Toward Self-sufficiency: Improving agriculture and elevating possibilities among rural households in Uganda

Thesis

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Author's notes

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Introduction

Poverty remains a reality for a vast majority of people in Uganda. In rural communities where most people survive on subsistence farming, breaking free from the grip of poverty is a dream yet to be realized. In this study, I provide the roadmap for new possibilities for poor households. Such new possibilities, I contend, must begin by identifying, improving, and utilizing the resources, assets, and skills set in the local community. Sustainable development is achieved by looking into a community to identify and utilize the locally available resources. In the process, the poor themselves must be directly involved because sustainable development requires their participation. Hammond notes that "… those who have a say in creating change are more likely to implement it" (25). For a long time, the poor have been on the receiving end, it is time to equip them to become creators of solutions.

The post-colonial Africa has experienced and continues to be inundated by several socio-economic issues, despite many efforts by foreign agencies and governments through aid and other forms of foreign assistance. One wonders what should be done differently? Many foreigners have gone in and out of poor communities, millions of dollars have been spent and programs have been introduced with the intention to combat poverty, yet little has changed.

Through this study, I have sought for answers to the following key questions: what resources, assets, and skills do poor people possess, what can they do within their means to create sustainable solutions? and where are the gaps to be filled by development workers and partners? Therefore, this study is a contextual response to a problem that has eluded many attempts, programs, and policies aimed at tackling poverty among rural households. It is time for out of the box measures to help the poor.

Having been raised in a rural agrarian community myself, I have a lived experience with the struggles of the rural household. I know what it means to try everything, yet the situation remains more or less the same. As a family, we toiled all year round to produce food that could hardly feed our large family of seventeen siblings. Every crop we planted, every chicken or goat we kept, ended up on our plates for food. Throughout my childhood, I always felt like we were trapped in an endless pursuit of basic needs and there was no room to dream beyond that. We toiled all year round on the farm to grow main staple crops like beans, cassava, millet, sesame, corn, sweet potatoes, and sorghum. Yet, even with hard work, the aggregate harvest was never sufficient to feed our family all year round. There were times we could barely afford one meal a day. I remember several nights going to bed hungry. Whenever drought hit my village, the agony was simply disheartening. Memories of such agonies have given me the drive to seek for answers because I believe change is possible and no one deserves to perish because they cannot have access to food, let alone fulfill their God-given mission in life.

In this study, therefore, I incorporate my passion, along with key principles I have learned from this program to provide some practical recommendations for sustainable transformation in poor communities. Specifically, I focus on the challenges faced by the poor in rural Uganda and consider what an applied alternative approach might look like in that context. My contention is that sustainable development must focus on the resources and the things that work in a local community. In practice, developers should walk alongside the poor and help them identify, expand, and utilize the resources and assets at their disposal. This is a collaboration that respects the local wisdom and puts the poor at the center of the development process.

The main focus of this study is agricultural transformation but I also point out the need for mindset transformation, the creation of local markets, incorporating best practices, leadership development, gainful partnership and honoring eternal perspective. The paper is divided into three sections: A, B and C. In section A, I provide the necessary factors for agricultural productivity such as conducive climate, fertile soil, available labor force and social capital. In Section B, I provide the different ways these factors can be put to use in a contextual and market-oriented manner as well as pointing out some important gaps that need to be filled. Finally, in section C, I offer key recommendations and a model for sustainable transformation in poor agrarian communities of Uganda.

Optimism

Walking through the impoverished villages that are void of modern facilities [like paved roads, electricity or plumbing, hospitals, and schools], one may easily get overwhelmed. Yet in these communities, you hear children singing. You meet loving and wonderful people less encumbered by the demands of western civilization. There is a unique sense of peace and optimism in such communities only known to many as poor. As someone who spent an entire childhood in such communities, every time I reminisce my experiences growing up, I forget the struggles I had, but instead, get filled with fond memories of peace and quiet. Sometimes I miss the simple life in my village.

In the midst of desperation and struggles to meet the very basic needs, in rural communities we also find the priceless gifts of social interaction and support, clean air, undisturbed natural environment, time to slow down and less of the many worries of the people living in the metropolitan. There is still hope and many opportunities among the poor. They may not need skyscrapers in their villages, but a simple means to improve their livelihood. If the right

opportunities are provided to individuals and groups, the poor have what it takes to chart their own destinies.

We all need to be inspired to attain our desired destinies. The poor need a lot more inspiration to find hopeful paths to deal with their problems. When they fail to find hopeful paths, it is easy for them to get overwhelmed by the problems and we often end up failing to try. Both the poor and development workers need to be inspired to try new methods. I am a strong believer in encouraging the local people to dream and to find ways of actualizing their dreams. Problems, I am certain, play a key role in pushing people to be creative. Challenges are also opportunities for innovative problem-solving. When it comes to poor societies, it is important for development workers to see the poor through the lens of hope and to believe in them. As noted by Hammond, "In every society, organization, or group, something works" (5). It is, therefore, the responsibility of development workers to identify what works in the context of a local community and build on the strength of the people.

The process of discovering new possibilities must involve the poor so that they are made part of the process from the beginning. In the context of rural Uganda, agriculture is what works (in terms of what people survive on) for over eighty percent of the population. In the process of improving agriculture, local farmers should be engaged in a step by step process to learn and to implement new methods. If the new methods involve modern technologies, then they should be trained to manage it. To give a brief overview, my data collection involved many in-depth conversations with Ugandan villagers. During the eye-opening sessions of discussions and interviews, the local farmers began to see possibilities of breaking free from poverty by making agriculture more productive. Specifically, household members who participated in this study began to see the value of the land, trees, water bodies, and animals, all of which are at their

disposal. Members began to imagine possibilities and came up with ideas for creating local solutions, improving the agriculture, and strengthening community groups.

It is time for the local people to figure out how they can create their own solutions, starting with the resources at their disposal. A lasting sustainable transformation is largely made by the hands of the local people. In her book, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*. Moyo ratifies:

> Africa's failure to generate any meaningful or sustainable long-run growth must, ostensibly, be a confluence of factors … [however much of the blame is on the interference of those who claim to be helping]. Since the 1940s, approximately US$1 trillion of aid has been transferred from rich countries to Africa. This is nearly US$1,000 for every man, woman, and child on the planet today. Does aid work? [Moyo laments]. (35)

Many authors have labored to assess the effect of aid, and the reality about the failure of aid is undeniable. It is true that aid can offer temporary relief, but when it comes to sustainable development, it is best for the local people to take the wheel and steer their own development agenda.

Aid indeed works if carefully managed. After the second World War, for instance, Eastern Europe benefited from the Marshal policy that called upon the United States and other willing countries to lend a hand toward the recovery of Eastern Europe. Buchannan notes that "… between 1948 and 1952, the European Recovery Program (ERP) pump[ed] $13 billion-worth of aid into the European economy" (40). Judging from current events, Eastern Europe utilized the aid to ensure an economic growth spurt that led to sustainability. Ultimately, the posterity of every society depends on its people and careful resource utilization.

Much as foreign aid used to be a lofty idea and indeed help bail Eastern Europe out of economic stagnation, the experience of aid, especially in sub-Saharan Africa has led to dependence and continues to muzzle local innovation. Today most governments of sub-Saharan African countries cannot even finance their own budgets without financial aid from the Bretton Woods institutions - the World Bank, and International Monetary Funds. Many scholars and I agree with Chollet that, if the poor continue to stay on the receiving end, "They will never 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps' to live meaningful lives" (23). Therefore, there is need to help the poor look inward for their inherent strength, not outward for handouts. Of great importance is the need to place the local people at the center of the development process. The rationale of contextualized development is to avoid the catastrophe of killing local creativity. Once a people group fail to be innovative by their own means, they will automatically become victims of dependence and exploitation.

Background and setting

Prior to my field research, I had the desire to figure out a way of presenting a new picture of a progressive community where its inhabitants are productive and have the means to sustainably meet their needs. This perfect picture would replace the vivid memory of my childhood and the current desperate situation many people in my village are still caught up in.

Of note is that people in the agrarian communities are hardworking, yet little is realized from their toiling. For instance, household members wake up at dawn and head to their respective farms (small family plots). Depending on the farming season, they spend more than half a day plowing, weeding, planting, or harvesting their crops. In the early afternoon, everybody returns home. The girls and the mothers embark on cooking and fetching water and firewood from a distance, while the boys take the goats and cows to graze. The men, on the other

hand, clean up and head to social gatherings. During busy farm work seasons, the families spend even longer hours in the garden, sometimes working till nightfall. Furthermore, since most people do not earn income, the household standard of living is low. As a result, most people sleep in huts, with no plumbing or electricity. The common mode of transportation is by walking on foot and bicycling. The difficulties involved in transportation greatly hamper accessibility to markets, schools, and hospitals, most of which are several miles away.

In spite of the misery in rural communities, it is worthy of praise that the poor still know how to survive: they know how to work together during a crisis, heal their sick using local herbs, combat natural disasters by appeasing the gods and pass down good morals to their children. Such traditional values provide a meaningful life in those communities. In addition, it is important to collaborate with the local communities to learn the best ways of approaching the problems they face.

Research methodology

This study is a qualitative research that offered me a great opportunity to delve deep into the root cause of perpetual stagnation among rural households in Uganda. The rationale for using qualitative research method is that it offered me the opportunity to gather stories and experiences of the people to truly identify the underlying causes of the problems in the community. Additionally, qualitative research is a great tool for community engagement. For community engagement to be successful, however, an understanding of where the people are coming from, their hopes and aspirations are critical in charting the way forward. When a researcher is not familiar with the culture, for example, qualitative research is the best approach for gaining a handle on a relationship with the people. It is an important first step towards a successful

fieldwork research. When we miss the mundane, yet critical aspect of context, we risk making assumptions that can misconstrue results.

Furthermore, for this research, I used appreciative inquiry technique as a positive validating technique for searching what works in poor communities. Using the "5-D model: Define, Discover, Dream, Design, and Deliver or Destiny" (Hammond 26).

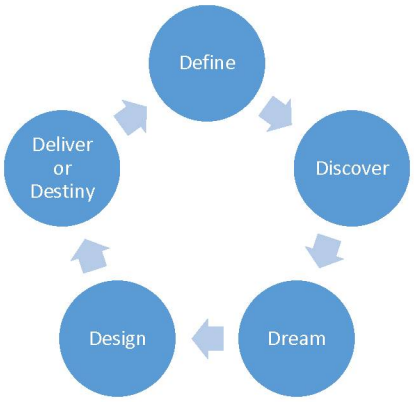


Fig. 1. 5-D model figure from Sue Annis Hammond, "The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry," third edition, Thin Book Publishing Co, 2013.

During the focused group discussions I conducted for this study, each of the session was dedicated to each of the phases of the 5-D model. In the Define phase, members asked questions and defined what they were going to look for. While in the discover phase, members identified the best of "what is" in the community. In the dream phase, the members postulated what "might be" possible within the local means. While the design phase was about imagination and creation of a picture of what the future might be. Finally, the deliver/destiny phase was about how individuals or groups in the community can create a continuous future. The recommendations and model created in this thesis, when implemented, are the good examples of the products that fall under the deliver/destiny phase.

During the field research, I had the privilege to sit and listen, as my informants shared their good ideas, they also shared their frustrations of not being heard by those who claim to care for them. The members of my focused group expressed their dissatisfaction with many programs carried out by foreign agencies. Obua, a member of the focus group exclaimed, "We are never consulted or involved both in planning and implementing NGO projects. They claim the projects belong to us, but we have no idea what goes on in those projects. We feel left out completely." The views of the local people are to be respected. It is indeed true that many programs fail because of lack of involvement. Often, interventionists from foreign countries make mistakes by assuming that they know what is best for the people and fail to consult the local wisdom and to involve the local community in the process. This is also the explanation for the failure of many of those good intentions and programs.

Contextual consideration is an integral part of sustainable development, with it comes the need to respect local wisdom. Any study or development initiative that begins with a positive validation of possibility in a local community is much more likely to succeed because positivity inspires confidence. My experience with positive validation in this study gave me an important lesson that no matter how terrible the situation of the people you are trying to help looks, we must still dig deeper to appreciate the values most inherent in their midst. This also means that when we go into a community, our first instinct should direct us to listen and observe. Normally, we are attuned to the problems. Snow observes that "So often, we make lists of things we haven't done, problems we haven't fixed, and complaints we haven't addressed. We get so accustomed to dealing with negatives that we forget what it feels like to focus on positives. Just looking at [an] asset, then, you might feel set free" (16). To put the words of Snow into practice,

I have devoted the next section for positive validation of what works in the rural community in terms of agricultural productivity.

Section A

Available natural resources

For too long, many people in poor communities of Uganda have focused on the lack of material resources as opposed to focusing on the available resources, assets, and skill set of the people. For this reason, many have been turned into beggars instead of hardworking individuals who can create their own solutions using the available means. Dealing with poverty requires the full participation of the poor, otherwise, our efforts in poor communities cannot go beyond relief. Policymakers and development workers must accept the reality that we cannot always be there for the poor, at some point, the poor must fend for themselves. In this section, I have charted a pragmatic path to such ends. The noble journey to self-sufficiency begins by identifying and appreciating the territorial blessings and God-given capability of the local people. In general terms, indigenous capacity encapsulates neighborhood resources, territorial occupation, skill sets of a people within that territory and enabling factors such as peaceful political atmosphere, good public policies, and able leadership.

When it comes to the case study of rural Uganda, local resources include fertile land, vegetation, rich aquifers, reliable rainfall, and sunshine, to mention a few. The main territorial occupation is farming which is supported by the large size of the hard-working labor force. A recent study shows that "80 percent of Ugandans practice agriculture, 69 percent of the households depend entirely on subsistence farming for their livelihood" (Uganda Bureau of Statistics). Therefore, there is hope that the miracle of transformation can come from Agriculture. The common types of crops and fruits include cassava, millet, sorghum, sesame

(simsim), sweet potatoes, beans, peas, sunflower, Irish potatoes, and maize among others. Fruits include mangoes, oranges, avocado, a variety of bananas, pineapple, watermelon, and papaya. Increasing the quality, quantity, and diversity of these crops and fruits can provide sufficient surplus for sale, hence, generating household incomes.

It is quite deplorable to see little change in the lives of the poor, despite the constant outpouring of foreign aid and other forms of western support since colonial periods. It appears that there are other people benefiting from the programs meant for poverty alleviation. Consequently, the poor have been reduced to mere beneficiaries, who need everlasting help. Pointing out this frustration is in no way intended to disregard all efforts and good intentions to help fellow humans who are experiencing unfortunate upheavals. The main goal of this paper is to emphasize the need to deal with the roots of poverty in a more contextualized and sustainable manner. Therefore, since the rural poor know how to survive, and have survived through farming for ages, it means that farming is their essential means of livelihood. For that reason, it is imperative to channel development efforts along the line of improving agricultural methods.

For someone who has spent his or her entire life practicing agriculture, it makes sense to empower such a person to continue doing the same, only better. For a farmer who has never attended school and possesses no other skills, except tilling land, talking to them about farming is the language they understand. During this study, I interacted with an informant, Nickson Ongora who is so passionate about farming and has many ideas on how to improve farming. Ongora passionately expressed, “I do not know how to read or write and probably never will, but all I have for survival is farming – I hope to increase and do it better.” Ongora believes in timely preparation of his garden, making local manure for the fertilizer, shifting cultivation and proper

processing and storage of his produce. Such a mindset can be expanded and spread to the other farmers.

The improvement of agriculture is indeed a great opportunity for economic advancement for those countries with the agricultural potential. In his book *Promises Not Kept; Poverty and the Betrayal of the Third World Development*, Isbister observes that "The secret behind the urbanization of the now-rich countries was that it depended on almost miraculous improvements in farm productivity, but the third world planners missed this part of the process" (164). It is, therefore, unquestionably important to value the agricultural capability of rural Ugandans, as farming carries the potential for poverty alleviation and transformation, as well as a path to industrialization. During this study, 42 rural households were sampled for an asset mapping and observation. Looking at the 42 households in terms of education, skills, and professionalism, the result shows that 40 households (95.2%) are purely subsistent farmers, and only two households (4.8%), have family members in professional occupations (see Appendix II). Improving farming could be the miracle rural Uganda has been looking for. This is possible because Uganda is blessed with the climate that supports farming.

Conducive climate

Located at the equator, Uganda's temperature is generally warm throughout the year. Although there is an all-year-round precipitation, there are two main rain seasons and two main dry seasons. The rain seasons range from March to May and October to November periods, while the dry seasons fall between December to March and from June to July. Around the shores of lakes and rivers, the annual rainfall received is more than the total received on the mainland. For this reason, farmers who practice agriculture around the lakes and river basins, tend to experience higher yield and they supply the market during low harvest on the mainland.

Sufficient rain is good for the plantation of a great variety of crops and fruits such as rice, bananas, coffee, tea, sugarcane, tomatoes, mangoes, and avocado among others. Others like sorghum, millet, simsim, beans, and peas, require some sunshine to aid drying of the crops. It is important to note that Ugandan farmers still rely heavily on nature to process farm products.

Fertile soil

On top of good climate, Uganda is rich with fertile loam soil that supports crop cultivation all year-round. I had never considered how naturally blessed Uganda is until I began traveling to other countries. In other regions, people literally live in deserts. Conditions in places like the United Arab Emirates are too harsh for farming because temperatures are too high. This is not the case in Uganda, a country so green and enriched by graceful freshwater rivers and lakes. From the peak of Mt. Rwenzori to the northeast plains of Karamoja, one is caught in the wonder of the rich diversity of natural resources, foods, and culture. Of our interest is that most rural households have access to the rich arable farmland, which is the most important factor of production. The result from the asset mapping in 42 households indicates that the poorest households own 0.5 acres of farmland, while 98 percent own between 3 to 10 acres of farmland (see appendix 1). Further, the land is not just fertile, but it is vast, creating an opportunity for intensive agriculture and mechanized agriculture.

Available labor force

In the rural agrarian communities of Uganda, labor is cheap and available. In addition, the population of Uganda is one of the youngest and most vibrant in Africa. According to the 2014 National Population and Housing Census, "Out of the 42 million people in Uganda, 55 percent are youth under 15 years. Only 2.04 percent of the population is 65 years of age and

older" (Uganda Bureau Of Statistics). This young and vibrant population is a true blessing to provide the workforce needed in the agricultural sector.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that by improving agriculture, the vast unemployed Ugandans would find jobs in the agricultural sector. Due to the high unemployment rate in Uganda, many young people graduate from colleges and universities only to spend years looking for white collar jobs. The difficulties involved in finding jobs has pushed some young university graduates back to the agricultural sector and many of them are succeeding. To give an example, Eddy Morris Ogweng is a university graduate who tried to look for well-paying jobs after graduating but failed. Then he decided to open fishing and goat farms. Today Ogweng is the CEO of Odwar Fund, an enterprise that employs over 70 people. In his words, Ogweng noted that "The problem many young Ugandans face is the inability to see the opportunities around them. There are endless opportunities in Uganda, but because of poverty, many people are forced to seek quick solutions rather than dig deeper and work patiently for results." Undoubtedly, one of the places where people can find their fortune is in agriculture. Many young people regard it as a "dirty job," but as I witnessed during this study, such a poor attitude is being dislodged as more people are pouring into the agricultural sector.

The agricultural sector needs the educated class of the population to facilitate the business side of agriculture. Therefore, it is important to appreciate Uganda's vibrant labor as an important factor of production needed in the agricultural sector. Currently many millions of youth are loitering in the cities without real jobs. Real change, however, will begin by changing the attitude of the young laborers. Turning some of this labor force back to the agrarian is also critical in reducing the unemployment rate. All that needs to be done is to create interest and profitability in agriculture, which in turn can inspire creativity and hard work, hence, reversing

the trend of migration from urban to rural. As observed by Rugasira, the CEO of *Good African Coffee* and author of *The Good African Story*, "Africans are one of the most resilient, innovative and creative business people in the world. To navigate poor and decaying road networks…, lack of reliable electricity, or water, all demand ingenuity, agility and determination" (59-60). Indeed, it takes resilience and some sort of creativity to be able to survive in rural Uganda. Rugasira works with coffee farmers in Uganda, and he has a unique experience with the conditions farmers go through in Uganda.

Social Capital

In her book, *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*, Lin notes that "In the past two decades, social capital in its various forms and contexts has emerged as one of the most salient forms of capital" (3). The concept of social capital is pivotal to this study because, in a collectivist society like Uganda, people value relationships and treasure working alongside others. This is important because the work of community development thrives on collaboration with other individuals and groups. Worth noting is that building teams in collectivist societies are easier than in individualistic societies. In collectivist societies, there is already an existing predisposition and a sense of togetherness. In addition, in such societies "… the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individual" (Hofstede et al. Loc.1642). This is the true definition of social capital. It is a value that accrues for the common good.

Furthermore, when it comes to the need to improve farming in rural Uganda, social capital offers a unique contribution to building a collaboration for sustainable agriculture. When farmers work together, they form a network which becomes a support system for every individual farmer. As observed by Pretty in her book *Agri-Culture: Reconnecting People, Land and Nature:*

> A sustainable agriculture cannot be realized without the full participation and collective action of farming households. … the motivation of large numbers of farming households [is necessary] for coordinated resource management; controlling the contamination of aquifers and surface water resources; coordinated livestock management; conserving soil and water resources' and seed stock management… the success of sustainable agriculture depends, therefore, not just on the motivations, skills, and knowledge of individuals farmers, but on action taken by groups or communities as a whole. (22)

The mantra of the conversation during the three-day focused group discussion of my fieldwork was unity. Given their collective culture, the people of Uganda believe that unity is a strength. Specifically, the local farmers in rural Uganda define unity as the ability to achieve more with many hands. To them, an individual effort is not adequate to overcome poverty. As observed by Opio, "When you are poor, it feels like you are in a deep narrow hole, you cannot come out except if someone throws for you a rope." This is a feeling of defeat which is common in poor communities. Opio's observation was on point because everyone, especially the poor people, needs empowerment in terms of knowledge, skills, and credit opportunities to be able to get back on their feet. When put to good use, social capital can be an empowerment to subsistence farmers, setting them on the path of productivity and self-sufficiency.

Social capital enables a collaborative social interaction where members benefit from the contribution of other members. No man can succeed alone. My father used to tell me that the poorest man in the whole world is one without friends. In fact, in Uganda, if you know someone who knows someone else, you are most likely going to get what you are looking for. The point I am trying to make here is that social capital can be a useful tool to galvanize participation and ensures sharing of skills and information. As noted by Dasgupta, "Like other forms of capital,

social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible" (16). In practice, as observed by local farmers during the focused group discussion, farmers can form farming associations and take turns in digging, planting, weeding, or harvesting the crops for individual group members. When such a group is bigger, it means that more farm work can be done faster than an individual is able to accomplish.

Moving forward, another area where rural households are already benefiting from social capital is in the formation of village savings associations. During my fieldwork, I interacted with two such groups. In these groups, each member makes a bi-weekly or monthly deposit of any amount of money into their village savings account. The money accumulates and by the end of the year it is given back to each member and the cycle continues the next year. Village savings associations are a positive response by the local poor to fill the gap created by the lack of financial services in poor communities. As noted by Chru et al.:

> The demand for financial services in rural Africa is huge, but in many cases, financial service providers are too few or nonexistent. In countries where microfinance institutions exist, their coverage is limited due to either insufficient capital or the high collateral requirements that discourage potential borrowers. Moreover, microfinance institutions focus more on lending and less on encouraging the rural population to save more. The underdevelopment of the rural banking sector has become a major impediment to mobilizing savings and to providing essential financial services to rural economic agents. A priority for African governments in the coming decades should be the broadening of financial intervention in rural areas. This could be achieved by liberalizing the financial and banking sectors and by encouraging both competition among different providers,

> from credit unions and savings and loan associations to domestic commercial banks, and the spread of banking services across the country. (21)

The benefit of a village savings association is enormous, especially among the poor who lack creditworthiness for accessing credit from formal financial institutions. Through this study, I learned that members of the village savings groups register economic progress faster than their counterparts. In my findings, I gathered that households that belong to the village savings groups have a better standard of living, children in those households are healthier, attend school and are dressed more decently than their counterparts. In addition, such households experience higher agricultural productivity because they are can afford better seeds and can hire more laborers in their farms.

The contribution of social capital in rural development is unique and unlike the contribution of any other form of capital. As noted by Dasgupta, "Such things as trust, the willingness, and capacity to cooperate and coordinate, the habit of contributing to a common effort even if no one is watching—all these patterns of behavior, and others, have a payoff in terms of aggregate productivity" (7). The model of the village savings schemes mentioned in the previous paragraph is an example of what can accrue from social capital. It creates a social network woven with the thread of trust and loyalty that enables members of the saving's group to obtain credit without any collateral. During my interactions, I learned that non-members can borrow the funds if a member of the group is willing to give a recommendation on their behalf. The beauty of this model is that it is based on trust, the only thing the poor may afford. Otherwise, without collateral, the poor are unable to secure loans from the traditional banks. When farmers have access to financial services, they are able to purchase better farm tools,

seeds, and to pay for the needed labor and procure machinery for processing their produce, eventually boosting agricultural productivity.

Overall, in this section, I described the enabling environment for agricultural productivity for rural agrarian Uganda. Specifically, I noted the existing factors such as fertile soil, reliable rainfall, available labor, and social capital. If all these factors are utilized in a proper manner, the rural poor may also get a chance to bid farewell to poverty, just like other societies have done. In the next section, I take this discussion to the next level by showing how these factors can be used to increase agricultural productivity.

Section B

Utilizing local resources and assets to bring transformation

In the previous section, I pointed out some of the core factors that enable agricultural productivity. In this section, I will show how these local resources can be utilized to spur transformation in the community. It is important to note that the task of transforming the agricultural sector in Uganda requires a collective action of both government and individual farmers. The government of Uganda acknowledges the potential in agriculture and has designed several programs to modernize agriculture. Unfortunately, many of those plans still remain unimplemented. In his book *Advancing the Ugandan Economy*, Suruma notes that:

> The economic vision of the NRM [National Resistance Movement] government for Uganda has been that every household in Uganda should have the means to earn the minimum income that enables it to afford basic human needs such as food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, and education. In this vision, every adult household member is employed, and all household members are able to access essential social services. …

> Every household should have the assets necessary to generate adequate income and savings. (98)

To bring this vision to fruition, however, the government ought to play its central role of providing the necessary infrastructures such as roads, electricity, bridges, and railroads to boost agricultural activities in rural areas. In addition, it is the mandate of the government to provide political stability and favorable economic policies to increase private participation. For example, farmers should be able to access the market easily, while investors should be encouraged to put their money to work in the agricultural sector. But, when the conditions are not favorable, and the roads are deplorable, economic interaction becomes cumbersome. Basau, et al., observe that "A country's macroeconomic policies will affect its growth performance through their impact on certain economic variables" (2-3). In respect to the general condition of the rural farmers I met during my fieldwork, I noticed that the majority of the people are still lacking the basic human necessities. For instance, many people still sleep in dilapidated huts, with no proper community road networks. Families depend exclusively on subsistence farming, and children are poorly dressed and malnourished.

Since the desperate poor cannot sit around waiting for the government to act, they need to take matters into their own hands by becoming innovative in creating their own solutions. Suruma further affirms that "Despite Uganda's significant progress in macroeconomic performance, its poverty level remains a stubborn problem, especially in the rural areas where the absolute number of people living below the poverty line has actually been increasing" (99). In light of this reality, I argue that households should transition from a subsistence to a commercially oriented agriculture, mainly because agriculture is the mainstay of their livelihood

and by far the only activity at their disposal. If managed well, agriculture is potentially a profitable venture for those who do not have other means to thrive economically.

Achieving the goal of breaking the cycle of poverty through commercially oriented agriculture, is a possibility among rural farmers. An important lesson I learned from many local farmers during this study is that despite the apparent misery, local farmers believe they can rewrite the story of their lives by using the income they gain from agriculture to invest in the education of their children. This would prevent the cycle of poverty from repeating in the next generation[s]. A common trend in rural communities is that if a parent stopped attending school in seventh grade (the highest level of education offered by most rural schools), the children are more likely to stop school in seventh grade, then return to the village to get married, have children of their own and embark on subsistence farming for survival. This trend is a major obstacle to the effort of breaking the cycle of poverty. In this section, I argue that by empowering the parents through improved farming, they will be able to earn sufficient income, which can, in turn, be used to improve the household standard of living. The children in those households are more likely to attend school, access medical treatment and eat healthy food. As a result, such children can do more for their own children and this new trend continues until history is completely rewritten for their families. My personal story is a testament to this trend of transformation. For instance, I am determined not to be the only child in my family to obtain a college degree. For that reason, I am committed to motivating and supporting my siblings to attend school and work hard. I am exceedingly happy that so far two of those children have already graduated from college, while others are still in school.

Relevant agricultural mechanism

After sharing a documentary on modern agricultural practices with my focus group members, their faces lit up with excitement and I could tell they admired the idea of the new possibilities in agriculture. However, the magnitude of changes seemed like a stretch to some members who were concerned about their capacity to adopt modern agricultural practices. First, those members had a genuine concern that the operation of such equipment seems too high tech for them to learn. Secondly, due to small land holdings, one member expressed concern that modern agriculture is likely to disrupt current communal farming and settlement, hence, forcing people to engage in costly resettlement and land boundary disputes with neighbors. The main concern of this member was that for the community to get more from modern farming, it must be intensive, requiring large fields. This could involve merging their little plots into community holdings. Many members did not like the idea of merging their farmland because of the controversies that could arise from communal farming. The members, however, agreed that it is more feasible for them to maintain the traditional setup while making individual small-scale improvements.

As I continue to deliberate on the idea of change and new possibilities for boosting agriculture, I would like to point out some of the low-cost farming mechanisms suggested by the members of my discussion group. The members suggested the use of medium intensive methods of farming such as the use of smaller tractors, ox plows, better quality seeds, cloning of fruit trees and basic irrigation systems. For irrigation, farmers suggested rain harvest as the cheapest way of getting water. The absence of piped water systems in rural communities makes it cumbersome for rural dwellers to utilize the water bodies. Practically, rain harvest would involve creating a gutter system that collects rainwater into mounted water tanks. The water is then

distributed through gravity into the garden. In addition, some members suggested sinking groundwater wells or creating an underground water reservoir which is then pumped by a solar-powered motorized system to water the garden. From my observation and interviews, local farmers currently do not practice any form of irrigation, which lowers their productivity, because they must time their crops with the rain season. In case of drought or irregularity caused by global warming, farming comes to a standstill because when seeds are planted the crop fails.

Despite the threat of global warming, farmers in Uganda are still on a much better side of natural luck. As discussed in chapter one, the climate of Uganda is conducive for agriculture. Therefore, any improvement in terms of irrigation and fertilization would boost unprecedented agricultural productivity among rural peasants. The views gathered from the FGD members concerning the various steps necessary for improving agriculture include the following. First, the members agreed that agricultural transformation will involve stopping the use of old skills and traditional methods of food production, to embrace good practices, better methods, and new skills. Secondly, the members suggested the use of local fertilizer to improve the quality of the soil. The local farmers were opposed to chemical fertilizers because of its alleged environmental degradation. Like many environmentally conscious folks around the world, these farmers are right to be afraid of the detrimental impact of chemical fertilizers on their environment. As noted by Freyfogle, "Industrial agriculture puts food on our tables and on the tables of much of the rest of the world. But the land and farmers pay a terrible price, and so do all the species that depend on the land, including us" (4-5). Local farmers cannot afford to lose the fertility of their land, because that is what life depends on in rural agrarian communities.

Soil health is fundamental to agricultural productivity and sustainability. In fact, it is the most important asset of agriculture. Therefore, using chemical fertilizers that permanently

destroy the soil and the environment is not an option in agrarian communities. As an alternative, however, the local farmers suggested the use of natural soil preservation like crop rotation, use of animal manure, compost manure, and planting grass and trees to avoid soil erosion, among others. Some members shared their successful experiences with compost manure and one member illustrated to the group how he makes compost by digging a hole and burying different layers of grass, cassava, sweet potato peels and all kinds of food waste. The hole is covered and left intact for months. Afterward, he reopens it and digs out the compost and spreads it in his plowed field, ready to plant seeds. To me, this type of creativity must be promoted and spread to other local farmers because it is rather organic and feasible. There are of course many other ways of safely preserving the soil. As noted by Pretty, "Soil … [can be naturally] improved through the use of legumes, green manures and cover crops; the incorporation of plants with the capacity to release phosphate from the soil into rotations; … Some of these are age-old practices adapted to today's conditions" (86). In addition, the idea of shifting cultivation and crop rotation is perfect because it prevents soil exhaustion. The problem with shifting cultivation and crop rotation is that many local farmers only own small and single plots of land used every season. Without leeway for resting the land, the soil is exhausting over prolonged periods of intensive cultivation.

Another challenge local farmers face is lack of good seeds. Yet, if a robust agriculture is to be realized, the quality and availability of seeds are key. Today, local farmers are caught up in the dilemma of lack of seeds and the vulnerability to genetically modified seeds. Although GM seeds are seemingly pest resistant and yield high quantity production, the politics and intellectual property right all seem to work to the disadvantage of poor farmers. This research does not provide an explicit answer to the seed dilemma but leaves it as a question for further exploration.

Nevertheless, local farmers believe that they can solve the seed crisis by practicing local seed preservation, grafting, cloning good quality fruit trees. When it comes to animal husbandry, farmers suggested cross-breeding and proper care of farm animals. Farmers also agreed that the problem of low productivity is not just a problem of seeds, but many other factors, like farming methods, soil quality, and drought. Therefore, they believe that with improved farming methods, use of irrigation and fertilizers, crop yield will go up. These improvements will not disrupt and replace the production of the organic local food crops with GM ones.

Moving forward, to maintain a buffer stock of food, farmers should learn to diversify and stock their produce because it carries economic value in the long run. For example, as a farmer and a local business owner, Morris Okullo started his business with the proceeds he gained from farming. He sold his crops, then used the money to buy more produce from other farmers then stocked it. Okullo waited until the season of scarcity when demand was high, then sold his produce, thus, making more than double profit. He did it over and over until he had enough capital to start a small retail shop. Today Okullo's business has expanded into a hardware store and his net worth is about $30,000, this is a level of wealth most rural households can only dream about. If all farmers would think like Okullo, they would have made great changes in their standard of living. In his own words, Okullo suggested that "local farmers should stop lamenting about their conditions and begin thinking of what they can do to change their conditions" (Okullo). Today, Okullo's children attend good schools, are well dressed and healthy. Therefore, there is no doubt that Okullo's family is on the path to breaking the cycle of poverty completely.

Market-oriented Production

Subsistence agriculture and farming for the market are two worlds apart. As noted by Ochieng, "Market-oriented production is characterized by … [an] agricultural transformation

process in which individual farms shift from a highly subsistence-oriented production towards a more specialized one, targeting markets" (40). In the previous sections, I described how peasant farmers can increase their agricultural productivity. This transformation achieves two things at once. First, it will guarantee food security and secondly, farmers will have a surplus production which can be targeted to the market. However, this shift to market orientation comes with three challenges. According to the local farmers, a market-oriented agriculture comes with the need for proper processing of agricultural produce, storage, and transportation.

Subsistence farmers are not encumbered with the demands that face commercial farmers. Therefore for local farmers to produce marketable products, they need to begin thinking about the quality and quantity of their products. In addition, farmers now must consider issues of storage and transportation of produce to the market. When this discussion was brought up during the focused group discussion, some members felt a little overwhelmed by the demands of market-oriented farming, but many were excited and shared many possibilities. At the end of the day, those who felt overwhelmed were encouraged. Members proposed that they could get financial services by joining village savings groups. With financial capital at hand, they can increase agricultural productivity, buy machines like a rice or maize huller for proper processing, build better storage facilities, and acquire wagons or trucks to transport their produce to the market. In addition, members faced the hard reality that there is no getting around the issues of storage because produce like fruits, vegetables, and fish are highly perishable and require proper storage and transportation to the market. They also acknowledged that poor processing and proper storage is responsible for the growing problem of food insecurity. They pointed out an example of fruit seasons when fruits literally rot because no one has the means to process and

store them to be eaten or sold during the seasons of scarcity. It is important for a western reader to understand that refrigeration is luxury for very few affluent people in Uganda.

For local farmers to make a good stride toward the market, they need empowerment through education and training. Unlike subsistence farming which does not require formal training and skills, a market oriented-farming requires necessary technical skills and training to be able to operate equipment and machinery, as well as the general understanding of the market system. In addition, farmers need to understand the regulations governing the quality control and pricing policy. Basically, knowledge and skills come with many benefits to local farmers. For instance, local farmers can learn basic low-cost skills like meat/fish and fruit canning, smoking, and drying. Foods or fruits in these conditions can be stored and used during seasons of scarcity. The more important rationale for knowledgeable farming is that it enables farmers to produce better quality products that can fetch higher prices in the market.

The success of market-oriented agriculture also depends on the collaboration among farming households. As pointed out by Dorward et al., "Farmer groups as an institution of collective action offer [an] opportunity for smallholders to participate in the market more effectively. They can enhance market access for smallholder farmers, …" (45). When farmers collaborate with their counterparts, it is easier to conquer market challenges. For example, when farmers collaborate during production, it prevents duplication of crops so that there are varieties on the market. Besides, a handful of farmers cannot produce enough to meet the demand, therefore, farmers who are acting in collaboration are able to put enough products on the market. Furthermore, collaboration carries an important benefit of enabling local farmers to access financial services. As a group, local farmers can apply for loan capital from banks and are more likely to succeed because of a stronger bargaining power and convincing collateral. In addition,

when farmers act together, they have a stronger voice to entreat the government to engage in the infrastructural development and rural electrification to boost agricultural development. It is a lot harder, however, for individual farmers who are acting alone, to put up a strong bargain for better prices. But when they act under one umbrella group, their voices are stronger and can move mountains.

Boosting agricultural production among local farmers could be the first step to a more sustainable agriculture. Looking to the future, agriculture should not stop at the level of production, but the increase in production should be an opportunity to introduce at least a single rural agriculture-based industry in every community. Having an agriculture-based industry in a rural community provides a constant market to farmers. There are of course more benefits like job creation, infrastructural development, and social services provisions. According to the World Bank Report *Promoting Agriculture-led Rural Industrialization,* "On its own, productivity growth in agriculture will not be able to solve the problem of chronic food insecurity, underemployment, and poverty in rural areas. The agricultural sector has to be used as a basis for wider African industrialization" (22). The development of rural communities and social institutions, and the sustainable use of natural resources, and the protection of the environment are synergistic and interdependent. Many advanced economies today, I believe, began by proper management of land and other natural resources. Therefore, I believe Uganda can tap its rich agricultural potential to follow this trend of development.

Nature, Culture, Food, and Farming Practices

The journey toward increased and market-oriented agricultural production ushers in yet another challenge, to which I devoted this entire section. A common phenomenon of ecological disruption arises when people become obsessed with profit maximization. The local farmers in

Uganda are aware of some of the farming activities that are detrimental to the environment. During this study, farmers pointed out activities like deforestation for firewood, making clay bricks that remove the top fertile soil, and destruction of wetlands for constructions and farming. As observed by Dale, et. Al., "There is the obvious disconnection between the ecological, the social, and the economic. That occurs when one is pursued relentlessly at the expense of the others. It occurs when one of the capitals, usually the economic, dominates and swamps the other capitals" (6). In our context, when farming is pursued at the expense of the environment, a greater damage is caused and our dependence on nature is disrupted.

Life is connected to nature more than we seem to realize. When we destroy nature, we are actually destroying our own lives. When we contaminate the water system or the soil with chemical waste, there is no avoidance of direct impact on both humans and animals. In her book *Reconnecting People, Land and Nature*, Pretty notes that "We still have close connections to nature. Yet, many of us in industrialized countries do not have the time to realize it" (5-6). The implication is that we may end up with a planet that is no longer livable because we have not been good stewards of our environment or brothers and sisters. Martin Luther King Jr. Once noted that "Before you're finished eating breakfast this morning, you have depended on more than half the world. This is the way our universe is structured … we aren't going to have peace on earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of reality" (qtd in Moe Lobeda 23). Having a good sense of the interconnectedness of life should guide our actions at every level, otherwise, development or human advancement will do more harm than good.

In this regard, as local farmers yearn for improved agricultural productivity, they should be sensitive to their responsibility to take care of the environment. At a community level, during this study, farmers suggested the need for a collaboration with farming households to ensure

effective water management, labor sharing, and marketing. Pastoralists should avoid overgrazing, fishing families and their communities must jointly manage aquatic resources. Such collaborations can be affected through institutionalized local associations, through clan leadership, water users' groups, grazing management societies, women's self-help groups, village savings groups, youth clubs, church groups, tree associations, and growers' societies. An important revelation I gained from this study is that the local people always have systems in place to manage the environment in a way that benefits them and the future generations. Fabiscrius observes:

> … ordinary men and women are managing and using resources (for example, plants, animals, forests, wildlife, and crops) in ways that enhance their lives. They get food, fuel, building materials and spiritual nourishment from natural resources and, either consciously or unconsciously, manage these resources through the local rules, taboos, and belief systems that they have developed in particular contexts. (xiv)

A fundamental aspect of this study is the acknowledgment and focus on the local wisdom and other capabilities such as skills and resources. Local contribution is always pivotal for sustainable development.

In this section, I discussed the journey local farmers can take, from merely practicing agriculture to put food on the table, to a type of farming that can bail them out of poverty and usher in a sustainable community transformation. For this milestone to be achieved, I pointed out that it begins by empowering local farmers with skills, and financial services to boost agricultural productivity at the local level. Once productivity is achieved, then the next phase is to access the market with their agricultural produce. When farmers can sell what they produce, there will be an automatic reciprocation in boosting further productivity. However, to avoid

falling headlong on the pursuit of profit and thus, disregarding the damages caused on the environment, farmers need to practice responsible agriculture. This holistic kind of farming and sustainability requires a collaboration among stakeholders, including government and community groups. A careful move toward sustainable agriculture can potentially translate into job creation, infrastructural development, provision of social services, and general improvement in the standard of living.

Section C

A new model of transformation

How can I help? A friend of mine desperately asked. I could feel deep compassion he had, yet at a loss for ideas and answers to the problems before his eye. As someone from the western world, this friend of mine was experiencing for the first time, the disheartening circumstances of the people living in Internally Displaced People's Camps, during the rebel war in northern Uganda. In fact, this is not the first time someone asked me a similar question, I still hear it and often see it expressed through many endeavors in poor communities. There are many well-meaning people who want to make a change, but they simply do not know how. Personally, I am still in search of the best way[s] of helping those in need. My quest for answers also drove me to this ICD program. And now, I can confidently say that I see the world a lot clearer and have gained very useful tools and ideas on how to approach the problem of poverty. In this section, therefore, I have incorporated my passion and the lessons I have learned in this program to try and respond to the question at the beginning of this paragraph. In addition, I have drawn from the last two sections to provide a contextualized model for enriching and equipping the local population to take charge of the transformation process.

At the center of my heart is the desire to empower the poor because prosperity cannot be imported. They must be created and sustained by the local people. The empowerment I have in mind is two-fold. First is to the need to provide education and skills training to the poor. As the world is changing, it is important not to leave others behind, otherwise, they would be completely cut from the modern society. The poor need information, skills, and opportunities, not more aid. It is for this reason that I propose a village-based training that capitalizes on providing customized business education to the illiterate population. The detail of this training initiative is elaborately provided in appendix I. In summary, however, I argue that the poor need entrepreneurial skills to become business savvy within their own local communities. They would then engage in economic activities that depend on the asset-based approach. According to Ssewamala et al. "The asset-based approach to development… enable[s] individuals and local communities to take action to improve their life situation" (434). As described in the model found in Appendix I, a local entrepreneurial training provides useful business education that utilizes local resources and networks.

A second aspect of empowering the poor involves the provision of access to micro-credit facilities. After acquiring the business skills, many people failed to take the next move because of lack of capital. For the poor and illiterate population, the chances of accessing loans from formal financial institutions are limited for lack of collateral and steady income. There is a need for locally based credit facilities (a good example is the Bangladesh Grameen Bank of Mohamed Yunus), to provide microcredit loans at low-interest rates and without demands for collateral.

Changing the counter-productive mindset

This next section explains the importance of helping people in poor communities change some of the pre-existing mindset and attitude that seem to hinder their advancement. I will begin

by illustrating this point with a story. When I was a boy, I remember one evening sitting around the bonfire, while my father told a hypothetical story of a wild animal that was caged within a wire fence. According to the story, the caged animal tried to run against the wall of wire blades, only to bleed with bruises, its hopes of escape shattered. Several months later the cage was dismantled, however, the animal never dared to run ever again – the fear of getting hurt again kept the animal put. This story alludes to the presumptuous notion that seems to be set in the minds of some people in poor communities, especially in Uganda where this study was based. The fatigue from failed attempts to alleviate poverty still looms large in the country, and that has had a profound effect on the thinking process of many people.

Most scholars tend to agree that the complexity of the problem of poverty in Africa is rooted in the colonial and imperialist tendencies that began invading the continent from the 1800's to this date. A common thread that runs back in the history of Africa shows that the spirit of innovation was literally crushed by imperialist governments from so-called civilized countries. The establishment of the Colonial Era in the late 1800s did more harm than good, as it turned Africans into slaves and strangers in their own land. Furthermore, colonialism which led to the scramble and partitioning of the continent, was naïve of ethnic boundaries, consequently leading to all sorts of political, geographical, cultural, and economic chaos that affect the continent to this day. During the cruel western hegemony, people were bought and sold and treated inhumanely for centuries. Any African who resisted the system was brutally punished and psychologically tortured.

This era destroyed the thought process of many and stifled a natural disposition to create and initiate solutions to the problems that faced Africans, by Africans. When we fail to see this kink in the cultural "DNA" of creativity in Africa, all good intentions will continue to fail, while

the problem of poverty remaining intact. The outside world continues to blindly pour billions of dollars in aid into the continent, yet, instead of solving the crisis, this constant river of cash has changed little. Today, poverty, sickness, and death across Africa continue to prevail, while Africans have become almost entirely dependent upon "Band-aid" handouts from foreign entities, to nurse the symptoms of a chronic and deeply rooted problem.

During the colonial era, the local farmers were not in charge, their roles were limited to planting and harvesting the crops. The colonial experts were in charge of the processing, transportation, and sale of finished products. Even after the independence, as noted by Suruma, "The new country's basic economic infrastructure – banks, factories, railways, plantations, and other critical productive entities – remained, as they had been during the colonial period, under the ownership and control of foreign[ers]" (28). Now that Africans are no longer under the yoke of imperialist governments and are in charge of their own fate, the mandate for development falls into their own hands. It is time to join the rest of the world in shaping a better future for the next generation. The 21st-century globalization offers the people in the global south the opportunity for enlightenment and information sharing. Governments and the private sector should take advantage of the global economy to create development initiatives.

Creating local markets

When it comes to trade, often many people assume that because of globalization, the rest of the world has a fair shot at participation, but in reality, this is not feasible for everyone, especially the local farmers in remote villages. Thus, there is a need for strengthening local markets to promote local trading. According to Fratianni, "Consumption, for example, has a strong domestic bias. Distance and borders are two important reasons for this bias and are a powerful deterrent to globalization" (8). There are local farmers in Uganda who have neither

heard nor understand how the global economy functions. Such farmers live in remote places where information flow is hampered by lack of electricity, internet access, language barrier, infrastructures and no modern means of transportation. This means that they cannot rely on the global market.

The problem of production and marketing is felt at the very local level. According to the International Monetary Fund:

> Most farmers in Uganda sell less than 50 percent of their produce and this is done mainly at the farm gate… poor people continue to face problems in processing, storing and marketing their agricultural produce… exploitation by traders, poor roads, unfavorable tax regime, lack of market information, unequal gender relations and lack of effective organization were identified as the major causes of the marketing problems. (95)

The unfairness of international trade leaves poor farmers as victims of dumped goods and foods from other countries. Dumped goods have a tendency of muzzling local production. When the local market is flooded with foreign cheap goods, local producers can no longer profit from their products, hence, they stop producing. There is, therefore, a greater need to promote economic interactions at the local level with the constant movement of goods and services within a single geographical area.

Furthermore, a local market system such as farmers' market, was highly recommended by the local farmers during my fieldwork. They believe that organizing themselves in farming communities is a first and important step toward boosting local sales of produce. A local farmer by the name Gummaka lamented, "What good is it if you toil all year round only to see your crop rot because there is no market" (Gummaka). There seems to exist a general frustration among local farmers because of lack of market. For this reason, the local farmers see the need to

organize themselves into farming communities as a starting point. This will be followed by an organized farmers market held monthly to showcase and sell their best products to the local community.

There are many benefits that can accrue to local farmers who have come together. As noted by Ochieng, "Farmer groups as an institution of collective action offer opportunity for smallholders to participate in the market more effectively. They can enhance market access for smallholder farmers, which in turn increases household income, food security, more employment and sustainable agricultural growth" (45). After local farmers have organized themselves and have come to a place when they have improved the quality of their products, they can then join the regional trading community such as East African Community or EAC. According to UN-OHRLLS, the East African Treaty "Outlines co-operation in trade, investment, and industrial development; monetary and fiscal policy; infrastructure and service; human resource, science and technology; free movement and of the factors of production …" (187). When local farmers in Uganda can reach the level of involvement in the regional trade, they will for sure have raised a higher standard that comes with much more benefits.

Overall, the improvements that begin from a local level prepares local farmers to participate regionally and eventually internationally. When local farmers come together and begin to interact with other farmers in the region, some of the benefits that may accrue to them include information sharing, quality regulation, and foreign exchange.

Promoting best practices

A key advantage of living in the 21st century is the free flow of information. Because of globalization we can all learn from one another and share vital information, methods, and skills to improve human life around the world. In addition, since we all share common challenges,

those who are still grappling with challenges can learn from those who have conquered similar problems. Accordingly, local farmers in Uganda can learn from other communities and individuals who are practicing successful agriculture. In fact, local farmers do not need to look far away for the best practices because there are some local farmers in Uganda who are already practicing better agriculture. One of the examples of such farmers (whom I very much admire) is Andrew Rugasira, the proprietor of the famous *Good African Coffee* that now sells in the global market. Like many other farmers in Uganda, Andrew has learned the secret and power of agricultural investment in Uganda. At a local level, farmers may simply adopt low-cost practices like timely preparation of their gardens to wait for the first rain, good choice of crops (planting more of the crops that take shorter gestation periods of three months or less) and covering the topsoil with grass or leaves to reduce loss of water from evaporation.

Due to prolonged drought caused by global warming, farmers are seeing the need to abandon the tradition of perennial crops that take longer to mature and to instead plant annual or seasonal crops like sweet potatoes, tomatoes, beans, soya beans, rice, Irish potatoes, cabbage, carrots, and onions among others. Some farmers are resorting to the fishery, piggery, dairy cows and poultry as an alternative to crops. As noted by Freyfogle, "The choice is understandable, since annual plants take hold more quickly and bear more abundantly than perennial do…" (7). The pictures below show some of the examples of the seasonal crops I saw during my fieldwork. These farmers are enthusiastic about planting different seasonal crops and in return, they are practically realizing a great harvest sometimes twice a year.

Beans

Cabbage

Another good practice that is being carried out by local farmers is the maintenance of soil health. Sustainable agriculture starts with the soil by seeking to reduce soil erosion and to make improvements to soil physical structure, organic matter content, water-holding capacity, and nutrient balances. Local farmers are improving soil health through the use of legumes, green manures and cover crops; this is the incorporation of plants with the capacity to release phosphate from the soil into rotations. Some farmers are using composts and animal manures, the adoption of zero-tillage, and the use of inorganic fertilizers where needed.

It is hope-inspiring that countries that were once agrarian communities managed to transform their societies into modern economies, beginning with agriculture transformation. As noted by Alam, "From a background of a colonial agrarian open economy, Malaysia formally started her industrialization journey in 1957 and proceeded phase by phase through the roadmap of development to realize her vision of becoming a 'fully developed' nation by 2020" (401). It is important to note that these countries did not just wake up one morning to success, they had to overcome numerous challenges. On the bright side, however, poor communities can avoid the mistakes and simply pick the good practices that worked for those countries. Agricultural transformation takes hard work and goes in stages, depending on the challenges in the region.

Some of these challenges can be drought, which can be navigated through irrigation. Others could be soil exhaustion, managed by proper use of fertilizer. A common challenge in these agricultural communities is poor road network. However, the communities that have transcended through these challenges give vital lessons to be adopted.

Filling the leadership gap

Good and visionary leadership is a central part of the development process. Without capable leaders, there is little progress in a society. The post-colonial Africa has been and continues to be a victim of poor leadership. It is befitting to assert that the problem of the African continent is primarily leadership oriented. Poor leadership is characterized by susceptibility to imperialist manipulation, lack of national spirit and patriotism, corruption, lawlessness, immature politics, and nepotism to mention a few. Like the old saying goes, "the fish starts rotting from its head." It is sad to note that poor national leadership trickles down to the grassroots. This owes to that fact that national leaders ought to be a good example. Therefore, if the dream of community development should be realized, there is need to raise young leaders to take on the mandate of current and future leadership.

For sustainable development to be achieved in any local context, good leadership must be among the priorities. When groups are formed, there are rules that are set. Therefore, able leadership is critical for executing such rules. Both leadership and rules are critical to the success of any group or society. It is important to note that many group endeavors fail because rules and regulations are imposed rather than developed by members themselves. Rules made by the members themselves increase the likelihood of successful adherence to the rules by all members. One of the weaknesses of externally funded programs is the imposed rules that are unfamiliar in the local context, hence, causing greater cultural conflict. I, therefore, submit that there is a need

for informed local leadership and establishment of culturally appropriate rules and regulations that are generated by the people themselves.

Furthermore, at a community level, leaders play important roles of community mobilization, providing a sense of direction, guiding implementation of policies and programs, settlement of disputes and fostering teamwork. As noted by Sinek, "The role of a leader is not to come up with all the great ideas. The role of a leader is to create an environment in which great ideas can happen. It is the people …, those at the front line, who are best qualified to find new ways of doing things" (99). This is a good model that is still lacking in the context of Ugandan leadership. Ugandan political and cultural leaders still operate under the auspice of "high power distance" and assume ultimate power and control. According to Hofstede, "Power distance can be defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Institutions are the basic elements of society, such as the family, the school, and the community" (chap 3, par18). As indicated by Hofstede's indices of cultural dimensions, Uganda falls under the East African category with 66 PDI or Power Distance Index. Some of the indications of high power distance in the context of Uganda's culture are lack of freedom of expression (the fear of questioning leaders), autocracy, and victimization of the innocent. In my opinion, implications of high power distance are more negative than positive. Autocracy, for instance, is detrimental to development in many ways. For instance, it keeps leaders far removed from capable leadership. As observed by Maxwell, "Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less" (17).

Many African leaders tend to operate under leadership myths of pioneering, position, and knowledge. To give an example the current ruling National Resistance Movement - NRM government, took over power in the 1986 guerrilla war. Children born after 1986 have never

seen another president. The claim of the NRM government is that they are the pioneers and revolutionaries who have earned the right to lead the country. No one is allowed to question these motives and although elections are held, the votes are a mere symbol of democracy. When a country lacks civil, social and economic participation, development takes a much slower pace. Perhaps this explains why a more democratic and lower power distance societies experience robust growth and development than their counterparts with high power distance, like Uganda, where leaders only seek to bolster their reign and profit from the public resources.

In community development work, leaders also play an important role in unifying the people. This is because community development is a collective responsibility that brings together people who may not share a similar belief background. This requires leaders who understand all groups can create a team of diversity. Groups often tear apart because of interpersonal issues that are why we need leaders who can harmonize and engage everyone productively. The new leadership model requires servant leaders. The old African leadership model tends to put leaders above the law, but when it comes to enforcement, such leaders are rendered powerless because they lack moral authority to command respect and following.

Weak leaders also give birth to weak leaders. That is why in this new model, I argue that young people should be engaged and trained. In Uganda for instance, there are very few leaders who lead by example. As a result, potential leaders are left without mentors to learn from. To avoid repeating similar leadership styles in the future, there is need to intervene and train young leaders. In an interview, Ongom asserted that "The time is now for selfless people to invest in the younger generation because if we don't, Africa will experience worse leadership crises in the future than we already have" (Ongom). During our time of potent leadership discussion, Ongom expressed deep concern that today's leaders have failed in their primary role of modeling a better

future because they are in leadership for their own gratification. Indeed, Africa's underdevelopment is tied to its poor leadership, and only by improving leadership can Africa experience transformation in other areas, beginning with the minds of the people.

Gainful partnership

Sometimes helping hurts. How then can those who have good intentions help without hurting? In this model, I argue that partnership ought to pay close attention to the culture and views of the local people. Much as the poor need the rich, the rich also need the poor. However, when it comes to community development, the poor must be consulted. A contextualized and careful collaboration (which does not perpetuate dependence), can benefit poor communities in unprecedented ways. For instance, by collaborating with richer and more developed countries and agencies, poor communities can access new information and modern technologies that can enable them to leapfrog into transformation. The involvement of foreigners, however, ought to take careful steps to avoid perpetuating the dependence mentality. One of the international organizations that are practicing a careful collaborative work in poor communities of Uganda is Children of the Nations - COTN. This organization follows through with its mission of transforming the locals, who in turn transform their own communities. In an interview with Kristen Marks, the liaison officer for COTN Uganda, Marks profoundly affirmed that:

> Community development should be community driven. It should be based on what the community needs, and most importantly it is all about participation. By encouraging participation, we give and maintain the dignity of the people. We foreigners should act in ways that are respectful to the people by acknowledging their unique abilities given by God to be creators. A lot of times we want to do things for the people without their participation, that is just wrong. By doing this, foreigners suppress local creativity by

> flooding their economies with subsidies and finished products. Development should be done in a way that promotes human flourishing. In the economy of God, there is enough to go around. Another important aspect is to acknowledge that the traditional Christian and family values are important in development. (Marks)

Mark's statement connects well with the message of contextual development embodied by this study. It is a message that all those who wish to be involved in development work should bear in mind: that it is imperative to put the local people at the center of development work. Too many mistakes have been made because foreigners and the locals themselves have never quite understood the essence of sustainable collaboration for local development.

Once a local community has been supported with all the necessary tools, knowledge and resources they need to get started, it is critical that the foreigners should dislodge their control and leave room for the locals to flourish with less interference. As observed by Glenwinkle, the president of Village Care International, "We understand that the catalyst necessary to effect change is to allow people's natural capacity to solve their own problems emerge" (villagecare.org). Unlike some international organizations that tend to spoon feed the poor, Village Care is among the few organizations that simply focus on empowering the people to look inward for their own natural capacity. This approach appeals to me deeply because I believe that when relief and other forms of assistance are mishandled, they can exacerbate the problem instead of reducing it.

Incorporating the eternal perspectives

As a Christian development worker, I know that development is incomplete without an intentional alignment with the greater redemption plan of God. It is important to see this world as fallen but also to be filled with hope that the one who created it will restore it. As written in the

book of Romans, "Creation was subjected to frustration but not by its own choice. The one who subjected it to frustration did so in hope that it would also be set free from slavery to decay in order to share the glorious freedom that the children of God will have" (Rom.8.20-21 GWT). Therefore, when we deal with poverty, for instance, it is important to gain a full view of the problem. Poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon that encapsulates the physical, spiritual, psychological and mental aspects of human life. Therefore, focusing only on the physical well-being leaves our work of transformation incomplete. As noted by Myers, "The biblical worldview is holistic in the sense that the physical world is never understood as being disconnected or separate from the spiritual world and rule of the God who created it" (chap. 1, par. 32). The effort to help people break free from poverty involves an understanding that the mission is not possible without a full view of the problem and an integrated approach that is required to uproot it. Myers continues to argue that "When most people think of development, they think of material change or social change in the material world. Secondly, development is a term that many understand as a synonym for Westernization or modernization" (chap. 1, par.11). This is indeed limiting and myopic in the sense that it focusses the effort to seek wellbeing solely in terms of material possession.

As [we] the development workers go into poor communities to help champion development work, it is pivotal for development workers to bear in mind that the spiritual and physical realms are connected in the most intricate sense. Therefore, as noted by Okalo (pastor) in an interview, "Tackling the physical aspects of poverty and leaving out the spiritual, emotional, and mental aspects leave the work incomplete." As a Christian minister whose plan is to be invested and serve among the poor, my hope is to be ready with the Bible in one hand and the development tools on the other hand. From my experience, preaching the holy word is not

enough. The problems in poor communities are more complicated, requiring a comprehensive approach.

Our world is connected in ways that we often fail to notice. Therefore, it takes a deep search to arrive at the solutions we seek. In the context of dealing with poverty, it is important to add that sometimes development workers need the divine guidance of the benevolent creator because he is the one who can work things out. We are simply part of the work. When it comes to helping the poor, it helps to know that God already cares for the poor. Ironically, God views all of us as desperately poor and in need of the salvation only God can provide. It is important to note that eternal perspective offers a broader meaning in life and opens our minds to issues beyond the skyline of this material world. When we work with the idea that our achievement is not limited to material accumulation, it broadens our hearts and minds to consider greater ends. Such greater ends include the redemption agenda of God and the need to build healthy relationships with fellow human beings, regardless of our differences. After all, we share a common destiny. In addition, our peace and freedom are connected to the peace and freedom of others. When they are hurting it can affect us. Just like the mistake we make in trashing the environment, it comes around to bite us with pollution. Therefore, we need to clothe ourselves with mercy toward others- Miroslav Volf calls this a *Catholic personality*. According to Volf, "A Catholic personality is a personality enriched by otherness, a personality which is what it is only because multiple others have been reflected in it in a particular way. The distance from my own culture that results from being born by the spirit creates a fissure in me through which others can come in. The Spirit unlatches the doors of my heart saying: 'You are not only you; others belong to you too'" (51). We can only experience complete joy when we live in harmony with God, with others and the environment.

Overall, eternal perspective also opens our minds to biblical business principles and teachings that offer a broader view of the problems of humanity and how to respond to them. In other words, religion teaches almost everything we need to know about the relationship with God himself, our fellow man and the environment. Without this balanced view of our world, we risk leaning heavily on one side – and we already did it through capitalism.

Conclusion

In this study, I argue that contextualized development should begin with the identification, improvement, and utilization of local resources and assets. In other words, sustainable development involves focusing on the strengths and the things that give life in poor communities as opposed to importing finished products. The contribution of the local people is irreplaceable. It is, therefore, key that the poor are empowered and situated at the center of the development process. In Uganda where most people depend on farming, the improvement of agriculture would have a far-reaching impact on the people and the communities. By increasing agricultural productivity, the problem of food insecurity and starvation would be averted, and the income of local farmers would increase from the sale of agricultural produce.

As carefully studied through this research, there are great potential and opportunities in poor communities. It is rather unfortunate that many in poor communities do not see the opportunities they have. Often people from other countries are the ones who see such opportunities and some have taken advantage of it through investment. They need both help to see such opportunities and the means to actualize them to create self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, since farming is the mainstay of many people in the local communities of Uganda, the best way to improve the livelihood of the poor is to provide local farmers with the skills, relevant technique and needed capital. Additionally, there are many other potential areas

that can be developed to empower the poor to be more productive. These include social capital, human capital, and business opportunities. Accordingly, I offer some new models that can help guide the cause of action along these paradigms (see Appendices I and II). With the right skills and opportunities, the poor, too, can prosper.

Appendix I: A practical training model

This model is pragmatic proposal and a recommendation for an entrepreneurial development initiative and microcredit program that is meant to aid transformation in the agrarian communities of northern Uganda. The proposal was inspired by the findings of this study and generates its content from the wisdom of those who contributed to this research. The rationale for this proposal is based on the idea that the poor need knowledge, skills, and credit, not handouts. The thesis of this study is a contextual development that underscores the need for acknowledging the local contribution in creating self-sufficiency and economic independence. However, to achieve that end goal of self-sufficiency, first, it calls for breaking the dependence syndrome, and secondly to equip the poor with the necessary tools for creating solutions. As I noted before, my stance on unrooting charity does not mean that I am totally dismissive of charity, but I believe charity is a special part of human society. It plays a unique role, but that role is not sustainable development. Mohammad Yunus affirms that "…charity is [not] a bad thing [and that] charity is very important. But charity has a time and place where it can be. Not every situation should be addressed by charity. And charity always has to be a temporary phenomenon, not a permanent solution" (Kiva). I agree with Yunus on his stance on charity because I believe Africa has and continues to experience a great deal of charity, but little has changed, and many people remain poor despite the massive inflow of charitable funds and other material gifts. The reason is well stated by Yunus: charity is not sustainable. It is against this backdrop that the contributors of this study overwhelmingly supported a village-based institution that can provide entrepreneurial training to local farmers and to the potential small business owners. The institute would be a social enterprise with the mission of providing business knowledge and skills to the poor. The uniqueness of such an institute is that it would not consider

educational background as a qualification, but it is meant for and is customized for the illiterate population.

Developing the entrepreneurial skills of the illiterate and poor people takes more than giving them knowledge. Many people need the skills as well as access to credit. It is important to remind the reader that African poverty is an age-old phenomenon that seems to have eluded efforts directed toward its mitigation. In Uganda, poor people are helplessly dependent on subsistence farming, unreliable government services, and on foreign support. Despite the constant flow of handouts, however, the condition of the majority of the people is still deplorable.

It is against this background that this study proposes an establishment of a village-based entrepreneurial training institute that will unleash the creativity of the poor and provide them with the tools to engage in gainful economic activities. As observed by Groody, "…many today are poor not because of laziness but because of a system of structures, policies, and institutions that greatly diminish their options and keep them in poverty" (chap.4, par.10 kindle). Therefore, I believe the catalyst necessary to effect change is to allow people's natural creativity to emerge. The reality is that socio-economic transformation cannot be imported from elsewhere, it must be created locally. To move the poor away from the receiving end, they need entrepreneurial skills and credit services to launch themselves into active economic participation.

Contextual entrepreneurial training

A village development institute will be built on the premise that the best way to help the poor is by empowering them to create sustainable solutions. In this context, the poor would be empowered with business skills and credit, hence, they can earn income and heal the wounds of poverty in their lives. One of the primary objectives of the institute is to guide students to

develop skills in their areas of interest and skill sets. Additionally, unlike traditional business institutes and universities that only consider students with a formal education background, VDI would provide business training to the poor and illiterate population. This model would bridge the gap that has been created by systematic and institutional injustice. As a result, the poor are left as passive observers, while those with the means are making economic progress, and worst of all, often at the expense of the poor themselves.

How does village development institute work?

To be practical, the institute would translate study materials and give lectures in the local language. In addition, courses would be customized to specific needs and aspirations of students. With a focus on agri-business, core business subjects such as business management, financial management, marketing skills, and leadership among others, will be taught. Students will have the freedom to choose the areas they wish to explore deeper and develop creativity in line with their capabilities. In addition, most courses will be delivered in form of practicums that encourages experimentations. In the case of farming, it will involve pilot agriculture to test new methods and seeds. Students will be encouraged to try new experiences and practices in the process of building their individual creative confidence. This process may involve several trials and errors that come with building prototypes and experimentations. As noted by Kelley and Kelley, "It's not about coming up with the one genius idea that solves the problem but trying and failing at a hundred other solutions before arriving at the best one" (114).

In this process, the community would be encouraged and challenged to strive and develop their innovative skills. The institute would provide an open opportunity to all who are willing to learn. Those who enroll as full-time students and those who become microcredit customers are not considered beneficiaries but clients and customers who will be served and treated with

respect and dignity. For too long, the poor have only been looked at as beneficiaries and beggars. As noted by Bornstein and Davis, "The shift from 'beneficiaries' to 'customers' isn't only a shift from 'free' to fee.' When done well, it can reorient the focus of an organization from its own needs to the needs of its clients" (54). Changing our outlook of the poor from beneficiaries to clients becomes an empowerment for those once looked down upon and mutual respect is created.

The largest fraction of the world population is the poor populace. As noted by Bornstein and Davis, "One big significant demographic difference is that the poor are the majority in developing countries, so poverty is a central political issue… the big constraint they face is resources" (44). I believe business development is one of the best ways of salvaging the untapped potential among the poor. For instance, when empowered to start businesses and increase their purchasing power, the poor can become a formidable source of market for the world's products. The irony is that today the poor are being exploited in farms and factories of large corporations, that care less to improve the livelihood of the poor. At VDI, however, we will focus not only on profit, but our ultimate fulfillment will come from seeing the poor rise on their feet and become self-sufficient.

How feasible is a VDI?

Lynch and Walls assert that "The mantra behind every successful business is repetitively simple: find a need or want and then figure out how to fill it at a cost to the seller that is less than the buyer is willing to pay to satisfy the need" (2). At VDI, we will employ several strategies to unleash their untapped potentials and creativity. We will work around the clock with our clients to discovery capabilities and validate every gift and potential. When it comes to teaching, we will also separate classes according to areas of interest and gifting.

Furthermore, to measure the impact of our programs, we will constantly perform an outcome-based evaluation. In social entrepreneurship, results are important. As noted by Bornstein and Davis, "… social entrepreneurship is characterized by a rigorous focus on results, traditionally a weak spot for social programs" (61). Therefore, at VDI we will create a department that ensures regular outcome-based evaluation. As observed by Reisman and Clegg, "(An outcome-based evaluation) … begins by asking a simple question, 'What has changed in the lives of individuals, families, organizations, or the community, as a result of this program?'" (14). At the end of every milestone, we will ask ourselves "So What?"

- After we have taught business skills, what creative skills are produced?
- What difference is microcredit making in the lives of the poor?
- How many businesses have been started?
- Can we see tangible indicators of improvement in the household standard of living, after a year or two?

The "So what" theory of change is an important strategy we shall use in assessing the effectiveness of our work. As noted by Bornstein and Davis "'Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.' Nowhere is this saying more true than in the social sector, where attempts to measure results are notoriously difficult" (62). Therefore, it is important to have a full view of the impact of the program.

To break the mindset of poverty and resistance to change, we will create a new culture of possibilities, participation, and growth orientation. As noted by Bornstein and Davis, "New ideas are often rejected by the very people who stand to benefit from them, especially if they feel imposed upon or baffled by the proposed changes." (22). Our leadership and staff will be intentional in painting the message of hope and possibilities. We may literally write on the wall,

the words of Kelley and Kelley that "If you currently feel that you are not a creative person – if you think, 'I'm not good at that kind of thing' – you have to let go of that belief before you can move on. You have to believe that learning and growth are possible" (30). Clearly, the possibility is formed in the mind. As affirmed by Carol Dweck "… regardless of our initial talent, aptitude, or even IQ, we can expand our capabilities through effort and experience" (qtd in Kelley and Kelley 31). Indeed, effort and practice lead to perfection.

How would a VDI be managed?

As opposed to the conventional top-down management of business institutions, VDI will encourage participation through a bottom-up process of generating ideas necessary for formulating policies. The executive director will be a benevolent dictator. As noted by Whitten, "A benevolent dictator leads by actively soliciting information and opinions from project members and others – listens, then demonstrates the leadership, courage, and boldness to personally make the right decision and stand accountable for that decision" (Chap.2, par.2). In other words, the operation and leadership of the institute will represent the best interest of the community. Most importantly, we will teach and live out the principle of servant leadership. In addition, the institute will hire qualified staff members who are passionate about the social mission of transforming society. As noted by Bornstein and Davis, "We need people who possess a ground-level view of problems and a mountaintop vision, who have a talent for building teams and the freedom to experiment. We need natural institution builders who care more about solving social problems than becoming personally wealthy" (25).

The institute will avoid unnecessary overhead cost by using freelance teachers and other experts. This will cut unnecessary labor costs like creating office space, equipment and supplies. In addition, our top executives will not take salaries within the first year of operation. Therefore,

by cutting unnecessary start-up costs, we can hit the ground running with fewer financial obligations. This will also keep our bottom line of margin and social mission less inundated with financial frustration.

Where would the start-up capital come from?

Following the discussion in the previous paragraph, the bottom line of our institute is margin and mission. Practically, profit and societal transformation justify the existence of a social enterprise. At VDI we will launch our programs with a one-time grant that will be carefully used to facilitate at least one year's budget. The assumption is that after a year of operation, the institute will be in a financial position to sustain itself. Our sources of revenue will include the fees collected from students, interests accrued from microloans, institute's farm, institute's restaurant, pastry, and coffee shop. Certainly, we want to demonstrate business success to our students, by operating small businesses of our own. Put differently, we want to walk the talk of our mission. According to Lynch and Walls, "Without your mission, your commitment to common good, your desire to cure an ill, you are not social. But it is equally true that without margin, you cannot define your organization as an enterprise" (29). Through the income generating activities listed above, the institute will provide employment opportunities along with many other fringe benefits in society.

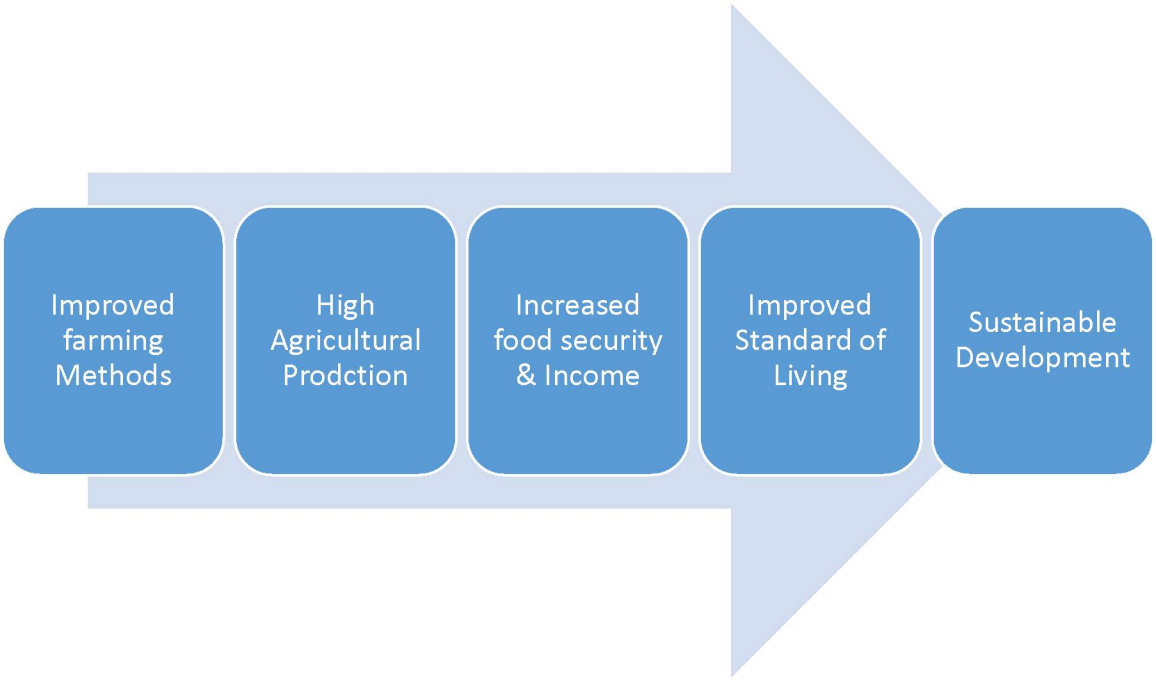
When it comes to expenses, we will be savvy with our investment plans. We will carefully seek ventures with high returns and try as much as possible to avoid loss. Until we break-even and become sustainable, we operate within the financial means of the institute and expand as deemed necessary and possible. The same approach will be used in staff remuneration. Lynch and Walls caution that "Don't underpay, but don't overpay either…don't build your enterprise at the expense of your people" (88). At VDI, we will take this caution seriously.

Overall, the proposed social enterprise aims at tackling a deeply rooted cause of poverty, that is, the lack of opportunity to develop and function within one's creative potential. As discussed in this paper, Village Development Institute will be committed to providing learning opportunities to those who are systematically left out of conventional institutions. In keeping with the social mission, I have discussed the need to empower people with business skills, so they can make a profit and become self-sufficient. In addition, VDI will create an environment of possibilities and learning. The institute will be committed to providing a positive change in the local community.

Those who will be impacted by our programs will discover their own creative confidence as well as become participants in developing the community. Kelley and Kelly observe that "While unlocking our own individual creative potential generates a positive impact on the world, some changes require a collective effort" (175). Therefore, VDI is committed to raising social entrepreneurs and change makers. As noted by Muhammad Yunus "Social business entrepreneurs can become very powerful players in the national and international economy. …" (qtd in Nicholas 41).

The goal of a village agricultural enterprise is the positive reinforcement and validation of what works in the context of poor rural households and the search for hidden talents and capabilities of individuals. The program aims to equip household members to start small-scale businesses, that are mainly sustained by locally available resources. Some of the key questions addressed by this program are: what can the people do on their own? What do they have that works, and what skills are available? And what is critically needed to supplement what is already there? First, this study discovered that farming is the primary means of livelihood among poor

Ugandans. Secondly, the local farmers need skills and access to credit, to be able to attain self-sufficiency. The outcome follows as illustrated below:



Overall, educating the poor is the first step toward a major transformation in poor communities. When the poor themselves have been offered useful information and skills, they can become more creative in figuring out ways of solving the problems that face them.

Appendix II: Asset mapping

HOUSEHOLD ASSETS MAPPING (*ANYALLO AND TEDAM*) VILLAGES

HOUSEHOLD	ASSETS		HOUSEHOLD		CHILDREN	JOB	VILLAGE SAVINGS GROUP
	PERMANENT	TEMPORAL	TWO PARENT	SINGLE PARENT			
HH1.	-Farm Land (2acres) -2 semi-permanent houses	-1 Ox plows -5 Cattle -2 Goats -1 Bicycle -2 huts -10 Chicken -1 Granary	✓		3	Farmers	✓
HH2.	-Farm Land (2.5 acres)	- 10 Chicken -3 huts -2 Oxen	✓		4	Farmers	

		-1 Ox plows -1 Radio -9 Goats -1 Bicycle -1 Solar panel -5 wood trees					
HH3.	Farm Land (1 acre)	-20 Chicken -1 bicycle -2 huts	✓		4	Farmers	
HH4.	Farm Land (1 acre)	-1 Bicycle -3 huts -1 cow -2 hoes -1radio -1 DVD player -1 speaker	✓		4	Farmers	

		-1 set of tables -4 chairs					
HH5.	-Farm Land (3 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-1 hut -1 solar panel -3 goats -3 chickens	✓		1	Farmers	
HH6.	-Farm Land (2acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-1 motorbike - 1 hut -20 wood trees -10 chicken -2 goats -1 solar panel	✓		4	Farmers	✓

		-1 radio -1 speaker					
HH7.	-Farm Land (0.5acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-2 huts -2 wood trees -2 Chicken -3 bicycles -1 radio -1 solar panel 4 chairs	✓		1	Farmers	✓
HH8.	-Farmland (2 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	- 2 huts -2 bicycles -2 goats -6 chicken -1 radio	✓		2	Farmers	✓

		-1 speaker -1 solar panel -10 wood trees					
HH9.	-Farm Land (2 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-1 cow -2 goats -1 radio -1 bicycle -1 wood tree		✓	0	Farmer	✓
HH10.	-Farm Land (3 acres) - 1 semi-permanent house	-3 huts -1 bicycle -6 cattle -7 goats -1 pig -10 chicken -1 solar panel -50 wood trees -1 radio	✓		6	Farmer	✓

		-1 ox plow					
HH11.	-Farm Land (1 acre)	-2 huts -2 goats -9 chicken -50 kinds of wood trees -1 bicycle	✓		5	Farmer	✓
HH12.	Farm Land (3 acres) -1 semi-permanent house -1 unfinished the semi-permanent house	-3 wood trees	✓		6	Farmer	
HH13.	-Farm Land (2.5 acres)	-7 goats -3 cattle	✓		3	Farmer	

		-6 chicken -1 bicycle -1 radio -2 huts -1 solar panel					
HH14.	-Farm Land (2 acres) 1 semi-permanent house	-3 huts -3 cattle -3 cattle -10 goats -50 wood trees -1 radio		✓	7	Farmer	✓
HH15.	-Farm Land (3 acres) -1 unfinished semi-permanent house	-200 wood trees -3 cattle -260 banana plantation -2 goats	✓		1	Farmer	✓

		-21 chicken -1 bicycle -1 ox plow -1 radio					
HH16.	-Farm Land (3 acres) -1semi-permanent house	-2 huts -6 cattle -2 goats -2 pigs 1 solar panel -19 wood trees -1 radio -1 bicycle		✓	2	Farmer	✓
HH17.	Farm Land (5 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-1 solar panel -1 camera -1 bicycle -1 hut	✓		4	Farmer	

		-2 chicken -1 goat -1 cow					
HH18.	-Farm Land (2 acres) -2 semi-finished houses	-1 ox plow -3 oxen -3 goats -2 chicken -1 radio -2 bicycles	✓		6	Farmer	
HH19.	Farm Land (3 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-14 pigs 3 goats -13 chicken -1 bicycle -1 radio -1 DVD player -1 desktop	✓		0	Farmer	

		-5 wood trees -1 sewing machine					
HH20.	Farm Land (4 acres) -2 semi-permanent houses	-2 huts -1 solar panel -2 cows -1 pig -5 chicken		✓	1	Farmer	
HH21.	Farm Land (10 acres) -2 semi-permanent houses	-3 bicycles -1 motorbike -3 cattle -1 radio -1 solar panel -4 wood trees -5 goats	✓		6	Farmer	✓

		-20 chicken -1 laptop					
HH22.	-Farm Land (3 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-1 cow -10 chicken -9 wood trees -1 bicycle -1 ox plow	✓		4	Farmer	
HH23	-Farm Land (3 acres) -2 semi-permanent house	-4 chicken -1 goat -2 cows -1 bicycle -1 ox plow -1 solar panel	✓		5	Farmer	

HH24.	-Farm Land (2 acres) -1 semi-permanent houses	-5 goats -1 solar panel -15 wood trees -1 bicycle -1 pickup truck	✓		4	Farmer	✓
HH25.	-Farmland (1 acre)	-5 huts -6 chickens -2 goats -1 cow -1 0x plow -1 bicycle -20 wood trees -1 radio	✓		5	Farmer	✓
HH26.	-Farm land (2.5 acre)	-1 radio -2 huts	✓		0	Farmer	

		-1 wood tree					
HH27.	-Farmland (1 acre) -1 semi-permanent	-1 hut -2 chicken -1 bicycle -1 solar panel	✓		3	Farmer	
HH28.	Farm land (3.5 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-1 solar panel		✓	1	Farmer	
HH29.	-Farmland (1.5 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-2 goats -1 bicycle -1 solar panel -6 wood trees		✓	4	Farmer	✓
HH30.	-Farmland (1 acre)	-4 huts -21 chicken	✓		2	Farmer	✓

		-2 goats -2 cows -1 bicycle -15 wood trees					
HH31.	-Land (6.5 acre) -3 semi-permanent houses	-10 wood trees -5 chickens -2 cows -2 bicycles -1 radio	✓		10	- Teacher - Accountant	✓
HH32.	-Farmland (4 acres) -2 semi-permanent houses	-4 chicken -2 goats -1 solar panel -2 bicycles	✓		6	Farmer	
HH33.	Farmland (3 acres)	-12 chicken -1 goat	✓		3	Farmer	✓

	-1 semi-permanent house						
HH34.	-Farmland (3 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-1 hut -18 wood trees -1 bicycle -1 motorbike -1 chicken -1 solar panel -1 speaker	✓		3	Farmer	✓
HH35.	-land (2 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-2 huts -11 goats -10 chicken -30 wood trees -1 solar panel -1 bicycle			4	Farmer	✓

		-1 motorbike -1 sewing machine					
HH36.	-2 semi-permanent houses	5 wood trees -2 bicycles -1 motorbike -5 goats -5 cattle -1 solar panel -1 radio	✓		9	Farmer	✓
HH37.	-land (0.5 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-2 huts -18 chicken -1 cow -30 wood trees -1 bicycle	✓		4	teacher	✓

HH38.	-land (1 acre)	-1 bicycle -3 wood trees -2 huts	✓		1		
HH39.	-land (1.5 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-2 huts -8 goats -2 cattle -3 chickens -1 solar panel -1 bicycle -1 Ox plow -35 wood trees	✓		6	Farmer	
HH40.	-Farmland (2 acres)	-4 cows -5 chicken -1 bicycle -43 wood trees	✓		2	Farmer	✓

		-1 solar panel -1 radio -2 huts -1 pig					
HH41.	-Farmland (1 acre)	-4 huts -2 cows -5 chicken -1 bicycle		✓	1	Farmer	
HH42.	-Land (3 acres) -1 semi-permanent house	-1 sewing machine -1 bicycle -6 wood trees -1 radio -6 chairs -1 solar panel -I car	✓		4	Farmers	✓

HH = Household

Farmers 90%

Teacher 0.5%

Accountant 0.5%

Average land size per HH = 2.713 acres

23 HHs (54.8%) belong to village savings group

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