Executive summary

In March 2011, YCI staff carried out an Impact Assessment (IA) of the ‘Youth Enterprise and Income Generation’ (YEIG) project which was implemented by the YMCA of Gambia and Senegal between 2002 and 2006 and funded by YCI and Comic Relief. This was the first IA implemented by YCI; the first of a series of IAs of YCI’s work around the world that would explore the long term changes to the lives of vulnerable and marginalised young people. For this IA, YCI staff hoped to gain a better understanding of the impact of the intervention on two specific dimensions of change: 1) changes in the quality of life of vulnerable young people; and 2) changes in the organisational capacity of the YMCAs to meet the needs of this target group in their respective countries.

The IA’s primary objective was organisational learning, to inform YCI’s youth livelihoods programming in order to increase the impact of current and future programmes implemented by YMCAs across the global South. Accountability focus was therefore primarily focused downwards, to young beneficiaries of the YCI-supported programme, rather than upwards, to the back donor.

The IA was undertaken from January to April 2011 by four YCI Programmes staff with support from a volunteer. YCI’s local partners were asked in advance to provide contact details for programme beneficiaries that they were able to trace, for YCI staff to choose a random sample. Four primary tools were selected: stories of change (workshops); individual questionnaires; timelines (for organisational development) and semi-structured interviews.

Data collection was undertaken in both Senegal and The Gambia over a 5-day timeframe, led by two YCI staff members in each country who were supported by YMCA national programme staff as well as three young YMCA volunteers. In total, around 100 people were surveyed, over 85% of whom were direct project beneficiaries and the remainder YMCA staff and volunteers. Following the data collection, the team met for 3 days in The Gambia to input the data collected, share experiences and draw out learning from the process, as well as agree on the data analysis methods.

Key findings

Economic Indicators

Economic data from the questionnaires revealed significant differences between beneficiaries’ experiences in the two countries. The vast majority (90%) of those interviewed in Senegal were engaged in some form of income generating activity (IGA), whereas the equivalent figure for The Gambia was smaller, at 57%. As expected, a larger proportion of beneficiaries had entered into self-employment in Senegal (34%) than in The Gambia (10%), given that the training model in the former was oriented towards entrepreneurship, and the latter, towards vocational training. Overall, 60% of beneficiaries experienced an increase in income since participating in the project. 82% of the Senegalese sample reported an increase, while the corresponding figure for The Gambia was half this size, at 42%.

Overall, 64% of beneficiaries believed that the training they had received in the project was the most important factor in them establishing and sustaining their IGA.
Social Indicators
In terms of self-confidence, 86% of the young people questioned felt they had become more confident since completing the programme. When considering individual stories of particularly vulnerable groups of young people (e.g. disabled young men and women, and rural young women in Senegal), it becomes clear that the most positive impact of the project was on their self-confidence and belief in their ability to succeed as equals to their able-bodied peers. The positive impact on the social indicators of disabled young beneficiaries, in particular personal development, self-confidence and leadership skills were noted throughout the data collection process.

Lessons learnt

Programmatic learning

- There is a need for better market analysis in order to ensure that livelihoods are sustainable and productive. Where market analysis does highlight a demand for certain skills and services, strict quotas should be set in order to avoid flooding the local market. In addition, there should be a clearer definition of what is regarded as a ‘sustainable’ and ‘productive’ livelihood, regardless of market demand.

- There is a need to compliment skills training with advocacy on gender discrimination to address issues of gender inequality in pay, labour opportunities and work conditions.

- It is critically important to reinforce personal development as an explicit outcome in all livelihood projects and therefore ensure that adequate funds are allocated to life skills training and other personal development interventions. YCI has always placed a lot of emphasis on life skills and personal growth, though this hasn’t always led to rigorous monitoring of these outcomes, perhaps because of its difficulty in measuring, particularly soon after a project has finished.

Impact Assessment process

- Tools must be user friendly: some tools proved difficult to implement and stories were often attributed strongly to the programme without a clear rationale. The piloting stage is integral to the success of the process and must not be overlooked in future IAs.

- IA methods can and should be incorporated into on-going M&E of existing programmes to enrich these processes and draw out learning on impact at different stages of the implementation period. Waiting to undertake an IA years after completion of a programme does present a more challenging process for collecting data on individual beneficiaries, particularly given the mobility of young people however, it does create a space for participants to critically feedback on the programme itself, and were open to share negative stories.

- Small-medium sized organisations can undertake an IA successfully even with limited resources. In this case, the IA was undertaken internally by 4 staff with support from a UK-based volunteer and a budget of just over £4,000 to cover a 10-day field visit to 2 countries.
For YCI, undertaking its first IA contributed significantly to strengthening staff capacity, knowledge and buy-in and has also impacted positively on our on-going M&E including for example supervision of external evaluation consultants, and development of IA tools for partners to use. The experience has also galvanized YCI staff around the need for greater enquiry into our own work and development approaches so that we can be absolutely sure that our work is leading to the desired long term positive impacts on the lives of marginalised young people.
1 Introduction

From 2002 to 2006 Y Care International\(^1\) (YCI) supported the YMCAs of Gambia and Senegal to implement the Youth Enterprise and Income Generating Programme (YEIG), co-financed by Comic Relief and YCI. In 2011, it was selected for YCI’s first impact assessment to determine the long-term impact of the programme on beneficiaries and to inform future programming. This report presents the findings from the impact assessment and its implications for the work of YCI and its partners.

2 Background

2.1 Country contexts

Over the past decade, youth unemployment has continued to pose a significant challenge in West Africa. While some countries have experienced economic growth, they have been unable to generate sufficient jobs to keep pace with an expanding youth population. Low literacy and education levels have left young people with limited skills for entry into the job market. Furthermore, neither the public nor private sectors have provided adequate support for job creation. The result has been high youth unemployment and underemployment which is exacerbating levels of poverty.

These trends have had a significant impact in the neighbouring countries of the Gambia and Senegal. Gambia’s young people make up nearly 50% of the population\(^2\) and suffer more acutely from unemployment. Whilst the official national unemployment rate is 6%\(^3\), this figure rises to 22% in relation to the youth cohort\(^4\). The International Poverty Centre has also found that urban areas suffer higher unemployment rates than rural locations\(^5\). A review of the 1999-2008 National Youth Policy found that young people were most concerned about gaining employment but this had been hampered by insufficient training and skills\(^6\). The little training provision that exists in the country has been centred on the acquisition of vocational skills - assumed to be the major skill deficit within the young person – and has overlooked generic life skills, pre-training and post-training support needs. The majority of Gambian workers are unskilled; 17% of workers have received no formal schooling and only 3% will have gained vocational qualifications or post-secondary education\(^7\). Many of these unskilled workers are moving from the agrarian sector into the tourist sector at the promise of better paid

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\(^1\) Y Care International is the international relief and development agency of the YMCA movement in the UK and Ireland. Working in partnership with YMCA Area Alliances and national movements in Africa, Asia, Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean, YCI supports youth-focused programmes of action and advocacy that meet the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.


\(^3\) Ibid., p.4

\(^4\) Ibid., p.4


jobs. According to the World Bank, a hotel worker will earn 28,000GDM ($965) in comparison to the 7,000GDM ($241) earned by a groundnut farmer in a year. Yet, the tourist industry is subject to seasonality and many workers without additional skills or qualifications are unable to cope with the fluctuations in this sector.

In Senegal, good economic performance has failed to generate sufficient jobs, particularly for young people. Private sector training has neglected the realities of the informal market and has mostly been beyond the means of the poorest young people. Young people (aged between 15 and 35 years) represent 56% of all job seekers. The Senegalese government and its development partners have taken a number of measures to address youth unemployment. These include a National Employment Policy (1997), the National Youth Promotion Fund (2000) to promote access to credit for young people, the National Youth Employment Agency (2001), and the requirement for ministries to specifically include the needs of the youth population in ministerial actions plans for the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy.

To respond to these challenges, the YMCAs of Senegal and the Gambia worked with YCI to develop a joint programme on youth entrepreneurship. This built on their previous work in the field, including Senegal YMCA’s entrepreneurship programme with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Gambia YMCA’s Appropriate Technology Training Programme.

### 2.2 Overview of the programme

The aim of the programme was to build the capacity of the Gambia and Senegal YMCAs to support 3000 marginalised young people in developing realistic income-generating activities. Its specific objectives were to:

1. train and support young people to set up innovative small enterprises
2. establish innovative pre and post training support activities
3. share learning around small enterprise and income generation for young people
4. advocate for increased and improved skills development provision for young people
5. enhance current skills training for young people by incorporating life skills training.

The programme targeted young men and women from deprived or marginalised backgrounds, including disabled young people and young offenders. The target areas in both countries were predominantly urban, with the majority of beneficiaries from the capital cities of Dakar (Senegal) and Banjul (the Gambia). In Senegal, beneficiaries also came from the comparatively smaller town of Ziguinchor as well as women in the rural community of Yendane.

The project implementation methodologies were tailored to the two countries’ contexts and realities. In Senegal, the YMCA adopted a ‘Cascading Model’ whereby young people were trained in entrepreneurial skills, and supported to establish micro-enterprises which were then used as training providers for other marginalised young people within their communities. In the Gambia, the YMCA used a ‘Franchise Model’. Through this approach, the YMCA first identified skill gaps in the hotel, construction,

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8 Ibid., p.26
tailoring, beauty and hair dressing industries, then established partnerships with existing training institutions to provide specialised training and support to marginalised young people who could go on to fill the employment gaps in these industries.

Programme implementation began in July 2002 and drew to a close in June 2006. The total project budget was £349,850, of which 66.5% was funded by Comic Relief and 33.5% by Y Care International (YCI).
3 Impact Assessment framework

3.1 Purpose
YCI continues to place increased emphasis on critical reflection and organisational learning so as to improve development outcomes for its young beneficiaries. In its new strategic plan (2011-16), YCI committed to undertaking impact assessments for major interventions.

An impact assessment differs from an evaluation in that it focuses on longer-term impact. In essence, it is “the systematic analysis of lasting or significant change – positive or negative, intended or not – in people’s lives brought about by an action or a series of actions” (Roche, 1999).

The IA’s primary objective was organisational learning, to inform YCI’s youth livelihoods strategy and to increase the impact of current and future programmes implemented by YMCAs across the global South. Accountability focus was therefore primarily focused downwards, to young beneficiaries of the YCI-supported programme, rather than to the principal back donor. Furthermore, as the IA was the first of its kind for YCI and its YMCA partners, it was intended that learning from the process inform future IAs in other regions.

Prior to the IA in-country data collection, two YCI staff participated in an external IA training facilitated by BOND, during which YCI’s proposed IA was used as a case study for the group to develop a work plan. This training enabled the YCI IA team to gain further useful insights and input from an experienced trainer as well as peers from small, medium and large UK and international agencies. As this was YCI’s first IA, having the opportunity to test assumptions and receive feedback from a group of ‘critical friends’ was invaluable.

The IA was undertaken between January and April 2011 by a cross-regional team of 4 International Programmes Department (IPD) staff, supported by an IPD volunteer. Rather than commission the IA to an external consultant it was decided to carry out the IA using YCI programmes staff in order to build staff capacity and to embed learning within the organisation.

3.2 Focus
In the absence of a theory of change at the organisational or programme level, the IA team developed dimensions of change, informed by the YEIG programme goal and approach, for the purposes of the assessment. It was agreed that the IA would focus on:

1. changes in the quality of life of vulnerable young people;
2. changes in the organisational capacity of the YMCAs to meet the needs of the target group within the countries.

3.3 Target group and sample size
To maintain a manageable focus within the timeframe available, the team agreed to focus on young direct beneficiaries and YMCA staff, rather than consult with all
stakeholders. Among young direct beneficiaries, it would focus on those who had participated in the primary training and not consider other target groups e.g. young people in prisons or housemaids.

YCI’s YMCA partners contributed to the finalisation of the IA TOR and were requested to provide contact details for programme beneficiaries that they were able to trace, for YCI staff to choose a random sample. From the outset of the IA it was understood that gaining a representative sample of the beneficiary group was always going to be challenging after such a long time period (5 years following the completion of the YEIG Programme). The time constraints of the data collection also meant that the teams would need to meet with beneficiaries located in the two capital cities, although in Senegal the team was able to conduct a workshop in a rural area. The YMCAs were asked in advance to provide the YCI team with a list of beneficiaries whom they believed to be contactable and from this list of 200 names a random sample was taken that represented a 15% sample of the total number of beneficiaries who received YEIG training.

The local YMCAs had difficulty in tracking down beneficiaries from YCI’s randomly selected sample group that would be available during the data collection period and so YCI accepted the necessity of using a ‘snow-ball’ effect to reach beneficiaries and re-establish contact with them (i.e. asking beneficiaries to contact their peer group). Whilst initial efforts had been made to ensure 15% representation, a sample of 13% of the original YEIG cohort was questioned, which is still considered adequate for the purposes of this assessment.

The workshops increased in size and were able to gain individual Stories of Change from nearly 10% of the overall total number of beneficiaries, which provided a depth of knowledge and opinion that has served to strengthen the findings of this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme activity</th>
<th>YEIG programme beneficiaries</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actual: Senegal</td>
<td>Actual: The Gambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprise / IGA activities</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA Sample Size</td>
<td>51 (19%)</td>
<td>60 (9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Profile of respondents**

**The Gambia**

The majority of females in The Gambia who completed the questionnaire fell into the 20-30 age range, while the majority of males interviewed were aged 26-35 years old. All those interviewed were based in the capital city, Banjul.

**Senegal**

The majority of females interviewed in Senegal were between 26-35 years old, but, the majority of males were older, with the majority ranging between 31-40 years old. Twelve of the women interviewed through questionnaires came from the rural village of Yendane, and an additional 10 women took part in the workshop in Yendane. All
Senegalese males interviewed were from Dakar and neighbouring towns. 6 disabled young people (12%) were interviewed and participated in the workshops.

In terms of YMCA staff and volunteers, in both countries the Programme Coordinators of the YEIG Programme were still within the YMCA staff, both working as National Programme Secretaries and were key participants throughout the IA process. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with key national staff and volunteers (both young volunteers and Board members), and this fed in to the development of a 10-year timeline (2000 – 2010) showing organisational development of both YMCAs. Overall, 4 staff and volunteers in The Gambia participated in these activities and 10 in Senegal.

3.4 Methodology
The tools used in the IA were carefully chosen from the Visualisation and Interviewing categories of the PRA approach so as to ensure the maximum amount of information on impact could be collected within a short timeframe.

**Individual questionnaires** were provided to beneficiaries to garner quantitative information regarding their employment and income status, how they perceived the impact of the programme and information focusing on the social impact of their training, such as their self-confidence and self-efficacy. The questionnaires were piloted with a small sample of beneficiaries in both countries, and amended to reflect differences in the country contexts as well as the programme context, and revised questionnaires were administered by YMCA volunteers with input from YCI staff.

**Stories of change** were captured in 5 workshop sessions. The workshops began by eliciting key quality of life indicators from the young beneficiaries, to provide a framework for subsequent analysis of changes in socio-economic wellbeing. Using Stories of Change theory, beneficiaries were asked to write a short statement about how their lives had changed since their training. These were then plotted by beneficiaries on a graph which allowed the beneficiary to analyse whether the change had been positive and to what extent they considered it to be attributable or not to the YMCA training.

A small number of semi-structured **case studies** were collected from beneficiaries to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences post training and to look more analytically at the impact of the training.

**Semi-structured interviews** were employed as a means to gain in-depth knowledge and learning’s from the staff and volunteers of the YMCAs. The questions and subject content were left specifically open in order to create fluidity and an organic manner in which to gain information about the programme and the organisational capacity.
The sessions with the YMCA staff and volunteers included the creation of a timeline which plotted the organisations prior, during and post YEIG programme and tried to elucidate how the organisation had changed over time and the interplay between the organisations and programme and the value of the YCI/YMCA relationship.

Data collection was undertaken in both Senegal and The Gambia over a 5-day timeframe, led by two YCI staff members in each country, who were supported by YMCA national programme staff as well as three young YMCA volunteers. In total, 110 people participated in the data collection, over 85% of whom were direct project beneficiaries and the remainder YMCA staff and volunteers. Following the data collection, the team met for 3 days in The Gambia to input the data collected, share experiences and draw out learning from the process, as well as agree on the data analysis methods.

**Data analysis process**
Following the data collection, the team met for three days in The Gambia to input the data collected, share experiences and draw out initial learning from the process, as well as agree on the data analysis methods. Data analysis and report-writing were undertaken by the IA team over a 2-month period once back in the UK, and a case study of YCI’s IA experience was accepted by INTRAC to be presented at an international conference on Monitoring and Evaluation (June 2011, Amsterdam).

The questionnaires were analysed to identify any themes and emergent patterns between the countries, sexes and employment sectors. The information from this provided the basis for the exploration of the stories of change and generated key areas that needed further analysis.

In analysing the qualitative data collected through the workshops, the team coded information using keywords drawn from the quality of life indicators that the beneficiaries developed at the beginning of the workshop sessions. From this, each story was given a positive or negative score by YCI staff based on the nature of the content and the extent to which it reflected a negative or positive impact on the individual’s life. The beneficiaries plotting of stories to assess attribution to the YEIG programme as well as the overall positive or negative impact of the change described also provided the team with clusters of stories and the opportunity to explore trends within the graphs developed.
The semi-structured interviews were coded using keywords which revealed commonalities between the two organisations and helped to organise the assessment of capacity. The visual representation of organisational development captured in the timelines provided a complementary assessment of key positive and negative factors influencing the development of the organisations.

3.5 Challenges to the process & how they were addressed
Recognising that this would be the first IA undertaken by YCI, and fully aware of the potential logistical challenges that were likely to be faced during the in-country data collection process, the IA team needed to be flexible and adapt the TOR for the exercise as necessary. While most elements of the process went well, the following principal challenges are noteworthy:

- **Baseline:** the YEIG project did not conduct a baseline study at the start of the project. As such, there were limited means from which to gather an evidence based perception of how life was like prior to the start of the project. One of the greatest challenges to understanding the significance and impact of the project had been this lack of data; more time should have been spent during the planning and data collection stage in establishing this baseline information.

- **Sampling:** contacting beneficiaries a number of years after an intervention has been completed is challenging and therefore impacts on the sampling process selected which in this case was designed to be a random sample covering 15% of direct beneficiaries reached. This is particularly challenging with a project focused on targeting individual beneficiaries rather than communities. Initial concerns raised by YCI staff about selection bias (i.e. the YMCAs identifying the most successful beneficiaries) did not appear justified given the range of feedback from beneficiaries and staff who were open to discussing positive and negative impacts of the project. This may have been a result of conducting the IA 5 years after the project completion and almost 10 years since the project began, suggesting that staff and young people involved in the project felt more open to provide critical feedback on areas of weak or negative impact. It also reflects a culture of openness and transparency within and between all key organisations without which the IA would not have been successful.

- **Preparation:** insufficient time was allocated to prepare in-country with local partners to develop a conceptual understanding about the difference between a programme end-of-project evaluation and an IA, as well as develop and pilot tools.

- **Logistics:** undertaking a multi-country IA with the evaluation team split into two groups to collect data simultaneously was extremely challenging. For organisations about to embark on IAs, it is important to subscribe to the ‘Keep it Simple’ philosophy, both in terms of logistics and in the design of tools.

- **Tools:** the logistical issues described above made it more challenging to test and update tools to effectively respond to the different country contexts. This included trying to keep tools consistent while taking into account different literacy and education levels of beneficiaries, and also in translating the original tools into French for data collection in Senegal. In addition, in the planning process the team...
found it challenging to find adequate tools to assess programme impact on organisational development.

- **Analysis**: the process of analysing qualitative data, in particular stories of change, is challenging when trying to capture the richness of a wide range of stories. The IA team spent a significant amount of time discussing how to best incorporate the data from individual stories of change and case studies into the overall analysis and decided on tagging stories based on the quality of life indicators identified by beneficiaries at the start of each workshop. Whilst it is expected that this should capture a good depth of the qualitative data collected, all team members highlighted the analysis of the stories of change as the most challenging task. This aspect of data analysis is often not given sufficient attention in training resources on IA and evaluation, and for future IAs it will be important to agree on the methods for data analysis as part of the TOR.
4 Findings: change dimension 1 – quality of life of young people

At the beginning of the workshops, beneficiaries were asked to determine what they believed to constitute a good quality of life. These quality of life indicators provided a framework for subsequent discussions and later analysis. Both the Gambian and Senegalese beneficiaries generated a very similar set of indicators, as shown in the below table. The following sections detail findings and analysis against each of these indicators.

Quality of life indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic indicators</th>
<th>Social indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to inputs</td>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability to shocks</td>
<td>community participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income and savings</td>
<td>personal development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health (of self and others e.g. family members, children)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Change dimension 1: quality of life of young people

4.1.1 Economic indicators

Employment status: employment and self-employment

Economic data from the questionnaires revealed significant differences between beneficiaries’ experiences in the two countries. The vast majority (90%) of those interviewed in Senegal were engaged in some form of income generating activity (IGA), whereas the equivalent figure for The Gambia was a smaller 57%. As expected, a larger proportion of beneficiaries had entered into self-employment in Senegal (34%) than in The Gambia (10%), given that the training model in the former was oriented towards entrepreneurship, and the latter, towards vocational training.

Gambian beneficiaries participating in the survey worked in the following fields: catering/hospitality in hotels, welding, hairdressing and tailoring. Qualitative data suggests that in most cases, beneficiaries went on to find jobs in the sector they had trained in. But in some cases, due to limited employment opportunities, this did not happen:

*I could not find a job as a caterer and ended up taking a job at a kindergarten because my family was pressuring me a lot to find a job.* (F, The Gambia).

Senegalese beneficiaries established small businesses in a wide range of sectors, including production (agro-processing unit), I.T (cyber café), tailoring and petty trading (vegetables, fish etc.). These were sectors in which they had previous experience or new sectors which had shown potential in the market research that they conducted as part of their training. However, in some cases, beneficiaries had to be flexible and adapt to available opportunities. For instance, a Senegalese woman had wanted to set
up a hairdressing salon or a tailoring business. However, she did not have access to funding at the time and so ultimately established an agro-processing unit, with funds from a government scheme.

Although in Senegal there was no difference in the proportions of self-employed men and women, in The Gambia, 18% of women were self-employed, but no men. This is due to the nature of the activities women engaged in. This included petty trading as well as hairdressing. Female hairdressers, unlike male beneficiaries on welding courses, required less capital to start-up a business. For example, they were able to receive clients at home, reducing the need to establish a separate salon.

### Beneficiaries’ current employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>activity</th>
<th>female %</th>
<th>male %</th>
<th>total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senegal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal activity</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self employed</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gambia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self employed</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informal activity</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self employed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>unemployed</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Unemployment

Overall, beneficiary unemployment in Senegal was 10%. This is impressive, given that national youth unemployment rates stand at approximately 30%. The Gambia, on the other hand, had a high beneficiary unemployment rate of 43%, four times higher than its neighbour and twice as high as the official national youth unemployment rate of 22%. Whereas Senegal had the same unemployment rates for male and female.

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9 In Senegal, an “informal activity” category had been created for petty trading, in light of the fact that a large portion of data collection was to be undertaken in a rural context.
beneficiaries (10%), the proportion of women unemployed in The Gambia was 58%, more than twice the rate for men (26%). These figures can be attributed to several factors, as outlined below:

**Availability of employment opportunities and sectoral differences**

In both countries, beneficiaries were faced with a limited pool of employment opportunities. However, the situation was more acute in The Gambia. In sharing their “stories of change”, many beneficiaries said they had spent time searching for a job, but it had proven difficult to secure one. Some were able to find apprenticeship and placements. These certainly provided useful practical experience. However, they did not address beneficiaries’ financial needs, especially as they often lasted for extended periods of time:

*When I finished the training I applied to different places, like at the port, for a job, but they never got back to me. My uncle took me to the workshop of a friend of his for work, but they didn’t pay me anything…I still work there now, without pay* (M, The Gambia)

In both countries, migration formed part of beneficiaries’ coping strategies. This included internal rural to urban migration:

*Some of us young people go to look for work in the town, we go to wash clothes for people. But it is not always easy. Sometimes we don’t find enough work to be able to pay for our children to go to school.* (F, rural, Senegal)

As well as urban-urban migration:

*I went to Cap Skirring (a tourist destination near Ziguinchor) in the holiday season and made about 90,000 CFA (UA$175) a month driving people around (as a taxi driver)* (M, Senegal)

And in one case, overseas migration:

*I was unemployed for 2 years and I said to myself I must do something … I have travelled by sea, I wanted to get to Europe. Unfortunately, I was deported and sent back home* (M, The Gambia).

Unlike in Senegal, Gambian beneficiaries were considerably dependent on the tourist industry for employment. As tourism is seasonal, employees can remain out of work for up to 6 months of the year. Furthermore, the training courses undertaken by Gambian women did not appear to have strong linkages with the formal sector. This is likely to be the result of weak market analysis, as well as inadequate focus on challenging gender stereotyping amongst beneficiaries and their families, such that young women entered into trades traditionally reserved for women.

Hairdressing, a female-only training course, is a case in point. Only 23% of hairdressing beneficiaries were employed at the time of the survey. In contrast, training courses completed by male beneficiaries had clearer routes into the formal sector. The tourist industry provided hotels and restaurants for catering training beneficiaries. Amongst the catering training beneficiaries, 55% of the men and 30% of the women were in employment. Welding, a male-only course was the most successful sector in this regard. 83% of male welding beneficiaries were employed at the time of the survey. This reflects the importance of the welding sector in The Gambian market economy and the existence of large numbers of workshops.
Access to inputs

The original YEIG project proposal did not incorporate financial or material inputs for beneficiaries upon completion of their training. This was because both YMCA were hoping to build up a strong referral network of agencies which could provide such assistance, which was also a way of addressing the budget constraints that the YMCA were operating within.

However, the YMCA found it more difficult than anticipated to establish a network of referral agencies, and securing microfinance was particularly challenging given the barriers for young people in providing the necessary collateral. Therefore, beneficiaries in both Senegal and The Gambia felt that while the training itself had been useful, the absence of inputs and follow-up support constituted a key weakness. This emerged as a recurring criticism. 23% of Senegalese stories of change and 13% of Gambian stories highlighted the detrimental impact this had had on their IGA. Many more suggested it as a recommendation in both the survey and stories of change data.

For some, the absence of inputs was a significant obstacle to establishing a business:

*YMCA provides us with training but then doesn’t do the follow-up. We get good knowledge, but one thing is missing – a source of funding. A credit line would have had a much greater impact than training us and leaving us to enter the labour market alone* (M and F, Senegal)

*I am happy to have skills but do not have the means to put these into practice…I don’t have the money to open my own business* (F, The Gambia)

However, some beneficiaries were able to surmount these obstacles by obtaining funding from other sources. It would seem that there were greater opportunities to do so in Senegal. Whereas Gambian beneficiaries only mentioned support from family members and friends in securing placements, jobs or business funds, Senegalese beneficiaries also referred to training and inputs from government and NGOs.

In addition, it is clear that young people require micro-finance products that specifically take into account their needs and abilities:

*We’re afraid of micro-finance institutions, as they have such strict conditions that make it difficult to access funds* (M, Senegal)

*I tried to access a loan but was not able (to) as I needed a guarantor.* (M, The Gambia)

Some young people face a double disadvantage. Two beneficiaries highlighted difficulties accessing funding due to their disabilities. And a female beneficiary with children had the same experience, explaining that some funders saw her as an unsound investment.

In recognition of these constraints, the YMCA did manage to secure some additional funding to provide micro-finance loans to a small number of beneficiaries. However, it is apparent from beneficiaries’ comments, that these loans were considered insufficient to meet their start-up capital costs:

*After my YMCA training, I got a small amount of funding, which didn’t even make up half of my financial request. It’s like my training wasn’t worth anything as I could not put it into practice* (M, Senegal).
Finally, even where beneficiaries had sufficient capital and had managed to establish a business, poor revenue and profit meant that they had insufficient funds with which to meet operating costs:

*I opened my own workshop with only one machine but it only lasted a few months as there was a problem - not enough tools* (M, The Gambia)

Over the last decade, YCI’s experience and evidence has demonstrated that access to credit is an important factor in the successful establishment and operation of young beneficiaries’ IGAs. Capital inputs have emerged as a critical component of post-training support to vocational training beneficiaries, with all YCI livelihoods programmes now incorporating this as a matter of course into programme design and implementation. Further details are available in YCI’s forthcoming livelihoods strategy.

**Learning**

Access to capital inputs should continue to form an integral component of post-training support to vocational training beneficiaries and these costs should ideally be incorporated into the project budget. However, where this is not possible, staff should not underestimate the challenges of establishing a referral network, as other agencies are often bound by their own back-donor requirements and project objectives.

To improve the chances of buy in from other agencies, cooperation agreements should be established prior to projects being developed, so that the views of collaborating agencies feed directly into the project design.

**Contributing factors to employment status**

Beneficiaries were asked to identify what they considered to be the determining factor that led to securing their job or IGA. The results are displayed below:

**Most important factor in securing employment / IGA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>female %</th>
<th>male %</th>
<th>total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Senegal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA Training</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non YMCA Training</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gambia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA Training</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non YMCA Training</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overall, 64% of beneficiaries believed that the YMCA training has been the most important factor in securing their IGA. This also emerged in qualitative data from workshops:

*The YMCA training helped me to get into new sectors that had not been accessible to me before. Before the training I was unemployed, although I did have a diploma. Now I am working in the Mayor’s Office (M, Senegal)*

*Thank God and YMCA I have a job (and am) happy (M, The Gambia)*

Interestingly, a greater proportion cited YMCA training as the decisive factor in The Gambia, (82%) than in Senegal (43%). Only 2% of beneficiaries in Gambia attributed employment to non-YMCA training, while a significant 23% did so in Senegal. Indeed, in describing their career histories, Senegalese beneficiaries often referred to their participation in other training courses run by government and NGOs. As one woman said:

*I’ve done so much training, that it’s difficult for me to keep track of them all! (F, Senegal, disabled)*

In attributing change to sources other than the YMCA, financial inputs are likely to have been the decisive factor for beneficiaries:

*After the YMCA training… I established a small business and an NGO called ADPES gave me finance to invest in my cosmetics boutique (F, Senegal, disabled)*

*After the training, I got a loan (from my friends in Tivaone) to buy merchandise and start my petty trade (F, rural, Senegal)*

However, even where beneficiaries had received inputs from other sources, it was apparent that YMCA’s training had left a distinctive mark. The above-mentioned female beneficiary, who had participated in multiple trainings, went on to state:

*The YMCA training gave me a different vision - the willingness to establish a business (F, Senegal, disabled)*

Similarly, a male beneficiary said:

*The YMCA training taught us to go all the way. It was my first training after school. It was the start; it opened my eyes. Future trainings enabled me to go more in depth (M, Senegal)*

While it is difficult to distinguish between the impact of YMCA’s support vis-à-vis other organisations, this data illustrates that YMCA training marked a turning point for the
majority of beneficiaries. Attribution to overall (economic and social) changes will be addressed in later sections.

**Learning**
The need for adequate post-training support is reflected in the large number of beneficiaries from Senegal (49%) who attributed their employment status to sources other than the YMCA. For future programming, it is better to offer a wider and more comprehensive level of support to fewer people than to provide support to more but offer less post training support.

**Income and savings**
Overall, 60% of beneficiaries experienced an increase in income since participating in YMCA training. 82% of the Senegalese sample reported an increase, while the corresponding figure for The Gambia was half this size, at 42%.

As expected, these figures roughly correspond with the proportion of beneficiaries who stated they were engaged in some form of economic activity. The transcripts of the stories of change suggest that two processes were at work. On the one hand, beneficiaries had generated increased income by transitioning from study/unemployment to employment/self-employment:

*I won a scholarship from the YMCA to study welding at the GTTI….Now I am working and earning a good salary. Now I am helping my family and my relatives* (M, The Gambia)

On the other hand, beneficiaries were able to increase their income or profit in existing IGAs, by intensifying or diversifying activities and better managing finances:

*I have done petty trading for a while, but the way I work now makes me happier than before and the money that comes from my business for my family is much better than before* (F, Senegal, rural)

*I developed in petty trading… I manage my money better now…and with the way I’ve organised things now, I’m able to sell other products out of season* (F, Senegal, rural)

Through this increased income, many beneficiaries were able to meet their and their families’ basic needs - an indicator which all had emphasised as a factor critical to a “good quality of life”. These included food, shelter and utilities.

Many were also able to pay their children’s school fees; with income, came greater economic empowerment and its associated impact on social empowerment and well-being, points that will be addressed further in the social well-being section below:

*My child is in school…with my hairdressing salary I pay her school fees and her lunch. I also use my money to buy food for the family* (F, The Gambia)

Another positive impact was that the training conveyed the importance of savings to beneficiaries and demonstrated how to go about organising these funds. Consequently, a number of beneficiaries, especially amongst women from Yendane village in Senegal, started to regularly set aside savings and improve their personal financial management.
In some cases, this enabled them to meet costs that they could previously not afford, as well as reinvest back into their IGAs:

*Before the training, at the end of every month I couldn’t pay for the school fees for my children. When I finished the training, I started petty trading, and I was able to save some money. Now at the end of every month I don’t have to worry about going to the school director and explaining that I can’t pay, because I pay every time. The most important thing for me from the training was that I learnt about the importance of savings. With the savings I have also been able to invest in a few sheep (F, rural, Senegal)*

*When I make some money, I break it down into 4 parts. I use two parts for my business, one part for my daily needs and the other I keep for difficult times (F, rural, Senegal)*

### Income changes amongst beneficiaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in income</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no change</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decrease</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>didn’t respond</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no change</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decrease</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no change</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decrease</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gambian women were the only group in which the majority did not believe that their income had increased. Only 27% pointed to an increase, while 64% asserted income had remained the same and 9% said it had decreased. While 64% of people registering no change in their income status is worrying, it should be noted that during this period, Gambia’s Human Development ranking actually fell (2005-10, UN) so static income in a period of deteriorating macroeconomic conditions may indicate improved resilience as a result of the YMCA training, particularly with the training aimed at vulnerable groups.
Many highlighted the low salaries they received, which meant they struggled to meet their financial needs:

*I don’t have a good job because the salary is low. I have husband and 1 boy but my boy is not going to school because I can’t afford fees for school* (F, The Gambia)

*It is very difficult to sustain my family with a low income which was not easy for me and my husband because he is not financially strong enough* (F, The Gambia)

The sectors Gambian women worked in were certainly not as lucrative as those of Gambian men. Small-scale, informal petty trading yielded minimum wages. Hairdressing also had poor salaries. As demonstrated in the table below, nearly 40% of women hairdressers had salaries in the bottom two rungs of the salary scale. Welding, however, was the most successful sector in The Gambia, with the vast majority of men (87%) earning upwards of 2000 GMD (us$70) per month in the top two salary brackets.

*I preferred the welding course as I knew that in the Gambia you can earn a lot of money in this profession…It’s true that welding makes a lot of money provided you have good client links* (M, The Gambia)

**Gambian Incomes (US$) by sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income (US$)</th>
<th>welding %</th>
<th>hairdressing</th>
<th>catering male</th>
<th>catering female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-90</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+90</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet even within the same sector, there were discrepancies between the earnings of male and female beneficiaries. There was a higher concentration of female catering beneficiaries in the two lowest salary brackets – 50% as compared to 37.5% of their male counterparts. Men were more likely than women to earn in the top salary brackets, with 50% earning above US$65 a month, while half this proportion of women (25%) earned the same amount. In part, this may be attributed to the fact that 80% of male catering beneficiaries had worked for more than two years in the four year period since the training, while only 20% of female catering beneficiaries had done so. It is possible that some of these men stayed with the same employer, or at the very least, remained in post for longer than their female counterparts, allowing for potential salary increases. However, it is also true that these differences reflect national and worldwide trends in the gender pay gap.

Although an income by sector analysis is not available for Senegal, it is possible to examine the income that beneficiaries had been earning at the time of the YMCA.
training and compare it to income from their most recent IGA. Senegalese salaries were higher than their Gambian counterparts, reflecting the higher cost of living in Senegal, but also suggesting that the former went into higher paid jobs than the latter.

**Senegal income tracking: most recent monthly salary against first salary after training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income (US$)</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>post training</td>
<td>most recent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Up to 20</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-70</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-100</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-140</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140-200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+200</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blanks</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While 31% of men earned above US$100 directly after the training, there were no women who earned the same amount. Instead, 70% of female beneficiaries were concentrated in the bottom three salary brackets.

However, this situation has evolved since the training and the data corroborates earlier findings on increased income. For women, the lower wage brackets have become less populated as wages have shifted into higher brackets. Now 37% of women earn more than US$100 FCFA per month. The same pattern holds true for men, with a large 72% now earning more than US$140 in the top two salary brackets. This suggests that the YMCA training and subsequent employment/IGAs have been the catalysts for beneficiaries’ increased income levels.

Although the gap between the genders has narrowed, disparities still remain, with only 30% of women now earning in the top two salary brackets. However, it must be noted that the data is slightly skewed for Senegal, in that 24% of the sample were rural women from Yendane village, who engaged in petty trading and had a lower income than other young women surveyed who were engaged in IGAs in Dakar.

In Senegal, a number of young participants responded that they were employed but also were engaged in running their own small business and therefore had two sources of income. For a number of these young people, they were not currently taking a salary from...
their own small business, rather where they made profits these were being re-invested back into the business and they relied on money earned from their ‘day job’ to cover their own needs. For small business owners, data was collected on both turnover to indicate the ‘health’ of their business, as well as any profit that they made.

As expected, the higher the beneficiary’s income, the more likely they were able to recruit employees. 15 Senegalese beneficiaries currently hired people in their businesses. Over half employed a single person, but one female beneficiary hired five people, two of whom had disabilities. One man used skills learnt during the entrepreneurship training to further develop his own training centre for young people learning traditional arts and crafts.

In The Gambia, a female beneficiary opened a training centre for hairdressers, with impressive enrolment rates:

_I studied hairdressing with the YMCA. After completing my training, I opened a hairdressing salon and skills training centre in March 6th 2008, with a total enrolment of 45 students, including 2 males and 43 females. A total of 39 students completed successfully the course and the pass rate was impressive. From 2009 to 2010 we registered 90 students. I now take care of my home. The YMCA sends beneficiaries to receive training in my salon. I enjoy the experience of teaching other young people as I learn from my students as well_ (F, The Gambia)

This demonstrates the multiplier effect that the training has had in contributing to human and financial capital in the local economy.

**Vulnerability to external shocks**

In both countries, some beneficiaries spoke of the “ups and downs” (M, Senegal) that they had experienced in their working lives, referring to changing jobs, as well as periods of unemployment and uncertainty.

But it is Gambian beneficiaries that seem to have experienced the most turbulence. 27 of the 41 Gambian beneficiaries who shared their “stories of change” referred to both positive and negative effects on employment. Here, enterprises seemed more precarious than in Senegal. Beneficiaries spoke of employers who had been forced to shut down their businesses, leaving them without work:

_I worked 6 months in a salon in the area where I live. However, the salon closed because of lack of money._ (F, The Gambia)

Gambian women were particularly prone to this instability. 63% had only worked for 1 year or less during the 4-5 years since the YMCA training. The equivalent figure for Senegal was less than 20%, with 63% having worked for at least 4 years.

Closely related to instability, and a factor common to both countries, was beneficiaries’ vulnerability to external shocks. At the personal level, this included poor health, an accident or the death of a family member, which had detrimental psycho-social, physical and economic effects on beneficiaries:

_My business lasted for 5 years and it worked really well. I reimbursed all of my loan and I continued with my own resources. But then, I had a negative part to my story. I had an accident and it left me with a fracture so I had to spend 3 months at home and spent the money from my business to cover my health needs. When I was ready to go back, I had another accident – I fell in the bathroom and ended up with a double fracture of my ankle,_
and then my business sank. Now I don’t have any more money to continue my business. Up to today, I am continuing to look for money to start up my shop again. (F, Senegal, disabled)

At the community level, adverse weather conditions led to poor harvest and financial loss for those dependent on the agricultural sector:
…I established my own cereal agro-processing unit, which I manage now….In winter, we had a lot of losses and I’m now looking for funds to start things up again. (F, Senegal)

Furthermore, natural hazards also had a destructive impact on economic activities:
Today my business is not doing so well. In the last 2 years, my community has been affected by flooding during the rainy season and in the last floods my shop was badly hit. My fridge broke and some of my stock was ruined. I didn’t receive any help to fix these things, so my turnover has gone down to about 30,000CFA (US$60) a day (M, Senegal)

Finally, technology also proved to be a constraining factor:
The YMCA training helped me to open a small business – a cybercafé - in partnership with a friend. We’ve had difficulties due to power cuts. (M, Senegal)

These cases highlight young people’s vulnerability to external risks and shocks, as well as the absence of social protection mechanisms to support them.

One way in which the programme helped to strengthen beneficiaries’ resilience against such risks and shocks, was through life skills training. Beyond technical skills acquired through vocational training, life skills sessions enabled beneficiaries to develop transferable skills such as leadership and communication. With such competencies, young people were better equipped to manage pressure, as well as identify and capitalise upon other economic opportunities during times of adversity. Life skills have become embedded into YCI’s holistic approach to livelihoods development. This approach also recognises the importance of social protection and YCI is currently assessing how best it can facilitate access to social protection measures, in order to provide a safety net for young beneficiaries and their families.

**Learning**
At the time that this project was developed (2001), YCI did not have an explicit Theory of Change, both for its overall work, as well as for its youth livelihoods programming. Instead, YCI’s approach to youth livelihoods had developed over many years and covered aspects which would be regarded as good practice in the field, including the integration of life skills into livelihoods training. However, YCI could have benefitted from a more explicit and codified ToC which was reviewed more regularly as one weakness in YCI’s approach was its lack of focus on strengthening beneficiaries’ resilience to external risks and shocks. Building resilience was framed as strengthening young people’s human capital, through life skills training. However a more nuanced approach would have sought to strengthen other types of capital, including social capital and physical capital, so that young people are better able to withstand external shocks. One relatively simple solution would be to incorporate social protection measures into projects, for example micro-insurance schemes.
Working conditions and remuneration
Some beneficiaries decided to leave their jobs if working conditions proved challenging: I lacked good salary during my first and second employment after the training. It is very difficult to sustain my family with a low income which was not easy for me and my husband… the distance between my work and where I live was not favourable…as it was very far from home. (F, The Gambia).

After the training, I was not employed at first but later I got a job. The salary was very poor and that led me to quit (F, The Gambia)

There were also cases where beneficiaries were reluctant to start jobs due to the low salaries on offer. Given the expenses they would incur in taking up the job e.g. travel, they realised it would be more economical not to take the job.

Family responsibilities
In both countries, women also took time out of their working lives to have and care for children. While some beneficiaries were happy to stay at home after having children, others wanted to go back to work.

I took the hairdressing training provided by the YMCA for 3 months. After the 3 months, I gave birth to a baby boy and since then I have been at home, sitting, doing nothing (F, The Gambia)

Summary of key learning
 The stories of change provide rich detail about the impact of increased income on the lives of beneficiaries and their families. The impact on household income is something that YCI should explore further, as part of its livelihoods ToC. In addition, identifying a model that indicates the impact of income on reducing various dimensions of household poverty would be a good investment, as it would help YCI better understand how young people’s lives are interwoven with their families.

 When baselines are established, it is important to identify some macroeconomic indicators which may influence outcomes for beneficiaries. For example, static household income during a period of stable or improving economic performance would be a matter of serious concern whereas static income during a period of economic decline may signal increased resilience amongst the target group.

 The large disparity in income ranges according to types of work that young people engaged in highlights the need for better market analysis in order to ensure that livelihoods are sustainable and productive. It is debatable whether hairdressing for example, would meet these criteria, based on the evidence from this Impact Assessment. Where market analysis does highlight a demand for certain skills and services, strict quotas should be set in order to avoid flooding the local market. In addition, there should be a minimum set of criteria for what is regarded as sustainable and productive, regardless of market demand. Small scale informal petty trading, for example, would fit into this category as it does not build young people’s capital in any long term way.
The gender disparity in pay highlights (a) the need to compliment skills training with advocacy on gender discrimination; (b) the need to encourage women to consider non-traditional livelihoods. YCI’s current livelihoods work currently addresses both of these issues; however the latter issue is difficult to achieve given the entrenched gender stereotypes in many countries. Further work needs to be done to support young women’s employment in new sectors and in livelihoods that yield higher incomes.

4.1.2 Social indicators
The more qualitative data on social indicators was collected primarily through stories of change and individual case studies, and was triangulated using analysis of responses on wellbeing collected through the individual questionnaires. The indicators on social wellbeing were identified by beneficiaries at the beginning of each of the workshops as part of overall quality of life indicators.

Common indicators on social well-being elicited across both countries can be categorised into the following:

- education and skills (of self and others e.g. children)
- family relationships
- community relationships (community participation, involvement in decision-making, etc)
- personal development (including self-confidence, self-efficacy, leadership, etc.)
- health (of self and others)
- hope and aspirations.

The tables below display results from analysis and coding of stories of change collected through participatory workshops. Where beneficiaries referred to positive circumstances or impact within the above-mentioned domains, these were categorised as “positive” and where these were adverse or challenging, they were categorised as “negative”. Some stories included both positive and negative elements and so were coded under both categories. These results have been cross referenced against the beneficiaries’ assessment of attribution, which refers to whether the YEIG programme had a high, medium or low impact on their circumstances.

Education and skills
Gambia
In the Gambia, 49% of beneficiaries discussed education and skills within their stories of change. 33% of the stories reported an increase in the level of education and skills with only 1% of stories suggesting that YEIG training had a limited relationship with this positive change. 25% of beneficiaries in Gambia ranked their success stories as being highly attributable to the YEIG training programme.
Gambia education and skills: results as %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At least things are a little bit easier for me because now I can help myself and my kids from the little money I have earned from the clients who normally come over for hairdressing. That is the way I am making to survive, pay my kids’ school fees and paying for my house rent. In short, that is my main story (F)

In The Gambia in particular, two stories noted the impact that the training had on their English language skills, increasing their ability to communicate and work in English.

The YMCA training helped me learn English so I can do things like use the internet even though I didn’t go to school. (F)

I am happy with the training I received from the YMCA because I learned English. Now, I am able to speak English. (F)

However, one in 6 of both the male and female stories in The Gambia noted a negative impact related to their education and skills, with 19% of males reporting that this was moderately related to the YEIG programme. It can be suggested that this attribution may be linked to beneficiaries’ perception that the training they received did not provide them with adequate knowledge and skills to secure employment and/or set up their own small business in the sector in which they were trained.

After the training, my aunt started a salon and gave it to me to manage it. I still feel that I need more skills because new hair styles come up every day and I don’t get to learn them. I currently live with my parents; I need more education and want to be independent. (F)

I graduated from the training in 2007. I am currently unemployed. My family complains every day, they want me to get a job, it is not good for me. I look for a job everyday but I feel I need more education. (M)

Senegal

In Senegal over 60% of the stories indicated a positive impact on their education in terms of the new skills and knowledge. Positive stories were not as keenly associated with the YEIG training as they had been in Gambia, with 15% of Senegalese stories suggested a positive impact which was either not correlated or had limited correlation with the training undertaken, suggesting external influences could create as positive
change as the training. None of the stories discussing Education and skills suggested a negative impact.

**Senegal education and skills: results as %**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Positive total</th>
<th>Positive male</th>
<th>Positive female</th>
<th>Negative total</th>
<th>Negative male</th>
<th>Negative female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>62</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of stories gave specific examples of business management skills that they had learnt and have been applying in their income-generating activity:

*I was able to be more innovative with the knowledge that I got through the training. I tested another experience of selling clothes to see what the result would be using my own resources. These experiences allowed me to more clearly see and better understand the market.* (F, disabled)

*I set it up [my agro-processing business] with my own funds, but YMCA training helped. Before I was evasive, afterwards I became more responsible. Before I spent without knowing how to manage my expenses – where to invest or not.* (M)

*The YMCA training was useful for me; it taught me how to be better at buying and selling, to use my merchandise in the right way, without ruining myself. And make sure I can pay for the schooling of my children. I have six children, from 3 to 11 years old.* (F, rural)

*After the training, I lost my savings as I was robbed. But thanks to the training, I knew how to start-up and I developed in petty trading and I earn a little. I manage my money better now, as I sell seasonal products and with my current management, I am able to sell other products outside of the season.* (F, rural)

A number of the stories told by young women in the rural area noted the positive impact of increased income on their ability to cover the school fees for their children; which indicates that the impact that they YEIG programme can play upon indirect beneficiaries’ lives, for example: *Before the training, at the end of every month I couldn’t pay for the school fees for my children. When I finished the training, I started petty trading, and I was able to save some money. Now at the end of every month I don’t have to worry about going to the school director and explaining that I can’t pay, because I pay every time. The most important thing for me from the training was that I learnt about the importance of savings.* (F, rural)
Combined results (Gambia and Senegal)

47% of all stories collected reported a positive impact related to increased knowledge and skills; 8% of all stories reported a negative impact upon their education and skills level and 45% of beneficiaries did not discuss this factor. 38% of all stories with a positive aspect had a high or medium level of attribution suggesting the positive changes in education and skills levels were strongly related to the training they had received. In some cases, these newly acquired skills have contributed to an increased, sustained level of income.

However, in 8% of stories, education and skills were perceived in a negative way; whilst high level attribution in negative stories is negligible, at 1%, the fact that 12% of males reported a moderate level of attribution in their negative stories is interesting.

It can be suggested, from reviewing stories and case studies, that whilst education and skills levels were not detrimentally affected, the YEIG training did not provide the adequate skills to ensure success in income generating activities.

### Combined education and skills: results as %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th></th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning**

The stories from The Gambia and Senegal highlight the impact of literacy, life skills and/or business management training on young people’s life choices. This is something that YCI has long recognised and is built into the majority of our livelihoods programmes. Given the economic volatility of countries in which our partners work, there is a strong argument for YCI to be providing young people with a greater range of transferable skills that help them identify opportunities and capitalise on them.

**Family Relationships**

**Gambia**

In Gambia, 61% of beneficiaries discussed family, whilst 39% chose not to talk about this factor. 13 of the stories made reference to the birth of a child, the death of a close relative or their marriage as significant events; all of which are unrelated to the YEIG training but can equally have a significant impact upon the beneficiaries’ lives and their familial wellbeing.
Almost half of all stories of young male and female beneficiaries in The Gambia noted a positive impact in relation to their families, with 35% of beneficiaries stating that this was highly attributable to the YEIG programme. The stories reflect the importance placed by the young people on their ability to use their increased income to support the education and health needs of their children and wider family members.

When I heard of the training which the YMCA was providing I did not hesitate to join. I did hairdressing for 9 months in 2006. Although it was difficult at the beginning because I had to leave my child at home to go for the training, later I coped with it and I graduated. I was later employed with my training providers and later, I started working for my brother. I am now earning my own salary which I now use to help myself, my child (daughter) and my family. (F)

I got confidence in me. I provide help for my family with the salary I have for education and health. (M)

After my training at YMCA 2005 to 2006 my life was changed. I learned a lot in English and more about food (catering) now I have self-confidence to work in the hotel. Now I am working at the restaurant and doing self-catering on my own. And I have good health now. I can pay my sons school fees and sometimes I send for my mum back home. My life is good now. Now feel happy with the things I learned. Now I am helping my people now and back home. (F)

I am married with one child. I support my mother as my father has died. My child is in school. With my hairdressing salary I pay her school fees and her lunch. I also use my money to buy food for the family. My brother is not well so I help his wife with whatever I have. (F)

I moved to another company in 2008 where I have been employed as a technician. Now, I am able to contribute to my family’s welfare and also, I am able to help other within my community. Now, I look forward to getting married and build up my own family (M).

There is some evidence to suggest that the training has contributed to increased independence for young women in particular, and may have had a positive impact on gender equity in the household.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For example, after presenting the story below, the young woman added that now she earns an income, her relationship with her husband has improved; he now respects her more because she is able to bring money in to support the household.

It [the training] has helped me to increase the way I live by thinking wide. It helped me to pay my children’s education. It also enabled me to take care for my parents and people in need. Some of my friends are jealous of me and they say I am always in a hurry. My husband now has more respect for me, since I am contributing financially in the home. It also enabled me to do whatever I want to do with my money. It helped me to have a good health and good relationships with the community around me. (F).

However, almost 1 in 4 of the female beneficiaries also noted a negative impact related to their family life, related principally to the low level of income they have earned since completion of the YMCA training, yet it should be noted that 12% of women suggested that this was not attributable to the YEIG programme: It is very difficult to sustain my family with a low income which was not easy for me and my husband because he is not financially strong enough (F).

In one case, a young man describes the negative impact that a low level of income is having on his ability to support his family, and as a consequence his self-confidence: Upon completing my training, I got my first job as a welder at House Welding from 2004-2008. During the course of my first job, I was not able to contribute to the welfare of my family, I felt so bad. (M)

Senegal

In Senegal, only 10% discussed the positive impacts of the project on family life. It can be suggested from the information that women were more likely to attribute positive experiences in the family context to the programme, yet that is not to say the programme did not have a positive effect on the family situation of the males.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senegal: family %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the male beneficiaries in Dakar made an interesting link between what he had learnt from the YMCA experience and his ability to bring up his first child. When he selected the story of the birth of his son as the most significant event since the training, group members questioned the relevance of this story in relation to the exercise. However, the young man was insistent that for him, there was a direct correlation between his personal development and skills acquired during the YMCA training and the way in which he has brought up his child.
For me, the birth of my son, Charly. Before, I spent a lot more time outside of the house, e.g. at a nightclub, drinking alcohol, smoking, and spending money unnecessarily without worrying about anything. But after my son’s birth everything really changed. The money that I spent in night clubs now served to look after my child – milk, cereals, care, prescriptions, clothes and above all, education. This training allowed me to be more responsible and above all, I learnt how to economise and to think of tomorrow, because before I used to always say that tomorrow doesn’t exist…

(M)

A second story from another male beneficiary demonstrated the importance of family life for him and in particular his desire to be able to financially support his family.

Family is the most important thing for me – maybe too important! I am not married yet, and I am not ready as I am worried that I wouldn’t be able to support my family as much if I had a wife and a family of my own. I want to wait until I have enough money to support them both. (M, case study)

A number of stories also noted the impact of external factors related to the illness or death of a family member on their socio-economic well-being.

I have sponsorship from YMCA. I studied for two years from GTTI. After that I worked in a company I earn there a good salary. After that I can able to married a wife and take care of her with two children. But it was too difficult for me I encounter many things before all these. After that I was sick I cannot able to work for a while I lost that after that I have another job and still now I am managing. After that I also lost one of my grandparent it was too sad for me because she is the one who was helping me a lot. (M)

I graduated from training in 2007. I was unemployed for 2 years and I said to myself I must do something. I am now looking for a job, my father passed away. I am confused and I have travelled by sea, I wanted to get to Europe. Unfortunately, I was deported and sent back home (M)

For female beneficiaries in particular, the birth of a child also was noted as a significant event that had in some cases a negative impact on their economic well-being.

I took the hairdressing training provided by the YMCA for 3 months. After the 3 months, I gave birth to a baby boy and since then I have been at home, sitting, doing nothing (F)

In 2006 I had my third son and I stopped working to take care of him. During 2007 I travelled back home [to Sierra Leone] to see my dad who I left behind during the war for then good years. When I came back in 2008 I found a placement in a friend’s tailoring shop. In 2010, I had a caesarean operation to give birth of my fifth son and I stopped working again until now (F)

The questions on well-being in the individual questionnaires also aimed to assess the extent to which the young participants were contributing to family life financially and also whether they perceived that their family respected their opinion more since they had completed their training.
In response to the question: ‘Since the completion of the YMCA training, I contribute more financially to my family’, overall, 72% agreed with the statement.

In Senegal, a third of men and women strongly agreed that they were now able to contribute more financially and 35% agreed that they were able to. However, 20-25% of both sexes stated that they were unable to contribute more.

In The Gambia, 45% of respondents agreed with the statement, which is surprising given the lower rate of positive impact on economic status amongst young participants in The Gambia. However, with no baseline data collected prior to the Impact Assessment on the level of income pre-training, we cannot assume that beneficiaries in The Gambia have not seen an increase in their income. For women, their ratings are similar to those in Senegal and the stories of change indicate that despite limited participation in income-generating activities, their perception of the value of the skills they learnt and a changed mind-set about their own capabilities is significant.

In asking young beneficiaries about their involvement in family decision-making, and their perception of their family’s respect of their opinion since completing the programme, young women were more likely to answer positively than males (84% vs. 63% in the top two brackets), and a higher percentage of men answered negatively (20% vs. 12% in the bottom two brackets). In Senegal, 87% of women were extremely positive about how their families valued their opinions and only 10% answered negatively. The men were less positive about how their family valued their opinion, with 33% answering in the negative two brackets.

In The Gambia, in terms of gender the picture is different with 85% of men viewing their value within the family to have increased against 51% of women. This is likely to be linked to the low % of females who have increased their economic status since the programme ended, and the stories of change indicating that this lack of economic power in the household is directly correlated to their respect within the household.

**Combined results (Gambia and Senegal)**

One in 3 stories indicated a positive impact on the lives and/or well-being of family members of the young beneficiaries, principally on their children and their parents. 64% of beneficiaries did not mention family in their stories.

The impact on families was mentioned more frequently in the Gambia, in 49% of all stories versus 10% in Senegal. The stories of change suggest there is positive relationship between the YEIG programme and positive impacts within the family situation as 20% of beneficiaries stated a high level of attribution.

The 7 stories that indicated a negative impact on their families related primarily to young people in the Gambia who felt that the low level of income that they had secured following the training meant that they were struggling to provide for their families.
### Combined: family %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Positive total</th>
<th>Positive male</th>
<th>Positive female</th>
<th>Negative total</th>
<th>Negative male</th>
<th>Negative female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Learning

Reducing young people’s vulnerability to external shocks should be more closely integrated into YCI’s work. In order to do this, YCI needs to study in more detail young people’s coping mechanisms which are not well understood. For example, how does the issue of mobility intersect with vulnerability to external shocks? And what of young people’s social networks? Linked to the above point is the need to look more closely into young people’s social networks. Young people are often described as occupying a grey area between childhood and adulthood, where they engage in sexual behaviour, start their own family, move away from home and earn their own income for the first time. This transitional definition of youth means that it isn’t always clear how young people are linked into their existing family networks, have established new families, and what other social networks they belong to which either provide additional support or place additional burdens on young people.

The stories in this section suggest a complex web of networks that young people belong to which affect their life chances. Understanding these interrelationships would help YCI understand how, for example, youth livelihoods interventions contribute to the household economy. This would also help in modifying training to take into consideration the other household commitments that young people have (for example looking after a dependent or ill relative). Given the link between economic empowerment and gender empowerment, YCI needs to focus more attention on research into gender and livelihood, including good practice in livelihoods interventions that support young women’s overall empowerment, within the household and in society more broadly.
Community Relationships and Participation

Gambia

14% of beneficiaries mentioned community participation whilst the majority (86%; 80% male and 88% female respectively) did not discuss changes around this area. 1 in 5 of stories told by Gambian male beneficiaries noted an improvement in their community participation – either in terms of their ability to support community development or to be a more responsible person within the community in terms of decision-making.

All of these stories referred to the positive impacts as being highly attributable to the YEIG programme.

Gambia: community relations %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No mention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>total</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have been a trainer assistant for almost 4 years now. This helped me a lot because it has made me to take care of my daily activities at home. Although I am not yet married I am planning to do so. This is not only helping me but also make me to take part in the community development (M)

I have improved my relations with my community. Now I am working and earning a good salary. Now I am helping my family and my relatives (M).

The most important thing I was able to do for my family, and especially for my father, was to rebuild his house. For the future, I would like to learn a different profession, simply because of the experience I have had in the field of hotels and catering. Now I see myself as a responsible person both with my family and the community I live in (M)
Senegal
Community participation and decision-making was not a prominent indicator in the stories of change collected in Senegal, with only 8% referencing it. The number of females referring to this factor was marginal, with 96% not discussing community participation in their stories:

Senegal: community relations %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However one young man highlighted the positive impact of the training on his increased sense of responsibility within his community:

*In 1998, I joined the YMCA. I can say that in terms of knowledge, through the different training seminars, I experienced a lot of positive changes in my life. It's true that I have not yet found a job as such, but today I am capable of taking on posts of responsibility in the religious, social and even youth communities. An example is that I am today in public-speaking thanks to YMCA’s training.* (M)

From the questionnaires, we can also see 65% of all beneficiaries agreed that they have been able to contribute more to community decision making processes since their training, however a quarter still disagreed with the statement. It is important to note that this question may have been interpreted differently by respondents as the notion of ‘decision-making’ was not made explicit in the questionnaires. In some cases, respondents referred to their participation in community events; their financial contribution to celebrations; their involvement in local associations, etc.

In both countries, on the basis of the questionnaires young women perceived their decision-making within their community to have increased, yet in the stories of change this was only referred to by 7% of the female participants as being an important change. In Senegal, overall, 61% of the sample agreed or strongly agreed with the statement and this was similar for both sexes. However, the ‘disagree’ response is much larger than for other statements on wellbeing, with 27% of males and 16% of females being within these brackets, giving an overall negative response to the statement of 24%.

In The Gambia, data indicated an equally high negative reaction with an overall figure of 25% disagreeing with the statement. 1 in 3 women responded negatively as opposed to 1 in 6 in Senegal. Considering the young women’s perception of their role in family decision-making, it is perhaps not surprising that their perception of their role in community decision-making is also low.
Combined results (Gambia and Senegal)

Only 12% of all beneficiaries discussed community participation in their stories, the other 88% did not reference this factor. Increased community participation and decision-making was noted as a significant positive impact primarily by young males, 20% of all males mentioning this fact, many of whom cited the leadership skills that they had developed through the training; and others who made reference to their increased level of income enabling them to participate more fully in community development. Whilst only 12% of all beneficiaries mentioned community participation in their stories, the majority of positive stories, 7%, were highly attributable to the YEIG programme.

### Combined: community relations %

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning**

The most important consideration for YCI is how best to strengthen the links between economic empowerment of young women and their participation in decision making. While women cited an increase in their participation in decision making, entrenched gender discrimination and stereotyping made the barriers for women much more difficult to break through. YCI’s programmes can address this by including complimentary activities that allow women the opportunity to design and engage in decision making processes.

**Personal development**

**Gambia**

In The Gambia, 54% of beneficiaries discussed personal development in their stories, 38% suggested a positive experiences whilst 16% of stories were made up of negative experiences and 46% of beneficiaries not referring this factor. There is little difference between the % of males and females referencing improvements in personal development indicators, (41% and 37% respectively) and there is little difference in the distribution of how they attribute their positive impacts; nearly 30% of both sexes suggest high attribution for positive stories. Negative experiences were more frequently mentioned by females (22%) than their male counterparts (7%).
Gambia: personal development %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Senegal

In Senegal 72% of beneficiaries did not discuss personal development changes and of the 28% of beneficiaries who mentioned it the frequency was much higher amongst males than females (64% versus 14% for females). However, it is interesting to note that neither gender suggests that success stories were highly attributable to their training programme they underwent; instead, overall 20% of beneficiaries (55% in relation to males) stated that their positive personal development was moderately attributable to YEIG and is indicative that external factors were in play as well. The relatively low % of female respondents in Senegal citing personal development as an area of change may reflect the relatively high proportion of females.

Senegal: personal development %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of self-confidence, 86% of the young people who completed questionnaires felt they had become more confident since completing the programme. Only 10% felt that this statement didn’t apply to them. 85% of women were in the top two brackets and 87% of men which is a significant result for both genders, particularly when compared to the more negative impact on economic wellbeing.

In Senegal, 84% of the sample believed that their confidence had improved (agreed and strongly agreed), including 90% of all female respondents. When considering individual stories of particularly vulnerable groups of young people (e.g. disabled young men and women, and rural young women in Senegal), it becomes evident that the positive impact of their involvement in the programme was felt more significantly on
their self-confidence and belief in their ability to succeed as equals to their able-bodied peers.

In some cases, this increased self-confidence gave beneficiaries the impetus to secure employment, but in other cases such newly acquired qualities did not lead to employment. Nevertheless, these qualities could be seen as an end in themselves, as explained by one beneficiary:

*It's true that I have not yet found a job as such, but today I am capable of taking on posts of responsibility in the religious, social and even youth communities. An example is that I am today in public-speaking thanks to YMCA’s training* (M).

As the following story suggests, even with little increased income or economic independence since the YMCA training, the young woman expressed happiness for her current situation:

*I went back to the YMCA which made me happy because I met new friends and it has changed my life a lot because I learn a lot during my catering course. Anyway, I am not working but I am happy for YMCA because I can cater for people when they have parties.* (F)

Another female noted improved relations with her husband:

*My husband now has more respect for me, since I am contributing financially in the home. It also enabled me to do whatever I want to do with my money. It helped me to have a good health and good relationships with the community around me.* (F)

Personal development emerged as a prominent theme amongst the stories collected in Senegal, both in the rural and urban contexts. In particular, the themes of empowerment and increased independence were highlighted by particular vulnerable groups within the young beneficiaries, notably disabled young people (male and female) and rural young women.

**Disabled young people**

The positive impact on the social indicators of disabled young beneficiaries, in particular personal development, self-confidence and leadership skills were noted throughout the data collection process both by disabled and able-bodied young people involved in the project.

*I can say that after I did the training, I became more responsible, more independent and more daring even. I was able to be more innovative with the knowledge that I got through the training.*

*Three months after the training I was working – I became more mature and had more confidence.* (F, disabled)

*The YMCA training gave me a different vision - the willingness to establish a business.* (F, disabled)

*The YMCA training helped me to get into new sectors that had not been accessible to me before. Before the training I was unemployed, although I did have a diploma. Now I am working in the Mayor’s Office. This wasn’t just because of the training from the YMCA, but it did enable me to be more confident.* (M, disabled)
I had more confidence that I could succeed in life, as I had all the necessary tools. The training from the YMCA was high quality, but because I didn’t get any financing, it can seem that everything is negative after training. However, it is positive in the way that the training helped to make me a leader in whatever I do. (M, disabled)

The interview with the Senegal YMCA Project Coordinator noted the impact on personal development of the disabled young beneficiaries and attributed this in part to the approach adopted by the YMCA to promoting inclusiveness during the training process:

The YMCA collaborated with the National Association for Physically Disabled People to identify and refer young people for training. The YMCA set a minimum quota for each of the training courses to ensure that approximately 30% of the trainees in each group were disabled young people. The training methodology was set up to be inclusive of physically disabled and other young people, e.g. with a focus on mixed group work. At the start of the training, it was noted that often the disabled young people kept in a group to themselves, but over the course of the training the groups became much more mixed and interaction was very positive.

I think the project had the most impact on disabled young people. Even if they didn’t get funds to start up their own business, they gained more independence and confidence. All young people who did manage to set up small businesses still run those businesses today, even though some of them have faced problems at one time or another. Young men and disabled young women were the most successful. This may be due to the Senegalese context where women tend to be more interested in establishing more formalised businesses rather than informal activities (excerpt from semi-structured interview with former YEIG Project Manager, Senegal YMCA).

Rural young women

For rural young women, a number of stories indicated that the training had contributed to increased independence and control within the household, and in one case reduced the young woman’s vulnerability to exploitation from others.

We no longer have to put the wood we have collected on our heads and walk kilomètres into town to sell it. The training has also helped the young women to be more confident and persuade their husbands to give them some money to take transport into town to work. (F, rural)

I cannot speak without referring to the training as it is after this training that we really became aware of what we do and decided to take things in hand and go it alone. It’s after the training, that I knew that a business man was stealing my profit behind my back (and was able to address the problem). And now I know my turnover. (F, rural)

I first thank YMCA, for if I was sleeping, I am awake now. I learnt to sell thanks to this training. Since the training, I know how to manage my money. (F, rural)

40% of all stories of change in The Gambia reported improvements in their personal development, related in particular to their level of self-confidence and independence. As demonstrated by the questionnaires, the impact of the training on the social,
personal development indicators was far more positive than on the economic indicators such as increased income levels.

In the Gambia, 89% of males strongly agreed that their confidence had increased since the training, however for females only 50% of women strongly agreed. 12% of women were in the negative two brackets, stating that their confidence had not increased. Reflecting on the young women’s economic situation following the training, the lower self-confidence could be linked to the fact that many had not been able to use their new skills to improve their economic situation and expressed disappointment or despondency when describing that little had changed in their lives since they graduated. Inability to provide for themselves as well as their family also has a significant impact on the young people’s sense of self-confidence and pride, and in some cases young people stated that they were not respected as a result of their lack of financial contribution to the household.

In response to the question: ‘Since the completion of the YMCA training, I feel more in control of my life’, 88% of young people ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with the statement. 12% of the sample either ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagree’ and young women were twice as likely to respond in this way.

In the Gambia, more respondents (89%) placed themselves in the ‘strongly agree’ bracket than in Senegal, with half of women and over 65% of males agreeing strongly with the statement. When comparing with the economic indicators, this analysis seems to suggest that despite the young people in The Gambia having less positive impact on their economic indicators, their perception of the impact of the training on their social well-being was overall positive.

**Combined results (Gambia and Senegal)**

After education and skills, personal development is the area that was most cited by beneficiaries as having changed since the training was received, noted in 42% of all stories with 58% of beneficiaries abstaining from discussing this topic. 33% of stories referenced positive changes in this area. In terms of positive impact related to the project, stories most commonly indicated (or directly cited) increased self-confidence, independence and empowerment. 25.5% of beneficiaries suggested their positive stories related to personal development were either highly or moderately attributable to the YEIG programme.

**Combined: personal development %**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
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<th>Negative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11.5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning
The most important learning for YCI is the need to reinforce personal development as an explicit outcome in all livelihood projects and therefore ensure that adequate funds are allocated to life skills training and other personal development interventions. YCI has always placed a lot of emphasis on life skills and personal growth, though this hasn’t always led to rigorous monitoring of these outcomes, perhaps because of its difficulty in measuring, particularly soon after a project has finished. YCI’s new Theory of change identifies personal development as one of the key dimensions of change that it expects to achieve for young people. The next step is to establish a strong M&E framework around personal development which is expected as part of YCI’s on-going ToC work. It is important to also reinforce to donors the importance of personal development outcomes in livelihoods projects, despite how intangible they sound.

The second key learning point is the need to continue to target particularly vulnerable and marginalised young people for whom there has been a significant impact in terms of personal development and levels of self-confidence, as well as addressing issues of stigma and discrimination.

Health

Gambia
In The Gambia, only 9% of beneficiaries discussed health impacts, with 91% of young people not discussing the topic. 7% of young people mentioned a positive impact on their ability to meet their health needs and those of their families as a result of increased income which they accredited highly to the YEIG programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>total</td>
<td>male</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Senegal
As in The Gambia, the impact on health indicators was the least frequently mentioned in stories of change collected in Senegal. 94% of beneficiaries did not reference this as a factor in their stories. The 3% who referenced the factor, all of whom were male, did not believe the positive change had come about due to the training.
The two stories that noted any impact suggested two issues: first, the impact of health problems on the ability of the young person to sustain their economic activity; and second, the potential negative impact that the income generating activity undertaken can have on the young person’s health.

1.  My business lasted for 5 years and it worked really well. I reimbursed all of my loan and I continued with my own resources. But then, I had a negative part to my story. I had an accident and it left me with a fracture so I had to spend 3 months at home and spent the money from my business to cover my health needs. When I was ready to go back, I had another accident – I fell in the bathroom and ended up with a double fracture of my ankle, and then my business sank. Now I don’t have any more money to continue my business. Up to today, I am continuing to look for money to start up my shop again. (F, disabled)

In this second case, elements of the story indicated that the economic well-being of the woman had improved in part due to the business management skills acquired during the training, but during discussions with other group members about where to plot the story on the positive / negative axis, the young woman asked: ‘if it [this activity] ends up killing me, is it really a good thing’?

2. I sell dried fruits that I collect from the bush. You know, these kinds of fruits don’t really have a market in the town so I am obliged to go from door to door to sell them and it is really hard. But the price I sell it is low and I don’t take credit, so I sell all the fruits that I collect by the end of the day. When I make some money, I break it down into 4 parts. I use two parts for my business, one part for my daily needs and the other I keep for difficult times. (F, rural)

Combined

Health was the social indicator least referred to in the stories collected in both countries, cited in only 5% of stories, with 88% of males and 89% of females not referencing it in their stories. In some cases, health was referred to indirectly linked to the young people’s ability to cover their (and their children’s) basic needs thanks to their increased income.

Where directly mentioned, stories noted the impact of poor health of the young person on their inability to sustain an income-generating activity, or the negative impact of the...
activity itself on their health status thus attribution in the negative stories is found to be in the highest level.

**Combined: health %**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
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<th>Negative</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning**

As indicated in other sections, a more holistic approach to youth livelihoods would see beneficiaries strengthen their own resilience to external shocks, through participation in micro-insurance and health schemes.

**Hopes and Aspirations**

Throughout the data collection process, a recurring theme emerged related to young people’s aspirations. Despite the positive impact demonstrated on a number of socio-economic indicators, many of the young people interviewed do not consider that their hopes and ambitions have been fulfilled. The impact of the training on their personal development – in particular their self-confidence and self-belief – has helped them to recognise their potential to achieve more than they may have previously thought possible, especially for those young people from traditionally marginalised groups (e.g. disabled young people in Senegal).

**Analysis**

Individual questionnaires asked respondents whether they felt more positive about their own future since completing the training. Overall, Gambian respondents responded more strongly to this question, but in both countries over 90% responded positively about their future, indicating a sense of hope. During the workshops in The Gambia, the aspect of faith emerged as an important theme, contributing to young people’s feeling of hope for their future. Looking at the 6% who responded negatively, a number of these individuals felt as confident about their future now as they had done before the training, suggesting that they did not consider the training to have had an impact on their perceptions of their own future and ability to succeed.

**Learning**

Whilst this element was not a key question to explore in the initial design of the IA framework it is clear that this is an important element, and potential impact of a training or intervention. As a result of these findings, future IAs will incorporate this as a key question to explore.
4.1.3 Assessment of YEIG’s contribution to changes in young people’s quality of life

As part of the questionnaire, beneficiaries were asked to assess the importance of the training in their lives. As the results below indicate, overall 56% of participants considered that the training had had a very important impact on their lives, with 38% considering it to have been important. In general, young men were more likely to answer positively than young women, 10% of whom overall considered that the training had not had an important impact on their lives. This reflects the experience of a number of female beneficiaries - in particular in The Gambia - whose economic wellbeing has not significantly improved in the years following the YEIG Programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Assessment of YEIG programme on your life</th>
<th>Female %</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>37</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Not Important at all</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
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<td>72</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
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<td>55</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Impact grids
During the participatory workshops drawing out stories of change from project beneficiaries, facilitators asked the participants to also consider the attribution (if any) of the YEIG programme to the changes that their stories had highlighted. An impact grid was used as a framework that enabled participants to plot their story on two axes: 1) the extent to which the story reflected a positive or negative impact on their lives; 2) the extent to which their involvement in the YEIG programme had contributed to the change described in their story. Participants were asked to place their story on the grid and briefly explain to a small group their decision. In some cases, group members asked further questions which prompted the individual to adjust their placement, but the final placement was up to the individual who ‘owned’ the story.

Line of best fit
A line of best fit represents the trends of data sets on a scatter graph. The line may pass through all, some or none of the data sets.

A positive correlation, which rises sharply from left to right, suggests positive experiences were more likely to be attributable to the YEIG training whilst negative experiences were likely to be attributable to other causes.

A negative correlation, falling sharply from left to right, would indicate that negative experiences were more likely to be attributable to YEIG training whilst positive experiences were more likely to be attributable to sources other than YEIG training.

A horizontal line of best fit is indicative of a limited relationship between the parameters of the YEIG training and whether a beneficiary experiences negative or positive changes in their lives.

Strong correlation is present when data sets are clustered closely to the line of best fit. Weak correlation, reversely, is where data sets are not clustered near the line of best fit.

The results of the impact grids are presented below, first analysed on a country basis and in summary key findings are presented reflecting the combined results.

1 Impact in The Gambia (see Annex 7.4)
The results from the Gambia impact grid indicate that the majority of participants who shared positive stories of change also attributed these strongly to their involvement in the YEIG programme. The line of best fit suggests weak positive correlation. 16 positive stories (50% of the total; and 76% of all positive stories) were recorded as having moderate to high attribution to the YEIG programme.

In further analysing these positive stories, the trend suggests that changes have occurred in relation to their social wellbeing (family and personal development in particular), rather than in their economic wellbeing given that for participants in The Gambia their employment status has on the whole been unstable since their completion of the YEIG programme training. What the impact grid suggests is that despite relatively poor economic wellbeing, participants still value highly the impact of the YMCA training on their social wellbeing.
Many of the participants who considered their significant change to have been moderately attributable to the training (score of 4 on the graph) tended to focus on educational impact of their training and the positive impact that their newly acquired skills had on their own life and that of their close family.

As noted previously, participants at workshops in The Gambia appeared to have had a lower educational status when selected for the YEIG programme in comparison with their Senegalese peers, which may go some way to explain the tendency to view education and skills acquired through the YEIG training as particularly significant in their lives. However, overall turbulence in their employment status has had a more significant – negative - impact on their lives, outweighing the positive impact brought about by the skills training itself.

Those participants who registered negative changes in their lives (32% of stories) tended to highlight in their stories aspects where they have suffered challenges related to their ability to gain stable employment and/or earn a sustained income. However, less than half of these participants attributed these negative impacts to the YMCA programme.

2. Impact in Senegal

The impact grid for Senegalese participants seemingly presents a more positive picture in terms of impact on changes in participants’ lives as 30 of 33 stories were considered to highlight positive changes in participants’ lives since the YEIG programme, and 19 of these (56% overall) were recorded as high or moderately attributable to the training. However, 40% of positive stories also have low attribution scores and the near horizontal line of best fit suggests a limited relationship between YEIG training and the impact it had upon beneficiaries’ lives.

The vast majority of those who cited a high attribution of the training on changes in their lives were women from the rural Yendane village in Senegal, who stated that they were able to scale up or better manage their petty trades using business management skills that they had acquired during the YMCA training. These improvements to their income-generating activities had contributed to an overall increase in their income in most cases.

Those participants whose stories suggested moderately positive experiences (average score of 4) all noted their lack of savings or inability to secure credit as being the main problem they have encountered since the YEIG training, which has limited their ability to establish their own income generating activities. Yet despite these limitations, this group’s stories highlighted an increase in educational and professional skills as well as gaining informal employment as positive impacts of the YEIG training.

The three stories that demonstrated negative changes in participants’ lives were provided by women from the Yendane village, and two of these stories highlighted a real concern linked to the stability and sustainability of their current means of generating an income and their ability to support their family.

For example, one woman noted that whilst she now felt able to find work to generate enough money to meet her daily needs, she stated:

“… but work can stop one day and in this kind of situation, your needs pile up. Even if
you change the type of activity you do to earn money that might not fix the problem. This means that you may find yourself in a whirlwind of debt. Even if an NGO might come and offer you a loan, the problem [of debt] could remain”.

In this case, the young woman felt that remaining in such a state of financial vulnerability since participating in the YEIG programme reflected negatively on her experience of the programme itself, therefore chose to give a high attribution score to her story.

**Combined Impact Grid for The Gambia and Senegal**

Looking at the results of the 80 stories collected during the workshops in both countries, the graph presents a predominantly positive picture in terms of the types of changes that young people recorded as having been significant in their lives in the years following their involvement in the YEIG programme and the line of best fit suggests a reasonably strong positive correlation.

14 (18%) of stories noted negative changes yet only 6% of negative stories were assessed as being moderately or highly attributable to the programme; suggesting that the majority of negative changes were not considered by participants to have been associated with their involvement in the YEIG programme.

Considering the findings presented earlier in the report, which indicated mixed achievements of the YEIG training contributing to improvements in young people’s economic wellbeing, specifically their ability to secure and sustain an income generating activity, it is interesting that the workshops drew out overall more positive stories of change in participants’ lives in recent years. In summary, these stories paint a picture of the varying, multiple factors that contribute to young people’s sense of wellbeing and quality of life, and suggest the significance that the young participants placed on changes in their social wellbeing.
5 Change dimension 2 – changes in YMCA capacity to support vulnerable young people

5.1 Changes in project management capacity

Data collected on the changes in organisational capacity since the YMCAs involvement in YEIG highlighted differences between the two YMCAs. In The Gambia, the programmes staff interviewed pointed to ways in which the learning they had drawn from programme implementation had been incorporated into the design and implementation of a follow-on youth livelihoods programme funded by the BLF in partnership with YCI. In Senegal, the findings of the impact assessment focused on changes identified by participants at the organisational rather than on a specific project basis. This was in part due to the role of the respondents, as during the data collection process in The Gambia it was more challenging to seek input from representatives at all levels of the organisation.

The Gambia YMCA programmes staff highlighted improvements in their beneficiary selection process in subsequent programmes, notably:

- During the implementation of YEIG, young offenders and young people living with HIV/AIDS were identified as particularly vulnerable groups who could be targeted through youth entrepreneurship programmes, and the YMCA has incorporated these groups in the identification of new programme beneficiaries under the livelihoods project supported by the Big Lottery Fund. The YMCA also reaches out to young disabled people directly rather than depending on referrals from the National Union of Disabled Youth (NUDY), which had limited success in the YEIG programme.

- With support from YCI, the YMCA has established a more rigorous selection process to objectively identify vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups of young people for livelihoods programmes.

On-going M&E processes and tracking of beneficiaries in The Gambia have also changed as a result of learning through the implementation of YEIG. There have been a number of learning points in this area that have been incorporated into current programmes:

- Programme staff are now decentralised to enable them to more effectively monitor project activities in different locations.

- In the subsequent livelihoods project (funded by the Big Lottery Fund) the vocational training course does not continue up to the final year of the project to allow the project staff to provide post-training support and follow-up to beneficiaries before project funding comes to an end.

- With support from YCI, The Gambia YMCA now uses a database to store personal (e.g. family status and vulnerability criteria) and on-going monitoring information on beneficiaries, managed by a Data Entry Clerk who is dedicated to monitoring. Case studies are developed for all the beneficiaries. Previously the only information collected was beneficiaries’ attendance at the training centres.
An Enterprise and Employment Officer (EEO) has been recruited who monitors and does follow up with beneficiaries in training and post-training. The EEO is in charge of finding out if beneficiaries are employed, monitoring their salary and, for those are self-employed or who have a small business, monitoring their turnover. Previously there was no staff member dedicated to follow up on beneficiaries. “After the beneficiaries graduated we would follow up with phone calls to see how they were progressing in finding a job. We would do this once after around 6 months. This was also challenging as the vocational training went right up until the end of the project and so staff were no longer available to follow up on the last batch of beneficiaries.” (The Gambia YMCA staff)

Not all changes noted by programmes staff are considered to have been positive. In terms of commissioning external evaluations, the evaluation process has also changed since the YEIG programme, with a lot more input from YCI in writing the TOR, shortlisting candidates and making the final decision on the consultant. It was suggested that some staff found that this process to be more bureaucratic than before and that it has not necessarily resulted in a better quality of consultants being hired.

5.2 YMCA profile and ability to influence

Both YMCAs have incorporated lessons learnt from the YEIG programme in developing subsequent programmes with an entrepreneurship and economic well-being component.

Following the final evaluation of the YEIG programme in The Gambia, YCI supported the YMCA to develop a national skills training and enterprise development programme for disadvantaged young people in 4 regions. Funding was secured from the Big Lottery Fund for a 4-year programme (2008 – 2011). In addition to this, the Gambia YMCA works with other partners (Liverpool YMCA; Finland YMCA) on youth livelihoods initiatives and provides vocational training with a focus on agriculture.

Whilst The Gambia YMCA had previously worked on vocational training projects, the increased geographical scope of the YEIG programme increased the government’s recognition of The Gambia YMCA’s work, particularly at local level. Programmes staff referred to local government representatives noting changes in the lives of young people in their communities who had been supported by YMCA interventions.

The partnership developed with Senegal YMCA through implementing the YEIG project gave The Gambia YMCA the idea of providing seed funding and loans to enable young people to start a small income-generating project. The microfinance aspect of the Gambia YMCA’s subsequent BLF-funded livelihoods project was a direct result of learning from the YEIG programme. Today, the YMCA is recognised as being the only organisation providing micro-loans to particularly marginalised young people in The Gambia, and the YMCA has developed a partnership with The Trust Bank to support the microfinance component of their programme.

Through the YEIG project, Senegal YMCA developed a strong collaboration with the National Agency for Youth Employment (ANEJ), as well as national NGOs such as the National Association for Disabled People. The YMCA is cited in the national ‘directory’ produced by CONGAD as one of the CSOs that works on youth entrepreneurship.
At the international level, YMCA Senegal was invited to represent African YMCA movements at a conference in Belgium in 2008 and was also cited as an example ‘leader’ in youth entrepreneurship training by a UN representative attending the YMCA World Council in Hong Kong in 2010.

Senegal YMCA staff also consider that their experience of YEIG facilitated a partnership with YMCA Toronto who in 2004 funded the establishment of a local YMCA training centre (Centre for Excellence, Parcelles Assainies, Dakar). In 2009, Senegal YMCA in partnership with Toronto YMCA secured CIDA funding for a 5-year HIV/AIDS and socio-economic development project for young people and women. Although the focus of the project is on SRH and HIV (a primary programmatic area for Senegal YMCA), a secondary objective focuses on entrepreneurship training and micro-credit for young people and women in particular. The target groups include unemployed young people, women and also returnees (unsuccessful migrants). In addition to CIDA funding, YMCA Toronto is undertaking local fundraising to raise money for young people who want to start up a business after their training, to be provided as micro-credit.

YCI as a partner is seen as having had a positive influence on Senegal YMCA, for the following reasons: 1) the entrepreneurship programme YEIG was initiated with YCI’s support; and 2) YCI’s support for the development and implementation of the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programme for Young People in conflict-affected Casamance (funded by Comic Relief 2006 – 2010).

As noted above, the YMCA’s profile in delivering youth entrepreneurship training increased as a direct result of their involvement in the YEIG programme, but on a national level the YMCA has seen their profile increase more as a result of their work in Casamance: “no-one would have imagined such a large project for the YMCA, one that has had a huge impact on the profile of the organisation and reinforced both our image and social relevance” (Senegal YMCA staff)

Senegal YMCA staff also felt that the YEIG programme has had a longer-term benefit to some of the local YMCA branches, notably Dakar University, Parcelles Assainies (Dakar) and Ziguinchor. A small number of the young YEIG beneficiaries had been YMCA volunteers and following the entrepreneurship training they started to use their skills to write projects to raise funds for their local YMCA branch activities. At least three of these young beneficiaries made a significant contribution to local branches, in voluntary or staff capacity, including one who became Regional Secretary of the Ziguinchor branch and coordinated the YCI/Comic Relief-funded Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Programme for Young People in conflict-affected Casamance.

The technical consultants used for the entrepreneurship training have also been called upon to provide technical support both for the YMCA and other organisations that seek training in entrepreneurship e.g. business management.

“These days, lots of organisations ask the YMCA for training [on youth entrepreneurship]. When they come back, they say we never knew that the YMCA could provide such good quality training. We have skills and capacity at the YMCA….” (Senegal YMCA staff)
6 Conclusions and lessons learnt

6.1 Programmatic learning: designing youth livelihoods programmes

YCI’s primary objective for conducting this Impact Assessment was for organisational learning in relation to what has worked (and what has not worked so well) in supporting vulnerable young people to secure safe and sustainable livelihoods. ‘Youth Livelihoods’ has been a central theme for YCI’s programming with local partners for many years and is one of five key thematic areas in our new organisational strategy for 2011-2016.

The impact assessment team recognise that over the course of YCI’s experience and in particular since the completion of the YEIG programme in 2006, a number of lessons have been learnt and built into the design of subsequent programmes to increase the effectiveness and ultimately the positive impact of our work. However, this impact assessment provides YCI with an important opportunity to critically reflect on our livelihoods programming and draw out learning related to the longer-term impact of this work on the lives of vulnerable young women and men.

Key programmatic learning from this IA can be grouped as follows:

- content of training programmes
- post-training support, credit and other inputs
- the role of formal education
- social protection: increasing vulnerable young people’s resilience

Content of training programmes

Vocational training versus entrepreneurship training

The approach employed in The Gambia to support young people to secure employment or establish their own small business was to provide young beneficiaries with a more traditional vocational training course over a number of months. Research conducted prior to the design of the YEIG programme had highlighted a lack of appropriate skills development opportunities for marginalised young people in The Gambia and concluded that this was a primary cause for the high levels of youth unemployment and under-employment. In Senegal, the approach taken by the YMCA to provide short (2 – 3 weeks), intensive courses in entrepreneurship and business management provided an alternative route for young people to secure income through establishing small businesses. This method was built on an assumption that the young beneficiaries had already acquired some level of skill or knowledge related to their chosen trade.

A potential challenge cited in vocational training programmes for vulnerable beneficiaries is the length of the course – the high opportunity cost of lengthy training can contribute to high drop-out rates as beneficiaries seek other means of generating an income to meet their needs. In an interview with the Gambia Project Manager, he noted that drop-out rates were around 10%, but data collected during the IA suggested that some of the young people felt that the course was too short for them to secure sufficient skills to find employment in the corresponding sector. In developing a follow-
on national livelihoods programme, the Gambia YMCA extended vocational training courses from 9 to 12 months as they believed this would give young people with low literacy skills more time to absorb the technical skills being taught. Experience and learning from other youth livelihood programmes implemented by YCI and other agencies suggests that there remains a tension between the demand for accelerated vocational training courses and additional support (literacy, etc.) to support more vulnerable beneficiaries to acquire a satisfactory level of skills. This could form a learning question for YCI's on-going / future livelihoods programmes.

Perhaps a more significant learning point relates to the approach of providing vocational training in a context of limited employment opportunities, rather than choosing to focus on providing entrepreneurship skills and small business management support. The IA results demonstrated that in The Gambia, a significant proportion of training graduates had spent time searching for a job, but had struggled to find one. Whilst some were able to secure apprenticeship and job placements which provided useful practical experience, much of the employment opportunities were temporary or unstable and did not address the young beneficiaries' financial needs. The focus on vocational training provision – i.e. skilling up young people for the labour market – needs to be complemented with work on market access to ensure that these skills meet current and/or emerging demands.

Labour market surveys should be undertaken prior to each new intake of training beneficiaries to help identify the most appropriate opportunities and provide young people with a better chance of securing employment post-training. In addition, training offered must take into account the distinct needs and situation of young men and young women, challenging gender stereotyping rather than reinforcing it by encouraging women to take up training in traditional sectors such as hairdressing and tailoring that tend to yield lower levels of income.

It is also important to consider entrepreneurship and small business management as being complementary to vocational training rather than a distinct approach. The young beneficiaries surveyed through the IA data collection process demonstrated a varying level of skills (e.g. literacy) and confidence, with higher levels seen more generally amongst the young people interviewed in the urban areas in Senegal. This may reflect the choice of the YMCA to focus on intensive entrepreneurship training rather than vocational skills. Learning from this IA and other programmes supported by YCI demonstrate the value of taking a combined approach to training, with entrepreneurship / small business management skills a complementary element.

There is insufficient evidence of meaningful impact to support the continued replication and expansion of more traditional approaches to addressing livelihoods, such as vocational training. This challenges traditional approaches to project design by demonstrating that, for example, building human capital through vocational training is insufficient for supporting young people to develop ‘safe and sustainable livelihoods’.

Consideration needs to be given to how their place in the labour market - and wider society – as well as their own personal development and life choices influence the opportunities available to them. The subsequent BLF-funded programme in The Gambia incorporates awareness-raising amongst young training beneficiaries about
their labour rights and advocacy to lobby employers and policy-makers on youth labour rights issues. These elements were incorporated into the design of the programme as a result of YEIG beneficiaries having to work for free or on a very low wage, often for long periods, in order to gain sufficient experience for a paid job, despite the fact that this contravenes Gambian labour laws.

**Life-skills and economic empowerment of vulnerable young people**

Whilst acquiring technical (vocational) skills is an important asset in securing sustainable employment and/or self-employment, for many particularly vulnerable and marginalised young people the lack of essential life-skills poses a significant obstacle. Participation in formal education is widely recognised to build vital social and efficacy skills that help young people to make considered decisions, live healthy lives and have better self-esteem. For those young people who have dropped out of education at an early age, or are excluded for other reasons such as a result of disability, the incorporation of life-skills into technical education programmes can support these more marginalised groups to increasing their self-confidence and self-efficacy. Importantly, regardless of income, young people valued the YMCA training for the impact it had on their personal development and wellbeing.

In The Gambia, a number of young, majority female beneficiaries noted their improvements in English as an important positive impact of their involvement in the YEIG programme, which was considered to be both a factor in increasing their self-confidence as well as opening up opportunities for employment.

**Post training support, credit and other inputs**

A critical assumption made during the project design process was that both YMCAs would seek to link young beneficiaries to relevant service providers such as micro-finance agencies rather than provide micro-finance directly. This was not successful and so the lack of inputs significantly impacted on young beneficiaries’ ability to secure a sustainable livelihood.

During the course of the project, Senegal YMCA staff initially tried negotiating with micro-finance providers but had little success in convincing them to support the marginalised young beneficiaries who did not have guarantors. In at least one case, the Project Coordinator acted as guarantor for a young person to be able to take out a loan. For some other young people, the YMCA was able to use funding provided from another partner, or allocate funds from their own organisational budget, to provide loans of CFA 100,000 (£135) and 500,000 (£670).

Of the young people prioritised for direct funding (only 10 in total), they included: those identified as most vulnerable and with no support; and also those who were or had been trying to start a project with some limited resources but required an additional ‘push’ to get going. For example, a young man who received a loan to purchase a motor for his car; a young woman who received 100,000 CFA to buy materials to produce an order she had secured with a hospital for curtains; and another young man who had a plot of land to farm but had no access to water.
During an interview, the Project Coordinator in Senegal noted his frustrations with the lack of follow-up support available for the young trainees:

“One major challenge we experienced was in the number of young people whose businesses were financed. We had aimed for 30 – 35% of trainees to secure finance for their businesses, but most of these people didn’t have a guarantor and we struggled to get any micro-credit agencies to accept applications from them. There were a very few cases of young beneficiaries who got finance this way, and those that did got it through referrals from the National Association for Physically Disabled People. Many of the young trainees said to us ‘you trained us but you didn’t give us what we needed to continue afterwards’” (Senegal YMCA project staff)

This same concern was reiterated in the words of a young disabled male beneficiary, who gave a strong recommendation for organisations supporting youth entrepreneurship programmes:

“The most important thing for people offering training like that for young people is to give them some finance afterwards to help them start a business. It can’t be a small amount – if it is too small to do anything important with, it’s not worth accepting. When you look at the cost of things, with a small amount you might be able to buy some materials but you can’t pay for marketing and have a nice place to attract clients. If you really want to help you need to be serious – give people a decent amount of money to start a proper business and give them on-going support.” (Senegal, disabled young man)

The final YEIG project report to Comic Relief (2006) also noted lack of inputs as a key lesson, but went on to describe young beneficiaries in Senegal as examples of ‘willing entrepreneurs’, many of whom with very little resources managed to turn their lives around and make a living by the end of the programme. At that time, YMCA staff considered that the most successful youth enterprises established in Senegal were not those that required a lot of resources, but those with very willing and motivated entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the Gambian YEIG final evaluator stressed that many YEIG beneficiaries were unable to establish their own enterprise due to limited or no start-up capital.

The report concluded that any entrepreneurial training programme must provide beneficiaries with advice and information on available funding or micro-credit agencies, and both Senegal and The Gambia YMCAs took this learning to start exploring ways of providing credit directly, or partnering with existing micro credit providers in future youth entrepreneurship programmes. Since the YEIG programme, all entrepreneurship and livelihoods programmes for young people developed by YCI together with YMCA partners incorporate post-training support in the form of inputs such as start-up kits, micro-credit or grants, mentorship, etc.

Learning from experiences such as the YEIG programme has encouraged YCI over the past 6 years to increase focus on strengthening post-training strategies, shifting from an emphasis on vocational training methodologies to entrepreneurship and reflecting critically on what interventions best enable young beneficiaries to secure a stable livelihood.
Social protection: increasing vulnerable young people’s resilience

As discussed earlier in the report, external shocks or changes related to the health status of the young beneficiary or one of their children / close family members (stories noted accidents, deaths and births) tend to have a significant impact on the young person’s social and/or economic wellbeing. In most cases, unforeseen changes related to health had a negative impact on the young person’s ability to sustain any economic benefit that they may have gained, with a number of participants noting an increase in debt and/or the collapse of a small business as a result. In the absence of social protection mechanisms, or contingency plans for small businesses, the sustainability of a young person’s economic wellbeing is at risk to external shocks.

In recent years, YCI has invested resources in exploring disaster risk reduction, providing technical support to partner organisations to incorporate DRR methods into the design of livelihoods programmes for vulnerable young people both in rural and urban contexts. YCI’s new livelihoods strategy takes into account the need to design a holistic approach to livelihoods work that seeks to increase young people’s resilience to future shocks or hazards and thereby contribute to a more sustainable livelihood.

6.2 Organisational learning: undertaking Impact Assessments

Given that this IA was the first undertaken by YCI, and was designed to provide a learning opportunity to YCI staff members as well as selected YMCA staff / volunteer, process was designed to be a learning opportunity, a number of lessons were taken from the experience and will be used to inform the planning process of the next IA. The following are highlights of the most relevant learning points for YCI and other agencies:

- Small to medium sized organisations can undertake an IA effectively even with limited resources. In YCI’s case, the IA was undertaken internally by 4 international programmes staff with support from a UK-based volunteer and a budget of just over £4,000 that was used to cover the 10-day data collection process in the 2 target countries.

- In selecting potential programmes for the first IA, one of the criteria was for programmes that had been completed at least 3 years previously in order to assess the longer-term impact of the initiative. However, IA methods can and should be incorporated into on-going M&E of existing programmes to enrich these processes and draw out learning on impact at different stages of the implementation period. Waiting to undertake an IA years after completion of a programme does present a more challenging process for collecting data on individual beneficiaries, particularly given the mobility of young people. It may however provide an opportunity for more objectivity if undertaken internally given that staff are less ‘attached’ to the programme and may be more open to critically analyse the work.

- YCI’s IA should challenge predominant thinking within the international development sector that suggests undertaking IAs internally is an inherently less robust method that will tend to yield only ‘positive’ results. The findings in this report demonstrate that undertaking an IA a number of years after a programme has
ended provided a space for participants to critically feedback on the programme itself, and were open to share negative stories.

- In terms of assessing the contribution of our programme to the economic changes in the lives of the young beneficiaries, the nature of the data collected poses some challenging questions for analysis. The workshops on stories of change asked beneficiaries to individually rank their story related to their perception of the attribution of the programme to the significant change they had identified, which was a difficult concept for many participants.

  Often, the facilitator noted that the plotting of the first individual’s story influenced how other participants plotted their stories, and the overall picture suggested that participants tended to place their stories as being attributable to the programme despite an assessment of their individual cases suggesting that another factor had a more significant impact (e.g. securing a non YCI/YMCA loan to start up a small enterprise).

  As YCI begins to draw out learning from these results to inform youth livelihoods programming, it is important to consider the limitations of the IA in assessing the extent to which the different livelihoods approaches employed in the project impacted positively or negatively on the lives of the beneficiaries.

For YCI, undertaking the first IA internally contributed significantly to strengthening staff capacity, knowledge and buy-in and will also impact positively on our on-going M&E including for example supervision of external evaluation consultants, and development of tools for partners to use IA methods at different stages in the project cycle. In a future IA, more time needs to be allocated to supporting partners to prepare for and participate meaningfully in the IA, to increase the partners’ ownership of the process and the findings as well as strengthen key staff and volunteer capacity to be able to incorporate IA approaches effectively into their M&E processes.

6.3 Next Steps for YCI

In conclusion, YCI’s experience of undertaking an IA demonstrates the case that small and medium-sized agencies can and should be thinking more seriously about IAs, particularly in the current funding environment when the drive for results delivery is stronger than ever. Large agencies often have the resources to commit to such processes, while small to medium-sized organisations consider IA’s to be a luxury that they cannot afford to undertake, or they consider them to be a technical process that must be externally commissioned at high cost. YCI’s case shows that this is untrue, with the entire IA costing around £4,000 whilst also significantly strengthening YCI staff capacity and skills in this area.

The process of conducting an IA has been hugely rewarding for all staff involved – both from the UK agency and the local partners in Senegal and The Gambia. Senegal YMCA national staff has begun to draw on the results of the IA to inform their strategic planning process for future youth programming, and both organisations have committed to incorporating IA methods and tools they used into the M&E of their programmes. The experience has also galvanised YCI staff around the need for greater enquiry into our own work and development approaches so that we can be
absolutely sure that our work is leading to the desired long term positive impacts on the lives of marginalised young people.

In terms of next steps for YCI, the programmatic learning that has been identified through the IA will be incorporated into a current review of YCI’s livelihoods strategy which aims to consolidate our experience from over 10 years of youth livelihoods programming and define our Theory of Change for this important area of work. Whilst a number of the lessons captured have previously been identified through on-going M&E (including external evaluations) of our work with local partners and therefore built in to the design of subsequent programmes, as is the case with The Gambia BLF-funded programme, the IA provides a longer-term view of impact of our work that would not otherwise have been available.

Given that we aim to support vulnerable groups of young people to secure safe and sustainable livelihoods, it is crucial that we understand how our interventions today can have a positive long-term impact on the lives of young beneficiaries. The IA has gone some way to help us understand this, although it will be important to further explore some of the learning highlighted in this report across other programmes and regions where YCI has supported work in this thematic area.

The organisational learning gained through the process of undertaking an internal IA for the first time will be documented fully and shared with YCI staff members who are preparing to undertake further IAs. YCI’s new organisational strategy (2011 – 2016) specifies that International Programmes staff will undertake an IA each year covering different thematic areas of our work and in different regions of the world where we are working with local partners.

In June 2011, YCI’s Africa Programme Manager took the opportunity to share the organisational learning of this IA as a case study presented to other practitioners and policy-makers at INTRAC’s 7th Monitoring and Evaluation Conference in the Netherlands. The case study was noted in plenary as a good example of an agency using IA methods for organisational learning when others presented had focused on undertaking IAs for donor accountability; and also for being able to effectively undertake an IA on very limited resources. Participants also appreciated the use of the stories of change impact grid as an interesting, relatively new example of measuring quantitative information. YCI’s IA case study was posted along with other cases studies on INTRAC’s website\(^\text{10}\) for further dissemination.

\(^\text{10}\) http://www.intrac.org/pages/en/working-group-papers.html
7 ANNEXES

7.1 Questionnaire for young people
YMCA and its partner Y Care International are carrying out an assessment to learn about the impact of the Youth Enterprise and Income Generating (YEIG) programme, which ran between 2002-2006.

The survey will take a maximum of 15 minutes to answer and your answers will not be released by the YMCA.

Question 1: Personal Data
Age....... Gender: Male/Female

What type of training did you receive from the YMCA?
HAIRDRESSING (___) WELDING (___) TAILORING (___) CATERING(____) CARPENTRY(____) MASONRY(____) ENTERPRISE TRAINING (___)
If you received Enterprise training please answer the Question 2a.

Year of graduation from training ______

Question 2: Livelihood Data
2a) (Only answered by those who received enterprise training)
How many young people do you now employ?
Since completing your training how many months/ years have you been in paid work? ______
(If not at all then please skip to Question 4.)

Question 3: Livelihood Data
What was your most recent monthly wage?
(0-800 GDM)...... (801-1,200)...... (1,201-1,600)...... (+ 1,601)......

{OR}

In your first job following the completion of your training what roughly did you earn a month?
(0-800 GDM)...... (801-1,200)...... (1,200-1,600)...... (+ 1,601)......

What was your most recent monthly wage?
(0-800 GDM)...... (801-1,200)...... (1,201-1,600)...... (+1,601)......
**Question 4: Training and link to Livelihood**

Do you think your training helped you get a job?  Yes/ No

b) If yes, how did it help you?

If no, skip to Question 5.

**Question 5: Evaluation**

Overall, how do rate the impact that training scheme has had on your life?

Overall, how do rate the impact/change that the YEIG programme/training has had on your life? (Please ring the selected option).

-3 Extremely Negative; -2 Fairly Negative; -1 Quite Negative; +1 Quite Positively; +2 Fairly Positive; +3 Extremely Positive.

**Question 5b:**

Did your status within your family and community improve due to the completion of the training?

YES / NO

If yes, why do you think your status has improved? (Please tick which you feel is applicable to your situation)

- I contribute more financially to my family____
- I contribute more financially to my community____
- I am successful in my job____
- I am more skilled____
- I learnt important life skills____
- I am more confident ___

Other______________________________

**Question 6: Recommendation**

Would you recommend a similar training scheme to young people?

Yes/ No

b. Why?

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.
7.2 Focus groups discussion with young people

Introduction 10 minutes max

- Welcome
- Explanation about the IA
  The aim of this assessment is to discover the positive and negative lasting changes that occurred as a result of the intervention. We will be recording all changes, whether they were intended or not, so that they can be analysed against the programme’s aims and we can determine the significance the programme had on impacting beneficiaries’ lives.
- What do you hope to get from it?
  Overall, we want to learn whether we made a difference to the people’s lives and were the actions we took the right ones. It is hoped that this learning will not be wasted but will help to inform future programmes and will enable the YMCAs positive impact to be maximised.
- Emphasise the need to be truthful and critical
- General plan for the workshop:
  Energiser Activity - how has life changed since the programme
  Impact Grids: stories of personal changes - How has your training impacted your economic well being?

Exercise 1: The Energizer  20mins max (Inc. instruction)
Aim: Bring back memories of their lives post training and focus their thinking around to the idea of change

Bring forth indicators of how the beneficiaries measure changes in quality of life

- This should be seen as an ‘energizer’ exercise as well indicating changes, therefore, participation should be prompted and the facilitator must be encouraging and try to move the exercise at a reasonable speed.
- Ask them, for two minutes, to think about how their lives have changed since they completed their training; they can think of small/large changes; those that have been positive or negative; allow it to be very broad so they can think of their own indicators
- If it is felt necessary the facilitator should provide two examples of how their lives have changed since they started working for YCI/ YMCA
- Everyone must try and think of, and be willing, to contribute two changes
- Allocate ten minutes for the group to each share their two changes
- Try and be brief and move through this listing quickly to avoid stagnation
- For brevity’s sake it would be best if the facilitator writes down the changes, be sure to use clear, well-spaced writing
During this section the facilitator should try to spot any similarities/differences and any themes emerging

After everyone has given their changes ask if anyone can spot any themes e.g. frequency of how the changes related to being able to afford more goods/services or changes that affected their families or community

If there is reluctance the facilitator should suggest certain themes they have noticed

As this is an energizer the facilitator should merely note down any themes on a visible large sheet or around the changes, if there is adequate space

The changes do not have to be formally categorized, to acknowledge the themes and have them visible is enough

The beneficiaries can be asked whether they believe these themes are good indicators of a change in one’s wellbeing; can they think of any additional ones that are a good way to assess an improvement in one’s life that are not already on the board e.g. being able to save money for one’s own business?

Again the facilitator should note down the categories on the paper

Keep the sheets visible during the rest of the workshop, for people having problems thinking of changes it may act as a prompt

Exercise 2: The Impact Grid
Part a: Stories of Change

Purpose: To gain what they view to be important changes in their economic wellbeing since completing the project

Explanation 5 mins; Writing of Stories 15-20 minutes.

Have small pieces of paper ready to hand out; ideally smaller than A5

Now that they have thought about their own personal changes and they’ve seen the changes that others have gone through since the programme ended, it is useful for them to provide a bit more detail about their life since their training.

Beneficiaries should now be asked a more focused question about their time since their programme which will assess their economic well being

"Please write a short story of how your economic wellbeing has changed since you completed your training scheme"

As economic wellbeing is a loose term the facilitator should give further explanation

Economic wellbeing is based around the idea of people being able to access: goods e.g. food services e.g. good electricity supply job opportunities appropriate education, employment and training opportunities and they have the essential life skills to function in their community

The term is purposefully loose enough so the beneficiaries can define their own story and decide what has been an important change in their own life
Promote the idea that there is no wrong story; they can provide details on what they view to be the most significant change(s) to their economic wellbeing, or it may be something that sticks out in their mind.

Also remind the beneficiaries that changes do not have to be positive; this is a chance for them to talk freely about negative changes that have occurred since they finished their training e.g. loss of job through worldwide economic downturn.

**Part b: Plotting Stories: Learning about how beneficiaries view the impact of their training**

Explanation 10mins; Presenting and Plotting 1.5 hours for whole group; 30mins for potential discussion and summing up

- Bring the group back together
- Introduce the grid
- The grid is used to get a visual reading of the changes the beneficiaries have faced and whether they believe these stories of economic change have been as a result of their training
- The beneficiaries are being asked to plot their individual stories of change on the grid; the grid is in reference to their stories only
- It should be stressed that the stories are of importance to them and YMCA/YCI want to know how much their training contributed to this particular story and change
- They should not feel any pressure to suggest that the programme played any greater part than it actually did; they must be honest about how they believe it helped to bring about the change
- Please see attached sheet for diagram of the cross-sectional grid and the how to plot contribution of programme vs. positivity/negativity of story of change.
- There needs to be clear indication on the grid, as well as by the facilitator, that further away from the 0-value the more extreme the answer, therefore, if they believe that their training was a big contribution to their specific economic change then they should plot it away from the centre
- Facilitator should be open to questions to ensure clarity of purpose
- It may be worth providing an example run through, e.g. since I finished my training I have been able to afford to provide more money for my children's education- I believe that this has been a positive change and my training played a large part as it gave me the skills to become a carpenter and earn money (see No. 3 on the diagram for plotting of this story)
- The facilitator should give them roughly five minutes to think about where they want to plot their story and discuss it with their neighbour
- This also should be an opportunity for any further questions and clarification
- Ask for a volunteer to come to the front and read out their story
- Ask them to plot their story with a brief explanation of their reasoning
- Ask the group if they wish to question the plotting. Be sure not to invite challenging of the story; this is personal and is not the focus of debate.
- Allow them to ask the beneficiary questions and allow any short discussion to emerge
- A discussion may emerge about how the others view contribution of the project; this can be useful information for triangulation purposes
- Note down, not necessary to transcribe, the themes that emerge and if the facilitator believes that it could be an interesting discussion point they can return to it later or use it in case studies
- Ensure the discussion of an individual story doesn't last beyond 5-7 minutes.
- After the beneficiary has presented their story, plotted it and had it challenged by the others then they should be asked if they wish to change its location; they do not have to if they don't want.
- Write a number on the plotted story to identify the beneficiary.
- Once the beneficiaries have plotted their stories make a brief comment on any visible/obvious patterns
- Use the time to briefly go back to any issues that had emerged but not fully discussed.
- If potential case studies had emerged, try and elucidate further discussion around the story and allow the whole group to discuss the issue and ask more questions
- If however, it is felt this isn't a suitable option then try and arrange a further session with the person to gain further detail.
- After the workshop has ended photograph or plot on a piece of paper the story related numbers
NB- The further away from the zero value/ cross sectional Centre then the more extreme the answer e.g. #2 saw a small negative change in their lives but the programme only contributed a small amount to this.

**Summing up**

- Thank the participants for their time
- Remind them of YMCAs and YCI's appreciation that they have come back to talk about their experiences so far down the line
7.3 Focus group and timeline creation with the YMCA staff

Timeline
Purpose: Identifies chronologically the events, programmes, policy, staffing issues, external organisations which have had a substantial impact upon the YMCA and how these issues affected their organisational capacity and the capacity to deliver a successful YEIG programme.

Furthermore, it will suggest if YMCAs’ see YCI’s support as having a significant and beneficial impact on their capacity and the programme.

- Give plenty of time for this exercise as it may focus future discussions and will be an opportunity for YMCA staff to remember the particulars of the programme
- The timeline instructions should be left purposefully loose so that the YMCA staff are able to define their own indicators
- The main aim is for the YMCA to produce a timeline of the past 11 years, which includes the time prior and since the YEIG programme. They should record times which they believe substantial in the development of the YMCA’s capacity.
- The three main areas that the timeline should explore:
  - The significant impacts (events, policies, staff, partnerships etc.) that have occurred in the 11 years which have altered YMCA organisational capacity
  - How the organisation has changed over time,
  - How the programme progressed and the key times in its lifespan

There may be some discussion about what they believe to have been significant times and what areas to include on the timeline. Whilst the timeline is most successful if the beneficiaries are able to define the indicators of change themselves, it is accepted that they may need some prompts of what areas to include, if this is so refer to the below list to give ideas about things that may be included:

- Policy initiatives e.g. Africa YMCA, YMCA Senegal and Gambia, YCI, external partners, funders
- Changes in the staffing infrastructure
- Particular times of hardship or positive times
- Learning processes e.g. Senegal sending team member to Youth Summit
- Partnerships: difficulties and development; trips to see YMCAs
- Images can be used at the beginning and end of their timelines to signify how the YMCA has developed over time e.g. baby to adult like development

- After the initial plotting of events, which has highlighted what the YMCA staff see as key impacts on their organisational capacity and the YEIG programme it is beneficial to identify which they believe to be beneficial and those which weren’t- a simple highlighting process will suffice for this
- Tell the YMCA staff that they need not classify each event/ impact, this will be too time consuming, focus on what they see as the key points on the timeline
Allow them to take a step back from the timeline, the facilitator should summarise the events/impacts that they view as being most beneficial/negative to the YMCAs capacity and secondly for the effectiveness of the programme.

Give them the chance to amend their decisions and reprioritise what they see as the most beneficial stages of the 11 years. They may believe that another issue, not listed, was the most important factor.

Now that the group has developed an idea of significant occurrences that have had a profound effect upon organisational capacity and the programme they are ready to discuss their own organisational capacity, the programme and their relationship with YCI.

For the SSI the facilitator should try to record the conversation using a Dictaphone and make brief notes throughout the interview, the recordings need not be transcribed but will help form an overall, review of the YMCAs’ appraisal.

Focus group
Topics to consider:

Programme Specific: The aim of the project was to improve the wellbeing of the beneficiaries - did this happen?
  - Do you believe that YEIG programme had a positive impact in creating positive economic wellbeing changes in the lives of the beneficiaries?
  - Has their access to employment, services and goods increased as a result of the programme?
  - Do you think the income generating approach used by the YMCA was the best method or have you seen or heard of other programmes which you feel may have been more effective?
  - Where was potential programme impact limited e.g. a certain group of people? Why was this?

Organisational Capacity: has the organisational capacity of the YMCA developed during the programme; is any of the attributable to its partnership with YCI?
  - Within this section assess whether there have been capacity changes within the following areas: Programme / Financial / Organisational management
  - For each category try to ascertain:
    What has changed?
    How it came about?
    Did the YCI have added value in this area?

*For this section it may be particularly useful to have an organisation structure diagram available so the YMCA staff can look at particular layers within the organisation if they feel it is necessary
The **quality and effectiveness of YCI’s technical support** to the YMCAs

- Did you feel well supported?
- Was there any limitations to this support or times when it wasn't forthcoming?
- Has the technical support led to any long lasting changes within the way YMCA e.g. how issues are approached?

**Networking and engagement with key stakeholders** on issues affecting Young People

- How successful were your engagements; have your interventions contributed to any kind of policy change regarding Young People?
- Do you believe that your capacity to carry out such work on future projects has increased?
  - Did the YCI provide a significant amount of help on carrying out such work?
  - Did you gain support on this aspect from another organisation or partnership?
  - Do you think your progress in this area has been as aided by YCI?

**Once the facilitator has examined these areas then they should try to gain a small evaluation of the programme and the partnership:**

- Did the programme have a positive impact upon the young beneficiaries; was their wellbeing improved by the YMCA/ YCI intervention?
- Has YMCA developed its organisational capacity overall? Do you believe that YCI contributed significantly to this development and was it a worthwhile and successful partnership?
7.4 Gambia: impact grid

7.5 Senegal: impact grid
7.6 Combined: impact grid
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