed through the following ways, which have been shown to be effective:

- Community sensitisation on gender equality
- Engaging community leaders as well as religious leaders to discuss ways of harnessing the identified opportunities in the district such that they can cascade the information to community members.
- Capacity building
- Training and development.
- Male engagement to address the plight of women.

As the quote above from the KII in Goromonzi district indicates, the research has collected evidence, perhaps not yet abundant yet very powerful, that breaking the vicious circle of economic apathy and lacking access to mobility, assets, resources and skills can actually contribute to reverse processes whereby economic empowerment becomes a driver towards agency of young women, even in the most traditional (rural) communities.

3.4.2. Age and gender relations

In terms of the relations between young men and women, the study revealed that in general, both treat each other as equals hence opportunities are equal for both men and women. They respect each other's space and rights and women are increasingly aware of their rights and are now occupying spaces in projects that were previously male dominated. Young men and women also tolerate gender diversity and balance in programming.

According to FGD participants in both districts, the relationship between young people and older people is premised on respect, humility, trust, obedience and honour. Younger men and women tend to work well alongside each other and exploit the opportunities in their areas more effectively, without gender roles being as much of an impediment as would be the case with older men and men . Unfortunately, young men and women usually avoid dialogue with elders and tend to be docile in decision making in projects that involve both age groups. Older people often take advantage of the identified age and gender relations patterns to overshadow young men and women in accessing and controlling resources as well as limiting their participation in decision making.

3.4.3. Participation in public decision making

In terms of participation in decision making on public platforms, the research revealed that the extent of young people's involvement varies across communities. A key informant in Goromonzi district indicated that young men participate in public decision making to some reasonable extent and roughly one-third of the councillors in the district are less than 30 years old. Young men are also assuming decision making positions as Members of Parliament, senators and junior councillors, hence role models in this area of leadership are available in the district. FGD participants in Goromonzi district underscored that young women lack confidence and experience to participate in public decision making and usually exclude themselves from meaningfully participating in public spheres.

In Umguza district, participation by young men and women in public meetings is limited. They argued that although they participate and make contributions, their participation in these public forums is not meaningful since the final decisions are made by older men who have a tendency to disregard the contributions made by women.

"When we are called for a meeting we come, and we make contributions. But the final decisions are made by older men and more often than not, our contributions are disregarded. So, while we are physically present during meetings, our participation is not meaningful as our contributions are neglected" (FGD with male and female youth in Umguza)

FGD participants in Umguza also noted that youth do not have much voice because when they bring issues to the (male) elders on a public platform, the issues are politicized and are subsequently dismissed. The participants also concurred that if they were to rank the weight of views in public meetings, the adult males would come first, then female adults followed by male youth and finally female youth. FGDs with elder men revealed their attitudes towards the participation of youth in decision making meetings. In Umguza district, older men accused the young men of not being serious with their lives and of having lost the character of "ubuntu" which is characterized by hard work, honesty and respect for elders.

However, when in their own spaces, young men and women contribute more meaningfully to meetings.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

This research found gender roles and responsibility to exert a heavy burden on women especially young married women thereby inhibiting them from harnessing opportunities in each of the two aforementioned districts. Young men and women have limited access to and control of critical resources such as land needed for them to fully embrace opportunities for employment in agriculture and green energy presented in their respective districts. The situation for young women is worse off due to the patriarchal nature of both communities. Both unmarried young men and women have limited space for participating in household decisions if they are not contributing to the household economy. However, the research established that household decision making process are slowly shifting towards becoming consultative and consensual. For instance, joint decision-making is now common among households in the two districts. The participation of young men and women in public decision making is still limited as this domain is dominated by older men and hence the need for the OYE project to focus on building young women's agency.

The words vibrant, creative, and energetic essentially sum up young women and men in the two districts. Young people when productively employed are an asset to their communities and to the world at large. Opportunities exist for youth employment in the two districts which the OYE project can unlock. Despite the socio-cultural and economic constraints, young women in the two districts have been active to fulfil their aspirations within and sometimes outside the dictates of culture. **The research has collected evidence, perhaps not yet abundant yet very powerful, that breaking the vicious circle of economic apathy and lacking access to mobility, assets, resources and skills can actually contribute to reverse processes whereby economic empowerment becomes a driver towards agency of young women, even in the most traditional (rural) communities.**

4.2. Recommendations

To address some of the barriers that are preventing young people from exploiting the opportunities in the agriculture and energy sectors, the following recommendations are made:

Promote knowledge and skills building for both young women and men

Because of the need to enhance young people's technical, financial and business skills, there is need for SNV to establish memoranda of agreement with agriculture and renewable energy industry and educational institutions such as universities, colleges and vocational training centres and develop specific user friendly and easy to follow modules to equip young women with the necessary skills to run sustainable projects in the two value chains including in procurement, instalment, maintenance and consumption of sustainable energy solutions and development of technical standards. Young women also need to be exposed to female role models that have excelled in technical fields that are traditionally considered as male-dominated.

The skills training should mainstream gender, ensuring that more female trainers are engaged, and training activities are conducted at convenient times and locations that will enable young women to also fulfil their gender roles and responsibilities and if need be. Conducting female-only training sessions can also help to avoid young women being intimidated by their male counterparts, which can lead to loss of confidence.

Tackling adverse social norms

The systemic constraints discussed in this report highlight how gender norms and stereotypes effect unequal outcomes in access and control over productive resources, access to services, and leadership positions among others, all of which have a bearing on young women's economic empowerment. Tackling these adverse social norms is critical to bring about transformative changes in young women's economic empowerment. OYE can

promote life skills education and community mobilisation for the transformation of social norms that promote the exclusion of young women from development initiatives.

A module on gender mainstreaming, which also incorporates SNV's Balancing Benefits approach, should be developed and rolled out to young people including their spouses. This will foster appreciation for young women's economic contributions at community and household level, as well as knowledge sharing and inclusive decision making within households. Household dialogues can generate family support for young women to take part in the project activities, and giving them space, safety and respect in order to be empowered to engage in self-employment. Extension workers also need to be trained on gender mainstreaming so that they are able to deliver gender sensitive extension services that will ensure that both men and women can equally benefit from the services. More attention should be given to the mode of delivery of the extension training, location and timing as well as sensitivity to the needs of lactating mothers and those with young children so that they are able to attend the training activities.

The modules on technical skills that are in high demand in the renewable energy sector can be facilitated mostly by women and should address discriminatory social norms and gender stereotypes in the pedagogy and in practice by making gender awareness a core component of the curriculum.

Safe spaces for young women

Create platforms for young women only to build their agency and for peer learning and sharing to mentor and support them in the male dominated areas. In these platforms, which can be in the form of Young women's summits bringing together young women from the two districts, young women can be encouraged to pitch their projects for them to gain confidence to participate in business platforms such as expos and trade fairs for the growth of their businesses. These can act as innovation hubs for the development of ideas into products and services that can be industrialised. OYE can also promote safe markets through conducting market scans with a gender lens to identify barriers and opportunities that exist for young women while also supporting projects that provide safe accommodation services and other gender-friendly infrastructure for inclusive markets.

Use of digital media to drive market linkages

In light of the marketing challenges faced mostly by young women, the OYE project can train young women in the use of social media for business purposes, which includes marketing of products as well as link them to established markets for their products.

Promote gender sensitive financing mechanisms

Innovative sources of finance, financing instruments and financing models should be made accessible to young women. These include the guarantee fund mechanisms, micro-credit, credit enhancement, third party ownership/payment, rural distributed energy service companies, mobile payments, pre-paid, rental and lease finance. OYE's ISALS to promote access to finance by young people can also encourage and assist young women to build their asset base as a gateway towards accessing bigger loans in formal banking institutions.

Strategic partnerships for gender equality and youth empowerment

SNV should build on strategic partnerships with relevant government departments such Agriculture, Women Affairs, Youth, the District Development Coordinator's offices, local authorities and traditional leaders as well as Youth Organisations and CSOs advocating for youth economic empowerment. OYE can then leverage on these strategic partnerships to advocate for young people to be allocated land and other critical resources for their empowerment in the two districts and for them to receive the necessary support offices for sustainability of the interventions and continued integration of gender. There is need to lobby for 50:50 allocation of resources and services for young men and women for youth employment. Female youth champions can be identified from the two districts and supported to spearhead and promote young women's empowerment. In addition, OYE can help create awareness among community leaders and relatives on the need for gender equality in opportunities for young people in agriculture and renewable energy to enable these community elders to appreciate the need to allocate resources such as land to young women as well so that they can equally benefit from the available opportunities.