YOUTH-DEFINED DEVELOPMENT

DOING DEVELOPMENT FOR, WITH AND BY AFRICAN YOUTH

by © Judyannet Waigwe Muchiri a Thesis submitted

to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts, Sociology

Memorial University of Newfoundland

October, 2017

St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Appendices

1. **Executive Summary**

Engaging youth is imperative to development because youth are aware of what their communities need and have the capacity to work with other members of the community to meet those needs. Yet, there is minimal meaningful participation of youth in development processes in Africa – especially in projects that are meant for youth. In situations where youth are engaged, they are typically only involved at the very end of the process as passive beneficiaries. Youth are excluded from meaningful participation because they are perceived in society as incapable of reasonable and rational decision-making, as inexperienced, and as a homogenous group of people with these essential characteristics. This exclusion poses a problem to development because without the input of youth, development will benefit only a few and it will not gain acceptance and support from youth.

By failing to engage youth in development, especially in projects that target youth, the development community excludes a substantial part of the population. The African Development Bank Group reports that 75% of Sub-Saharan Africa is below 35 years old.[1] Youth are not only Africa's present, they are its future; failing to invest in youth is failing to invest in the future of Africa. Youth are the custodians of the future; they are the future parents, professionals, farmers, construction workers and traders. As such, their participation in development fosters skills and experience in development activities necessary for young people to take charge of community development initiatives as leaders. Indeed, a significant number of young people are already involved in development activities, indicating the will and initiative of young people as agents of change in the community. Further, when youth are not involved in making decisions and actively taking part in activities that affect their lives they are bound to become indifferent. Many

challenges faced by the development community in the course of planning and implementing projects can be avoided if the development community worked with youth.

Development is defined variously as a process that: promotes prosperity and economic opportunity, greater social wellbeing and protection of the environment[2]; gives people more freedom and opportunity to live the lives they value, develops people's abilities and gives them a chance to use them;[3] or as positive socioeconomic transformation under the African Union's Agenda 2063[4]. These definitions come from organizations. It is important to consider how youth define development because with this understanding, the development community can create better ways to work with youth in youth-oriented development. Further, understanding development from the point of view of youth enables policy makers to prioritize development practices in ways that address the needs, experiences, and insights of a substantial portion of Africans. That is, it allows the immediate needs of youth, as defined by youth, to be met. Finally, it allows the development community to find out if there is any disconnect between their definition of development and how youth define development and find ways to reconcile the two.

This paper outlines what development means to youth who are members of a networked youth group and what 'good' development looks like according to them in the context of youth-oriented development. It provides evidence for the development community to: a) consider what youth think about development, b) invest in youth and their capabilities, and c) forge meaningful partnerships and develop trust with youth in development processes and activities. Further, it shows what youth- and community-centered development looks like when defined by young people who are invested in development in Africa.

In this paper youth are defined as people between the ages of 15 and 35. The development community is defined as local and national governments, foreign governments, international and local non-governmental organizations, multilateral government agencies, faith-based organizations, multi-national corporations and local community organizations. It is based on insights from youth in different African countries who are members of a network that uses digital media to bring youth involved in development together. It focuses on youth-targeted development.

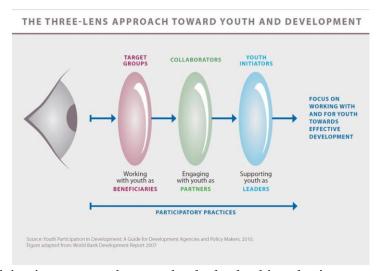The findings of this research lead to the following recommendations.

For participation in development projects to be meaningful:

- Information should be shared and people consulted at all levels[5].

- People should be involved in setting priorities and determining how resources will be used in projects in the planning stage.

- People should participate in implementing projects and be encouraged to take initiative independently[6].

- Responsibilities and power should be shared among the people involved in projects.

- People should be involved in making decisions which affect the quality of their lives.[5]

- It should be based on respect and recognition of individual and group differences based on racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual orientations and religious background.[7]

- People's local knowledge should be integrated in the design and planning process in development.[8]

There are various ways through which development actors can achieve this meaningful participation with youth. Below, the Three-lens Model of Participation is discussed.

The Three-lens Participatory Model

Given the centrality of youth's expectation to participate in development projects, people working with youth can adopt the Three-lens Approach to Youth Participation[20] This participatory model involves working with youth as beneficiaries, as partners and as leaders. The highest level of participation occurs when youth take leadership roles in projects or when they start their own initiatives. This model of youth participation shows how the development community can work with youth to foster more participation. The very basic form of participation is when youth are engaged as mere beneficiaries or clients in a project. On the other hand, the most effective mode of participation includes youth as leaders in projects. Though situations differ with contexts and countries, development actors can mold their youth participation strategies on this model.

Main Findings

Based on the above features of meaningful youth participation and participatory model, it is imperative to find out from young people to what extent this is evident in practice. This research project does this by engaging a group of youth who are involved in development; it focuses on finding out what development means to this particular group of youth. The following are the main findings of this research.

- Young people have a sound understanding of problems in their communities and have the capacity and expertise to contribute to their community's wellbeing.

- Youth participation in development includes taking part in designing, actualizing, and monitoring projects.

- There is a disconnect in how youth and the development community define development; this affects what is prioritized in development and is seen as a problem by youth who already participate in development.

- Information sharing is central to the way youth participate in development projects. Young people want development actors to clearly communicate what is expected of youth in development projects, how projects are executed, what the goals and objectives are in projects, how power and responsibilities are shared and what the scope of work is.

- Youth use informal channels and platforms, such as social media, to organize and share information about development activities they are involved in.

- Young people display a willingness to work collaboratively on projects in adult-youth relationships.

Youth Participants' definitions of development

- Good development gives people the ability and opportunity to sustainably use available resources;

- access basic needs;

- appreciate intangible things like culture, freedom, education and to enjoy them with family and friends;

- work together as members of a community for socio-economic growth through partnerships;

- identify the needs of different communities and helps fill the gap between those needs and available resources;

- work for positive change in the community in the interest of the local population;

- and to improve their livelihood in a way that promotes environmental sustainability.

A Summary of Recommendations

Based on the above findings and existing models of participation, the following recommendations to the development community are targeted to governments, international aid agencies, and other policymakers:

Procedural Recommendations

1. Change from a top-down approach to a more community-centered approach in creation, implementation and evaluation of development projects.

2. Map development projects onto the needs of youth and community.

3. Move beyond a mere inclusion of youth in development projects (e.g. a certain number of youth are consulted or are involved in workshops) to substantial engagement where youth meaningfully participate in decision making processes and tasks throughout projects.

4. Involve youth in evaluating existing policies and programs.

Thematic Development Priority Recommendations

1. Invest more in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for girls and young women in Africa.

2. Invest in programs that nurture and promote the value of arts in informal and formal learning institutions and allocate more funds for arts.

3. Create legal and policy systems within which youth participation in development is enforced.

2. __Introduction__

Development projects that target youth—but fail to engage youth as participants—pose several problems to development. First, this encourages an overreliance of youth on others (adults) to solve challenges for them discouraging youth from taking initiative to exercise agency in making their communities better. Second, such projects use more resources than necessary trying to navigate the social and cultural terrain in the targeted youth's communities. Development projects could be more cost effective if they engaged young people in these communities who understand how their communities work and are familiar with the cultural practices that affect how people receive projects. Third, these development projects can end up doing more harm than good in the community.[9] If development actors bypass community gatekeepers such as village elders for example, this disrupts the power dynamics and might cause disagreements among members of the community as seen in two natural resource management projects in Lilongwe, Malawi[9] and Eastern Cape Province, South Africa[10] and in a human-wildlife conflict mitigation project in Budango Forest Reserve, Uganda[11]where community elders felt left out in projects and were hesitant to support projects led by people they considered outsiders. Finally, this development denies young people the opportunity to exercise their rights to participate in issues that directly affect them.

One of the main problems with youth participation is that development actors often approach youth as a homogenous group in community. Young people are a group of people with different needs and insights depending on family background, gender, life experiences, and education. These differences influence if and how youth take part in community development activities. For example, youth whose parents and other family members are active in the community are more likely to become active themselves.[12]

As the development community engages youth, they need to give special attention to youth that are consistently marginalized – those excluded from resources, facilities and other public amenities based on gender, religion, ethnicity, and social class. This group of people includes, but not limited to, ethnic minorities, young women, members of the LGBTIQ community, youth living with disabilities, youth in rural areas and youth living in informal settlements. This is a way to ensure that not only youth who have access to information, who are educated and who live in urban areas are actively engaged in development. It is also a way of ensuring the needs of these marginalized youth are prioritized and addressed.

This paper is the outcome of research conducted with participants who belong to a network of youth involved in development. They volunteer in their local communities; run youth-led community based organizations, and/or participate in local initiatives as peer mentors. All youth in this study are part of NAYD, a network of African youths for development that uses digital media to bring youth involved in development together to exchange ideas and share information. This group of youths is chosen based on their pivotal position as a link between other youths, especially in rural areas, and the development community, including national governments, regional and global organizations, and aid agencies. The researcher recognizes that these youths do not represent the views of all young people in their communities, but as a specific group of young people who are already involved in development, they represent a population that is already involved in and that is insightful about development. As such, they were asked what development meant to them, what differences are there in how the development community and youth define development and what can be done to bridge this gap. The research employs a mixed-method approach in data collection and analysis using photovoice and photo-

elicitation, focus groups, and interviews. The paper concludes by making recommendations to policy makers based on research findings.

3. Statement of Problem

Failure to involve youth in development projects presents a problem to both young people and to the development community. For those in charge of programming and policy making, failing to work with youth in development projects aimed for youth poses the following five challenges:

(1) **Mistrust among youth:** Young people are likely to develop a feeling of mistrust and indifference towards projects if they are not meaningfully engaged. This attitude begins to manifest among youth in such ways that adversely affect development. For example, if we focus on political participation as one form of participation, youth in South Africa lack trust in institutions and leaders;[13] therefore they choose not to vote in an election if their needs are not addressed.[14] Political absence among youth is also evident in Kenya where research shows low formal participation in both the electoral and political spheres.[15] As public policy specialist Raphael Obonyo, asserts:

> Active youth participation (in Kenya) is in doubt. Youth have largely been marginalized, excluded from decision-making in political parties and denied the chance to determine their own destiny.[16]

Youth apathy in politics is also high in other African countries: Nigeria,[17] Uganda,[18] and in Botswana.[19]

(2) **Missed opportunities for youth:** This emerges when youth are not given an opportunity to exercise agency in their lives. There is a common misconception of youth in Africa as victims and perpetrators of social problems[20, 21] rather than people who make informed decisions and actions. Yet, evidence suggests youth are competent citizens with strengths and abilities.[22] This view influences the kind of intervention programs designed to do things *for* youth

but not *with* youth. As young people transition from one stage of life to another –for example school to work- they need support from parents, their local community and governments.[23] However, if not given an opportunity to exercise agency and initiative they can easily become overly dependent on others to make decisions for them. This denies them the opportunity to develop the experience and skills necessary to support themselves.

(3) Mismatched needs and resources: This occurs when resources are directed to projects that do not meet the immediate needs of youth. As researcher and activist Lisa VeneKlasen asserts:

> When those adversely affected by problems in a community are not at the forefront of setting agendas, planning strategies and taking actions, there is a possibility for resources to be channeled towards projects that are not a priority to these people.[24]

A mismatch between resources and the immediate needs of a community occurs when members of a target community are not consulted. For example, resources used to build a government funded modern market in a village with poor roads are better off used to repair and build a better road network without which farmers will have difficulties accessing the market. This results in resources not being used optimally in development especially in projects without direct benefits to a community.

Similarly, without involving youth in project planning development actors might find it hard to gain an entry into a community. In fact, research demonstrates that projects that build relationships and involve local community members including youth are more likely to have a positive reception.[25, 26]Besides difficulties in building relationships with local people, development actors might also have to spend more resources, for example, making multiple trips to a remote village where transport is problematic requiring the hiring of a vehicle and paying for an overnight accommodation in a nearby town. Without the participation of community members

10

in projects it is possible for disputes to occur when authority figures such as village elders are not consulted. To address this problem, economists Ghazala Mansuri & Vijayendra Rao stress the importance of training community members as facilitators for effective community participation.[22] This enables a smooth entry into a community with key community members as facilitators and it also reduces possible waste of resources.

(4) Violation of the principles of rights-based development: Failure to engage youth in development overlooks the principles of the rights-based approach to development which include human rights, ethics and values in development practice and accountability of policy makers.[27] Its premise is that those whose lives are affected the most by problems are in the best position to articulate development priorities. The UN Declaration on the Right to Development decrees that, "every human being is entitled to participate in and contribute to economic, social, cultural and political development under the principles of empowerment, participation, equality, equity and non-discrimination."[28] If youth participation is missing in development, that development is not inclusive as stipulated under the rights-based approach to development which seeks to "make possible more inclusive participatory development."[29] Development projects need to create an environment where youth are able to claim their rights and where development actors have obligations to meet the rights and needs that youth have.

(5) Waste of assets in youth: Young people's capacity, energy, dynamism, and innovation are positive forces and necessary for development.[30] These qualities are assets that the development community can capitalize on while working with youth for effective meaningful participation. Further, these qualities make youth potential role models for younger generations. Youth participation in development presents a good opportunity for development actors to change mindsets and shape attitudes in younger generations.[31,32] According to psychologist James

Youniss and researcher Miranda Yates youth participation reinforces positive social values and sets an example for younger people.[33]Just as it is possible for youth to model good behavior for children based on how adults, including development actors, relate with them, it is possible for youth to pass on negative attitudes to children such as disinterest in politics.

To address these problems that arise when youth participation is not present, this paper answers two questions:

What does development mean to African youth who are invested in development?

How can this youth-defined development be realized through youth participation in development?

4. <u>Methods</u>

This study uses a mix of top-down and participatory research methods to gather data collaboratively with youth using several techniques and two stages of data generation. The first stage data was generated through photovoice,[34] a method that involves participants taking pictures in their community, by participants recruited from the Network of African Youth for Development (NAYD).First, the pictures were solicited from participants, and analyzed through photo-elicitation. Photo-elicitation is a method that involves participants and the researcher discussing pictures taken by participants. These findings were used to structure the second stage of data collection, which was generated through focus groups and interviews. Data was analyzed by identifying recurring concepts and drawing similarities or differences across the participants' input using such factors as age, gender, geographical location, country, and class.

This methods section describes:

a. NAYD

b. Participants in this study

    c.   Photovoice and photo-elicitation

    d.   Focus groups and interviews

    e.   Data

a. Network of African Youths for Development (NAYD)

NAYD, the organization from which participants were recruited, is a network of more than 60,000 young people involved in development activities in different African countries. It was established in 2007 by a group of young people in Cameroon[35]to create a platform for youth to exchange ideas on development, share information on projects they are working on, and deliberate on issues affecting their communities. A team of volunteers runs the network. They include the founder, country officers representing all African countries, a team leader, a social media coordinator, and an editor for INSPIRE, an online magazine published by NAYD. It operates on a purely non-profit basis under a wirearchy structure. A wirearchy, a term credited to Jon Husband,[36]is a structure that is enabled by interconnected technology and people with a common goal. NAYD is involved in different projects geared towards development in Africa; one such project is the NAYDSDGs Initiative that coordinates the efforts of rural communities in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[37]

b. Profile of Research Participants

This paper adopts the chronological measure of age and defines youth as people between the ages of 15 and 35. Chronological age as a marker of aging has been called problematic by some researchers[38]as it factors out other social factors that are influential in human development. Despite these concerns, this study uses this age marker because it aligns with that of the African Union,[39]one of the policy makers that this study is directed to. A majority of the young people who are members of NAYD are also in this age bracket. Participants give a reflection of the

young people that make up NAYD. A typical member of the network can access the Internet since NAYD's first field of operation is online, is interested in development, either works in a CBO or volunteers in local organizations, and is interested in connecting with other young people who are agents of development. Participants represent a particular group of African youth who are at least college-educated, are active in their communities, are well networked, and are ardent users of the Internet. While these participants reflect the views of a networked group of youth, they do not represent the views of other young people, for example poor young people living in rural areas, who may have different views of development. Through this sample, however, it is possible to see how young people, with access to the Internet, who are well networked, largely urban-based, college-educated and with some formal employment. It is also important to note that NAYD is made up of different youth, from different African countries and with different cultures. These differences shape the members' experiences and views at the individual level and at the group level; they also influence the views of the NAYD members who took part in this study.

A total of 18 participants between the ages of 22 and 35 years old took part in this study. These participants are young adults who are over the age of 18 and in the upper end of the "youth" chronological definition (22-35). They can be described as follows:

- 10 (56%) of the participants were male and 8 (44%) were female

- 12 (67%) participants took part in the photovoice exercise; 6 (33%) in focus groups and interviews

- All participants at least have a college-level education, one is a recent graduate and two are current students.

- All the participants have access to the Internet via cell phones, laptops and personal computers at work.

- Majority of the participants work in community development as:

  a. Employees in CBOs and NGO -9 (50%)

  b. Activists -3 (17%)

  c. Volunteers -3 (17%)

  d. Social workers -1 (6%)

  e. Social entrepreneurs -1 (6%)

  f. Consultants -1 (6%)

c. Photovoice and Photo-elicitation

Photovoice is a method of data collection where participants use cameras to take pictures in the community of their lived realities without the intrusion of a researcher.[32,40,41]Photovoice is used to gain access to the world from the point of view of individuals who have not traditionally held control over the means of imaging their world.[42].Photovoice, a participatory action research (PAR) method of data collection, fits into this study's main aim of engaging with participants as collaborators and not as subjects to be researched on. Participatory Action Research is research by, with, and for people affected by a particular problem which takes place in collaboration with academic researchers.[43]

In this study, 12 participants were asked to take pictures representing what development means to them. They sent 3 pictures that best represent what development means to them to the researcher who posted them on a private Facebook album called "Visualizing Development"[44] for all the participants to access and make comments.

The pictures were then discussed in a photo-elicitation exercise where the researcher and the participants talk about the images taken by participants.[32, 36, 37] In photo-elicitation the focus is not only on the images but also on what the images mean to participants and how participants use the images to express their own experiences.[45] Photographs have no meaning in and of themselves; they take up meaning from the contexts in which they are taken and from the people who take them or view them.[46, 47]

The researcher facilitated a discussion of the pictures using a set of questions (in appendix). Participants commented, asked questions and discussed each other's pictures. From this exercise, concepts such as education, human development, community initiatives, and infrastructure emerged. The next stage in the study was based on these concepts.

d. Focus Groups and Interviews

Focus group and interviews were used to establish depth in the concepts that emerged from the photo-elicitation exercise. New participants were recruited from NAYD. Three young women took part in a focus group discussion while two young men and one woman took part in an interview. With more male participants in the first stage of data collection, the researcher included more female participants in this stage of data collection. The discussions were held online on Facebook Messenger in a synchronous chat via typing; a method that was convenient for all the participants. The researcher facilitated the discussion using questions that emerged from the photo-elicitation exercise (in appendix). For example, education featured prominently in the photo-elicitation exercise; therefore, one of the questions in the focus group and interviews focused on the kind of education that youth think is important for development.

e. Data

To analyze data, the researcher identified reoccurring concepts that featured prominently during photo-elicitation, focus groups, and interviews. These concepts were identified by first creating labels in open coding[48]for emerging issues from the data for each of the questions used in photo-elicitation, focus group and interviews. Following this labeling, relationships among the open codes were identified and finally core themes common in the data were selected and coded as the main concepts.

The concepts were then categorized into themes and subthemes. These themes were subsequently compared for whether, how often, and how they were used across different ages, geographical regions, and genders. Similarities and differences in what youth value as development emerged. From these themes it is possible to describe what development means to youth in this study and how youth-defined development can be achieved with young people.

To further ground the newly collected data from focus groups and interviews the researcher considered insights from literature and practice with a focus on the specific countries that were mentioned by participants during discussions.

This study has an ethics approval from Memorial University's Ethics Board. The data collection process and engagement with the participants was done with utmost respect to the participants. The pictures collected through photovoice belong to the participants and are shared here with the permission of the participants.

5. <u>Youth Articulations of Development</u>

This section discusses the main findings of the research in terms of main trends, analysis and youth-defined features of 'good' development.

5.1 Main Trends

Knowledge and Capacity:

During this study, participants displayed two key qualities- knowledge and capacity- that makes them ideal agents of development. These qualities emerge in how the participants addressed the questions presented to them during photo-elicitation, interviews and focus groups. They were able to draw comparisons, for example participants from Ethiopia, Tunisia and Malawi compared the education system in their respective countries. Similarly, many offered alternative ideas on what development should be like and engaged in an informed argument on how some factors are better drivers of development than others.

Themes:

Further, in terms of youth-defined development, the following emerged as key aspects of development: education, youth participation, human development, democracy and governance, and community-centered development. For example, 31% of the pictures submitted by participants were explained as showing an aspect of education such as a digital skills program for girls, children in school engaging in sports, and youth in a training session. 33% of the pictures show some sort of community action such as repairing a road, planting trees and a group exercise to promote health among community members. Throughout the discussions with participants, in photo-elicitation, focus group and interviews, human development emerged as an important feature in development.

These main trends, with evidence from participants and literature, are discussed in detail below.

Knowledge

Through these methods, it is clear that youth are aware of the immediate needs in a community. For example, in Ethiopia a participant cites the Ethiopia-Djibouti railway line[49] as a misplaced priority in a country where some people are dying of hunger.[50]Expressing frustration

with how development is prioritized the Ethiopian participant says: "an example would be Ethiopia's railway line in Addis Ababa and the new one they are building to connect to Sudan so that they can have easy access to port while many in my country are hungry (so hungry.)" For development to meet the needs of a community, those needs must be clearly understood by development actors. This is the first step in designing intervention projects that are community-centered.

Participants gave ideas of what development should look like in their communities. They said "good" development was: "(when) a country provides for its vulnerable people", "a community which has a combination of good morals, providing equal (okay, almost equal) opportunities" and "when people have enough to spend on their basic needs, are able to participate in all spheres of life- social, economic, political and technological (with) enough resources for everyone." Participants also suggested ways through which this youth-defined development can be achieved. For example, free and fair elections and equal access to public resources are some of the factors that provide an environment conducive to for development. These examples show that participants display a clear understanding of their community needs and how these needs can be met.

Throughout this research, young people articulated what they want in development. Just as they know what they want, youth also know what they do not want. Case in point, young people are not comfortable being included in projects as tokens--they seek meaningful collaboration. Youth-led and –centered development requires policy makers and governments to partner with youth as capable members of the community in fact-finding missions, formulating projects, and implementing and monitoring these projects. As discussed above, if youth are engaged in development only at the first level described in the Three-lens Model of Participation,

they are engaged as mere beneficiaries of a project, which can lead to tokenism, decoration and manipulation; this is not the kind of meaningful participation that youth seek. Instead they seek participation where they can exercise agency and initiative as partners and leaders in projects.

Capacity

Young people often organize themselves for a common cause in their communities. All participants in this study, for example, are a part of NAYD, a network of young people involved in development in Africa. They use informal networks such as social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to organize, share development-related ideas and information, and debate and discuss the challenges that they face. Ibua Africa[51] and Ignite Youth Africa[52] are examples of youth-led initiatives that use such platforms to engage youth. Some online campaigns, such as the Siasa Place[53] that encourages youth to be active in politics, and Jiactivate[54] an initiative documenting shared problems by youth in Kenya, organize online but move beyond the Internet to the grassroots.

Young people are also able to reflect on development in their communities and offer a sound critique. In current development endeavors, participants in the study consistently noted that some needs in the community are prioritized at the expense of others that are equally, if not more, important. This sentiment was voiced and shared by participants in the first stage of generating data and was reiterated by participants during subsequent discussions in focus groups and interviews. They said that issues such as physical development are prioritized over other forms of development and aid. For example, billion dollar projects to expand roads and build railway lines, such as the Ethiopia-Djibouti Railway Line Project, [45] receive significant government support while other projects, such as mentorship programs for children and digital skills training for women, get little or no support. Research[55, 56] supports this claim, but also

indicates pockets of funding in technology projects for women in Ethiopia such as a beekeeping technology project for women,[57]and the DOT (Digital Opportunity Trust) Entrepreneurship and Business Growth Initiative using ICT for youth and women.[58]Inadequate financial support is a barrier to women's access to technology, even when the technology infrastructure is present.[59,60]This is also the case in Malawi as articulated by one participant, "the main drive of some infrastructure development is politically motivated" as opposed to the prioritization of other areas like mentorship programs.

5.2 Analysis

While the sample size in this study does not allow for statistical significance, patterns were observed across age, gender and geographical location. These patterns are discussed below.

Age: The youngest participant is 22 years old; the oldest 35 years old. There is little difference in how the younger participants and older participants define development. Though expressed differently, they share the same ideas about development. For instance, the 22 year old participant from Ethiopia describes how development works in her country as follows:

> Development is a process of developing right but a developed community for me is a community which has a combination of good morals, providing equal(okay, almost equal) opportunities, enough resources for everyone. This community or country shouldn't be stagnant as well. That is most important actually…the developed country is hungry for more, has space for more and (for) better change.

While a 35 year old participant from Cameroon defines development as follows:

> Development is a process that unites efforts of beneficiaries and sympathizers or stakeholders to achieve or meet the needs of the beneficiaries. It is a gradual process that recognizes the efforts of all and focuses on identified needs to be addressed

In these two definitions, both participants view development as a gradual process that involves development actors as well as the community members whose needs development seeks to address. This shared idea of development can be attributed to the fact that the participants were recruited from a network of youth invested in development in different ways in Africa. Some of the participants work with community-based organizations, some are volunteers, some have started initiatives in their local communities and some work in larger NGOs. The research participants are active participants in their communities.

Gender: Across genders, education and human development emerged as important aspects of development. This is not surprising as in most African countries education is valued and educated people are respected and often hold important positions in the community. Moreover, all participants had completed some degree of a college education. As young people actively engaged in community activities, there are many opportunities for the participants to directly witness examples of how human capabilities, or lack thereof, influence how people work in the community. Indeed, participants identified expanding human capabilities through education, training and capacity building as some of the areas that should be prioritized in development.

Most of the pictures sent in by male participants during photovoice are representations of infrastructure. Figure 1 and figure 2 were taken by two male participants from Kenya and Zambia. Figure 1 shows a modern commercial building in Nakuru town, Kenya and, according to the participant, represents what development should look like with modern facilities well equipped to house different business ventures. Figure 2 shows a road with potholes in a town in Zambia representing the need to prioritize infrastructure in development in Zambia. These two

young men in two different countries reinforce an observed pattern, the focus on infrastructure, among male participants
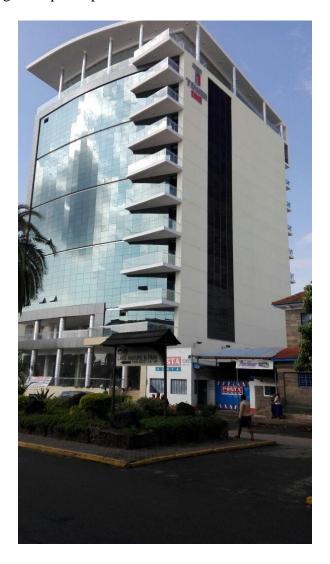

Figure 5.1. A Commercial Building in Nakuru, Kenya. This picture shows what a developed city looks like with modern buildings for businesses. According to the male participant who took the picture, physical development is key in overall development in a country. Picture by Sam Kamau. Taken from: Muchiri, J. (2016). Visualizing Development [Photo album][43]

Figure 5.2: Poor Road Conditions in the Central Business Centre. Similarly, this picture by a male

participant in Zambia shows the need to prioritize physical development by constructing –and repairing- roads in

towns. Picture by Emmanuel Sachikumba. Taken from: Muchiri, J. (2016). Visualizing Development [Photo

album][43]

Pictures by female participants, on the other hand, frequently represent community

health, mentorship programs, and women as leaders in community projects. Figure 3 was taken

by a female participant in Cape Verde who noted that it is common to see groups of people,

including older people, in urban areas early in the morning or late in the evening exercising

together. Similarly, figure 4 was taken by a female participant in Ghana showing how radio can

be used to reach youth in rural areas in mentorship programs. In communities where traditional

gender roles and needs are still prevalent, women are caretakers and are involved in nurturing

children at the household and community level. In this position, they directly witness the

challenges in healthcare and schools. While physical development affects them as well, other

needs are a priority to women based on their lived experiences.

24

Figure 5.3. Group Exercise in Cape Verde. This image shows the importance of healthy lifestyles among community members. According to the female participant who took the image, health is key in development and projects that promote healthy lifestyles should be prioritized. Picture by Nilda Mendes. Taken from: Muchiri, J. (2016). Visualizing Development [Photo album][43]

Figure 5.4. Radio as a Medium to Reach Youth in Rural Areas. This picture by a female participant in Ghana shows how radio can be used to reach youth in remote areas where internet connectivity is problematic. This is a medium that can facilitate peer-to peer mentorship programs among youth. Picture by Rosina Dolly. Taken from: Muchiri, J. (2016). Visualizing Development [Photo album][43]

For female participants, funding for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) especially for girls and young women is important in development. Women can identify with the challenges of access, funding and an enabling environment both at home and at school for them to pursue STEM fields. Prior research by researchers Omoyele Akinsowon and F. Osisanwo calls for more investment in STEM programs for those underrepresented as well.[61, 62] This is, however, not the case for men, who at an early age are encouraged to pursue such courses and are not subjected to stereotypes that discourage them from pursuing STEM disciplines.[63]

Participants also voiced the need for development actors in the context of intervention programs to consider engaging more women, as one woman said, "[t]he key benefit of any development must consider bridging the gap in terms of gender." Participants urged policy makers to take account of marginalized groups among youth such as young women. Equity demands that more resources be allotted to such groups who require either extra or specialized support to assume full roles in society.[64]

Geographical location: The erroneous idea that *Africa is a country* affects how development projects are formulated and executed in Africa. Each African country has its own unique challenges based on history, culture, religion, traditions, geographical location and colonialism. In Northern Africa for example, participants identified the need for reform in the education system. For education to work for development, participants from Tunisia recommended reforms in the education system to include a more holistic kind of education. A shift from an education system that merely grants a certificate to a student at the end of the learning period to one that builds skills and character is needed in Tunisia. According to Researcher Mohamed Maomouri, the poor quality of education in Tunisia can be attributed to the relevance of the curricula, inadequacy and deterioration of schools and historical effects of language of instruction.[65]Language plays a key role in how students express themselves among peers, to their teachers and how they understand reading materials. In schools where Arabic is the formal language of instruction, education is affected by the different varieties of Arabic among the students and teachers. The Arabic language underwent a slow but inevitable process of change introducing variations in the language.

In Southern African countries, land rights are important in development. Even with the presence of state laws, customary systems of land tenure that prevent women from owning

property including land are prevalent.[66]Land ownership, among other resources in the southern region, is heavily influenced by policies made during the colonial period. In South Africa for example, land rights, especially for women and other marginalized groups, are influenced by policies of segregation and apartheid dating back to colonial times.[67]Further, even where state laws that govern land ownership are present there is tension between governments and village councils, who are authority figures under customary law, over allocation of land for development projects.[68]The lack of a land policy with legal provisions that includes women and youth makes land ownership for women and young people problematic even when they have the means to acquire land. Land is one of the most important resources for most countries in Africa whose main economic activity is agriculture; therefore, as indicated by a female participant in South Africa, there is need for policy to allow women and young people to acquire land.

Finally, community initiatives emerged strongly in the Western, Northern and Southern Regions through locally organized community activities. Participants cited instances where community members come together to take part in communal work in Malawi, for example, people often come together to plant trees under the *Make Mchinjy Clean, Green and Beautiful Initiative.* In Uganda, there is the *Keep Iganga Clean Initiative* that happens the last Thursday of every month. Other examples include initiatives that bring people together to clean the local market, repair feeder roads and clean local neighbourhoods. This can be explained by the shared concept of humanity commonly known as 'ubuntu' in Africa.[69]

From this study, it emerges that youth-centered development is development that values local **knowledge** by youth, recognizes their **capacity** and capitalizes on these capabilities in meaningful collaboration between them and policy makers.

5.3 Youth-defined Features of 'good' Development

Key features of 'good' development according to youth in this study include education, youth participation, community-centered development, human development, economic growth and democracy among others. These features as well as insights from literature and practice influence recommendations by the participants and the researcher to policy and governments.

According to the youth involved in this study, these are the major features that make 'good' development. The term 'good' here is used by the researcher to mean development that centers the experiences, capabilities, and needs of youth and other community members as well as working with youth and community members to meet these needs.

Youth participation

At the core of 'good' development is youth participation. Youth participation is defined as a process of involving young people in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives[70] and as a process of engaging youth in sociopolitical processes to effect change in communities.[71]Young people are already taking part in different activities in the community contributing to social change by being resources and competent citizens in their communities.[19]

Youth also actively participate in community development through volunteering. Most of the participants in this study have participated in voluntary work at one point; some are current volunteers with local organizations. This shows money is not the only motivating factor for young people to take part in the wellbeing of their communities. By volunteering, youth benefit by acquiring a new skill set and getting an opportunity to explore different career choices. A chance to volunteer at the policy level, in government ministries for example, gives young people an opportunity to learn, get experience and participate in processes that affect them as members of a community. Further, this is a good chance for policy makers to interact with youth, understand how they work and get an insight for future collaboration.

Rather than view youth as problematic members of society and as passive recipients of adult-directed intervention projects, policy makers should engage youth by finding ways to collaborate with them in the activities they are already taking part in. These can also act as a good opportunity for development actors to access a community.

The following are examples of youth participation and collaboration in development that demonstrate initiative and capacity. Two examples are drawn from literature to show how projects effectively achieve meaningful youth participation at an organizational level and at a personal level, two young people who took part in this study, are highlighted to show how young people demonstrate initiative to address community needs.

a. Participation at an organizational level

Rusizi Youth Center, Rwanda is a joint initiative between several international agencies such as United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture Rwanda. One of the key goals for the initiative was to rehabilitate infrastructure for sports and games in youth centers. These youth centers, headed entirely by youth volunteers, provide a space for youth to come together play games, mentor each other and come up with ways to address challenges in their communities.[72]

The groundBREAKER program, South Africa is an example of youth participating in development as leaders as described in the Three-lens approach to participation.[29] The program, led by youth, conducts sexual and reproductive health programs in schools and youth centers as a means of addressing HIV/AIDS among youth in South Africa.[73]

b. Participation at a personal level

The following two young people demonstrate how young people exercise agency, even with inadequate resources, to address challenges in their communities. They also show young

people's ability to network and bring people together for a common course, and their

innovativeness. As discussed earlier, these are key qualities that youth can bring to development.

Sam Kamau, together with other young people in Rongai, Kenya, formed the Rongai

Youth for Change. This is a youth-led community based group that promotes alternative farming

methods and environmental conservation in their neighbourhood. They train young people who

in turn train other youth and women thus expanding the project's reach and impact. Figure 5

shows Sam Kamau in one of the green houses owned by the group. Besides green houses, they

do sack farming –localized microfarming conducted in sacks filled with soil- for people who

have no access to arable land in urban areas.

Figure 5.5. Green House Farming in Rongai, Kenya. This picture shows how youth are embracing
alternative farming methods especially with unpredictable weather patterns. By training other youth on these
methods, youth in Rongai are able to support themselves and their families. Picture by Sam Kamau. Taken from:
Muchiri, J. (2016). Visualizing Development [Photo album][43]

Stephen Machua is a young Kenyan who is active in his community. Last year Stephen identified a need while visiting a juvenile correctional facility in Ruiru, Kenya. He decided to volunteer and introduce the children to digital tools on a weekly basis. The facility only had one computer when he started so he reached out to people and organizations for help. Currently the facility has a fully equipped room with computers contributed by individuals and companies and is run by Stephen and other volunteers who teach children basic computer skills. The children are busy and they learn a valuable skill.

Community-centered development

Participants also identified development that values and has community at its core as 'good' development. Community-centered development is defined as the process of economic, political and social change springing from the efforts of the people themselves[74] without relying on 'outside' agents such as the state and Western development agencies to achieve social change.[75] Community members come together in collective action and address community needs; collective action is an important force that can pressure changes in policy and bring about political change.[76]Besides uniting in community development activities, participants recommend that community "… unite and demand services from their leaders."

Development initiatives and projects with a community-centered approach value local knowledge and expertise held by community members; this local knowledge is important in the process of social change. To better understand and capitalize on this local knowledge, one participant suggested that, "[p]olicymakers need to frequently conduct surveys on the ground." Development actors such as local and international NGOs can do this by going to a community and building relationships with the members. This way they can find out what issues matter to members and collaboratively come up with ways through which these issues can be addressed.

Rather than independently implement projects in communities, governments and policy makers should first find out the needs of a particular community and map their projects onto those needs. This allows organizations to consider cultural variations and dynamics that influence how projects are received in a community and which members take active roles in the projects. According to one participant, failure to consult community members and youth in the "designing, planning and implementing of projects that are supposed to help youths" results in "some policies made based on theories rather than practical activities on the ground." Success in community-centered development is best achieved in a context-specific manner[77] that takes into account the differences within a community.

Education

In this study, education emerged as a feature of 'good' development as well as a means of achieving this development. Investing in both formal and informal education and training provides and enhances the skills, knowledge, attitudes and motivation necessary for economic and social development.[78] Investing in young people's education is a powerful means to achieve economic and social progress in society.[71]Two participants emphasize:

> This education should not be 'just' education. It needs to contribute towards innovative and creative ideas for the youth so that they can come up with new ways of doing things towards their country's development

> …this means that our aim should be how to be cultivated in many fields (political, economic, laws…) not only to get (a) diploma and look for a job!

Different aspects of education are important to youth in different countries in Africa; therefore, policies in education should not be homogenous but should be tailored according to specific needs of a country. For example, in Ethiopia where access to education is a problem[79]building more schools in remote areas is appropriate. In Tunisia, however, where

33

schools are available the poor quality of education is an issue due to challenges in resource planning and management.[80]The effects of the use of multitude non-standardized Arabic dialects throughout Tunisia's schools also contribute to the variability of the country's education quality.[81] In Tunisia a more appropriate policy would be aimed at investment in improved educational management and administration.

Country-wide blanket policies that fail to consider contexts and unique needs in different communities are problematic. Even where challenges are the same such as lack of classrooms in some regions in Malawi and Kenya, policy intervention should be specific to the contextual factors in each of the countries. There is need for governments who enact policy to collaboratively focus on educational reform and an equal need for youth, community leaders and teachers to interpret policy locally.

According to the participants in this study and reinforced by other research, education for development includes:

- A broader understanding of society, economics and the environment as well as the interconnections among the three.[82]It does not only teach young people to read and write but also to be sensitive of how they interact with the environment. This holistic approach to education should start at the earliest age possible as evidenced by the primary school children in Figure 6 taking care of the school garden in Mozambique;

- Leadership programs: youth recommend the inclusion of leadership programs in the curriculum at all levels of education including primary and secondary schools to equip children and youth with leadership skills right from an early age. It also addresses the lack of leadership skills as anexcuse that is often used keep youth from important decision making processes;

- Innovation: learning institutions must have systems and programs that nurture creativity and innovation and that encourage youth to become creators and producers rather than mere consumers. This approach encourages youth to start their own ventures using locally sourced materials which can address the high unemployment rates in Africa;[83]However, for this innovation to contribute to development it needs to be nurtured. Figure 6 below shows a young man from Kenya who builds planes from scrap metals, unfortunately, the participant who took this picture reports that this man has had no support whatsoever from the government or other agencies.

- Practical application: learning should not stop in classrooms but extend to the community. There is need for a channel through which youth can apply the skills they learn through mentorship programs, internships, and work study;

- STEM: more opportunities, funding and support, especially for girls and young women, to pursue the STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) disciplines.

Figure 5.6. Innovation by Youth in Kenya. This picture is evidence of innovation among youth; the young man in a brown hat builds small planes from scrap metal without any specialized training. Such innovation needs to be nurtured. Picture by Stephen Machua. Taken from Muchiri, J. (2016). Visualizing Development [Photo album][43]

What does this kind of education do for development?

- It improves young people's capacity to innovatively address challenges in their communities;

- Young people are able to think about issues from several viewpoints and analyze information from various sources including media, government agencies, and industry.[78]This allows them to make informed decisions;

- It encourages behavioral change as youth begin to reflect on their own actions in the community in view of newly acquired knowledge and skills;

- It produces advanced human capital for the labour market in an economy; and

- In the words of one participant: "Education is a tool for change and (an) empowering platform that gives equal opportunity both to the rich and poor background individuals No matter (whether this is) informal and formal education."

Human Development

"People are the real wealth of a nation."

-Human Development Report, 1990

People are not simply beneficiaries of economic and social progress in a society, but are active agents of change.[71]There are various factors that influence young people's ability to exercise this agency; for example, the institutions and mechanism linking people and their government and power dynamics in their local community. According to participants in this study, people's capabilities also play a part in how they participate in community development

activities. Capabilities are the various things that a person can be and do: being healthy, well nourished, and knowledgeable, having access to resources needed for a decent standard of living and being able to participate in community life.[84, 85] The purpose of development is to improve human lives by expanding these capabilities.[71]

For young people, and other members of the community, to fully exercise these capabilities, there is need for sound structures and mechanisms. These structures and mechanisms give room for personal development, personal liberty, literacy and freedoms at the community level.[86]Policy makers should focus on building structural reform like legal provisions that enable young people with political aspirations to run for political office regardless of gender or socio-economic status to ensure that youth exercise agency in any field that they choose to in the community.

According to participants, capacity building is one way through which human development can be achieved. A participant from Ghana gives an example of peer mentoring as an approach to enhance skills among youth:"I see a group of people (who) share with others what they know which to me is a great bonus for development." Skills and knowledge transfer can be achieved as the same participant suggests "with trainings, we can build the capacities of youths especially in rural communities. These trainings enable development actors to "…harness talent" and build capacity for collective action in development as "we must be ready to know that one person alone cannot start and bring development."

Figure 5.7. A Workshop on the Global Goals in Mali. This image shows how young people organize to discuss how development agendas at the international level affects them, how they can actively contribute to the goals in these agendas and what skills they need to implement these goals in their community. It also alludes to the peer-to-peer mentorship mentioned in this paper; the workshop is facilitated by other youth. Picture by Principe Moro. Taken from: Muchiri, J. (2016). Visualizing Development [Photo album][43]

Figure 7 above shows an example of capacity building in the community. This image was taken in Mali and shows a group of NAYD members holding a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) awareness session with other young people. This image also prompts the questions: are there means for youth in rural areas in Mali to take part in implementing the SDGs? Are there local institutions that can partner with willing youth? Who decides which goal is prioritized? And are there resources available for youth to implement the SDGs. These questions allude to the earlier discussion on structure and mechanisms that enable youth to exercise agency.

Democracy and governance

Good governance and democracy present an enabling environment for development.[87]This environment includes systems, institutions and legal frameworks that enable development to thrive. Countries that focus on development before democracy do better than

those that extend political rights before liberating their economies.[86, 88] However some countries, depending on the kind of political reform, that prioritize democratic reforms do better in development.[87] Effective governance institutions are important for youth in their community initiatives; they are frustrated by an environment that hinders them from active participation in community matters that affect them. Corruption, for example, presents an often-remarked upon hurdle for youth working in youth-led community based organizations.

Civic education and political literacy stand out as key elements in democracy and governance. Through civic education citizens can vote for deserving candidates irrespective of their gender, religion, race and status in society. For example, a young woman who is a member of NAYD in Uganda vied for a parliamentary seat and lost to a male candidate who held the seat prior to elections and whose record in public service was questionable. This example shows that some people in a community still vote for people on the basis of gender, status in society, tribe and wealth. Organizations that work in communities to expand spaces for youth in politics such as the Siasa Place in Kenya[50] require support and recognition by governments.

Traditionally in African politics, youth have fallen into the 'seen-but-not heard' category, where the involvement of young people is solicited for their logistical and supportive contributions: fundraising, campaign literature distribution, and campaign coordination. However these roles do not encourage active participation in meaningful political debate.[86]As a result, there is a tendency to discourage the vocal engagement of youth in political process This model of engaging youth leaves them disillusioned with the political system. Young people cite resources as one factor keeping them away from political office. Policies should be put in place to encourage youth participation in politics especially in a devolved government system such as

Kenya where youth would have an opportunity to take part in politics at the local level as members of the County Assembly.

Besides needing more opportunities for youth to be part of governance institutions, youth also need greater access to participation in existing governance spaces and institutions. According to one of the participants, observing national assembly debates is important as it helps young people shape policy within political spaces. Expanding participation through democratic institutions within stronger democratic governance can play a greater part in promoting development[71] by allowing youth to be part of the important decision making bodies.

How do these features tie together to form the foundation for development defined by these youth? Education and human development, for example, contribute to skill enhancement and capacity building for youth; they help nurture the skills needed to analyze and make informed decisions in the context of development. Investing in education and human development can encourage more young people to become leaders in, and initiators of, development projects. When youth meaningfully participate in development they are able to articulate shared needs in their communities and collaboratively work with other community members and development actors; this centers youth and community in development.

6. <u>Findings & Recommendations</u>

6.1 Main Findings

- Young people have a sound understanding of problems in their communities and have the **capacity and expertise** to contribute to their community's wellbeing. These are positive qualities for community development and should be encouraged and nurtured.

- Youth **participation** in development includes taking part in designing, actualizing, and monitoring projects. This requires youth engagement in all stages in a project.

- There is a **disconnect** in how youth and the development community define development; this affects what is prioritized in development and is seen as a problem by youth who already participate in development.

- **Information sharing** is central to the way youth participate in development projects. Young people want development actors to clearly communicate what is expected of youth in development projects, how projects are to be executed, goals and objectives in projects, how power and responsibilities are to be shared and the scope of work.

- Youth use informal channels and platforms, such as **social media**, to organize and share information about development activities they are involved in. These channels offer an opportunity for shaping attitudes towards development among youth.

- Young people display a willingness to work **collaboratively** on projects in adult-youth relationships. Youth are ready to work with development actors in a mutually beneficial way where they can learn and contribute to development.

Recommendations

People working with youth can adopt the Three-lens Approach to Youth Participation[20] This participatory model involves working with youth as beneficiaries, as partners and as leaders. The highest level of participation occurs when youth take leadership roles in projects or when they start their own initiatives. This model of youth participation shows how the development community can work with youth to foster more participation. The very basic form of participation is when youth are engaged as mere beneficiaries or clients in a project. On the other hand, the most effective mode of participation includes youth as leaders in projects. Though situations differ with contexts and countries, development actors can mold their youth participation strategies on this model.

For participation in development projects to be meaningful:

- Information should be shared and youth consulted at all levels[89].

- Youth should be involved in setting priorities and determining how resources will be used in projects in the planning stage.

- Youth should participate in implementing projects and be encouraged to take initiative independently[90].

- Responsibilities and power should be shared among the people involved in projects.

- Youth should be involved in making decisions which affect the quality of their lives.[5]

- It should be based on respect and recognition of individual and group differences based on racial, ethnic, cultural, sexual orientations and religious background.[91]

- People's local knowledge should be integrated in the design and planning process in development projects.[92]

Based on the above findings and existing models of participation, the following recommendations to the development community are targeted for governments, international aid agencies, and other policymakers:

6.2 Procedural Recommendations

1. **Change from a top-down approach to a more community-centered approach in creation, implementation and evaluation of development projects**. This requires prioritizing community needs properly through consultations with community members. Community consultations can be done through platforms such as youth groups, community meetings, faith-based institutions and formal and informal learning institutions. Participants recommend that policy, "establish relations with authority

figures in these platforms and use them as a link to the community." The researcher emphasizes the need for these consultations to be collaborative allowing members to express their views and needs. Further, to ensure that all community members' ideas are taken into account, development agencies need to navigate power dynamics that exist in a particular community.

2. **Map development projects onto the needs of youth and community.** This can be accomplished by talking to youth to get an insight into the challenges that need immediate intervention. The researcher suggests development actors engage social media to find out what youth are involved in and how these activities can tie in with their development plans. This is because most youth-led work that is not covered by mainstream media is self-reported in virtual communities on social media through pictures and short videos.

   Citing political reasons as the basis of prioritizing development projects in their communities, one participant opined that: "community needs should come before political ambitions."One way to do this is for development agencies to understand the local and national politics in target communities and have sound monitoring systems in place to ensure projects benefit the intended people. This way development projects are implemented to address actual needs identified by youth and community members.

3. **Move beyond a mere inclusion of youth in development projects (e.g. a certain number of youth are consulted or are involved in workshops) to substantial engagement where youth meaningfully participate in decision making processes and tasks throughout projects**. This reinforces the need to move beyond policies on paper to working with youth on community projects with meaningful participation. Youth

involved in this study, for example, have demonstrated capacity and knowledge. These qualities make them candidates for joint action with development actors. Other specialized skills, such as budgeting, that they may need to take part in project design, for example, can be acquired through mentorship and training as they learn on the job. This is one way in which "youth can gain skills while simultaneously changing their communities."[93]

4. **Involve youth in evaluating existing policies and programs.** This collaborative exercise can be fruitful in identifying problematic areas and gaps in existing policy and programs targeting youth. In this process, youth can also contribute to the formulation of alternative policies and programs. Policy makers can use this approach to develop youth-inspired and –informed policy that caters to youth and meets the objectives of policy makers. Since youth are directly affected by existing policy and programs, they are better placed to say what works and what doesn't and to offer suggestions on what might work better.

6.3 Thematic Development Priority Recommendations

1. **Invest more in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) for girls and young women in Africa.** There is need for more financial, technical, and infrastructural support for young women and girls to access technology. Digital hubs situated in community resource centers and ran by youth, for example, would be a good way to encourage access to digital tools as well as mentorship programs. It would also motivate girls and young women if the development community, especially people working in communication, spotlights other women in STEM careers. The AAUW (American Association of University Women)[94] reports that girls and young women face

stereotypes and gender bias among other hurdles in pursuing STEM. Community programs open to all can help address these stereotypes and build a network creating an environment that supports young women in STEM. Equally important is funding organizations –such as youth-led CBOs- focusing on STEM for girls and young women.

2. **Invest in programs that nurture and promote the value of arts in informal and formal learning institutions and allocate more funds for arts.** There is need to support initiatives that promote the appreciation of art in its various forms- such as music, creative writing, photography and painting- to change how people perceive art in Africa. This will encourage children and youth with artistic inclinations to pursue their talents in an environment that supports and nurtures art. The first step towards promoting arts in public education in Africa is by integrating arts into the curricula rather than relegating arts to the extra-curricular margins. This can further be strengthened by creating avenues for accomplished artists to offer mentorship to students.

3. **Create legal and policy systems within which youth participation in development is enforced**. National and local governments are better placed to implement and enforce such legal frameworks which would require state actors as well as non-state actors to adhere to regulations involving youth in projects and initiatives that are meant for youth. This is also a way of ensuring the marginalized among youth also have an opportunity to participate in development. For example, focusing on political participation as a form of youth participation, under the constitution young women would have the chance to be elected into political office.

However, "The existence of legal frameworks is not always sufficient to ensure effective participation"[95]especially when faced with challenges such as corruption. This requires a

sound accountability system and institutions that can enforce provisions in these legal frameworks.

This paper set out to answer these two questions: a) what does development mean to African youth who are invested in development? And b) how can this youth-defined development be realized through meaningful youth participation? It answers the first question in the themes that emerged from discussions with participants: youth participation, education, human development, community-centered development, democracy and governance. This youth-defined development can be achieved through procedural and thematic measures by the development community. These measures include adopting a community-centered approach in development projects, engaging youth in substantial ways, mapping development projects onto the needs of the youth and prioritizing development projects according to the needs of youth.

7. References

[1] African Development Bank Group (2012), Africa's Demographic Trends. Retrieved 24 September 2017, from https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/FINAL%20Briefing%20Note%204%20Africas%20Demographic%20Trends.pdf

[2] United Nations: Promote Sustainable Development. (n.d.) Retrieved 13 May 2017, from http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/promote-sustainable-development/index.html

[3] Ranis, G., Stewart, F., & Ramirez, A. (2000). Economic growth and human development. *World development*, *28*(2), 197-219.

[4] Agenda 2063: The Africa we want. (n.d.) Retrieved 10 May 2017, from https://www.au.int/web/en/agenda2063

[5] Matthews, H., Limb, M., & Taylor, M. (1999). Young people's participation and representation in society. *Geoforum*, 30(2), 135-144.

[6] Checkoway, B. N., & Gutierrez, L. M. (2006). Youth participation and community change: An introduction. *Journal of community practice*, *14*(1-2), 1-9.

[7] Loader, B. D., Vromen, A., &Xenos, M. A. (2014). The networked young citizen: social media, political participation and civic engagement.

[8] Mohan, G., &Stokke, K. (2000). Participatory development and empowerment: the dangers of localism. *Third world quarterly*, *21*(2), 247-268

[9] Kamoto, J., Clarkson, G., Dorward, P., & Shepherd, D. (2013). Doing more harm than good? Community based natural resource management and the neglect of local institutions in policy development. *Land Use Policy*, *35*, 293-301.

[10] Bennett, J., Ainslie, A., & Davis, J. (2013). Contested institutions? Traditional leaders and land access and control in communal areas of Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. *Land use policy*, *32*, 27-38.

[11] Webber, A. D., Hill, C. M., & Reynolds, V. (2007). Assessing the failure of a community-based human-wildlife conflict mitigation project in Budongo Forest Reserve, Uganda. *Oryx*, *41*(02), 177-184.

[12] Fletcher, A. C., Elder, G. H., & Mekos, D. (2000). Parental influences on adolescent involvement in community activities. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 1,* 29-48.

[13] Oyedemi, T., &Mahlatji, D. (2016). The 'Born-free'Non-voting Youth: A Study of Voter Apathy Among a Selected Cohort of South African Youth. *Politikon*, *43*(3), 311-323.

[14] Potgieter, E. (n.d.) South African Youth: Politically Apathetic? Retrieved 13 May 2017, from http://www.academia.edu/7966171/South_African_Youth_Politically_Apathetic

[15] P. Kagwanja, Power to Uhuru: Youth Identity and Generational Politics in Kenya's 2002 Elections, Africa Affairs Vol.105, No. 418, 2006, p52.

[16] Obonyo, R. (2016) Youth need to Shape Kenya's Party Politics. Daily Nation. Retrieved 10 May 2017, from http://www.nation.co.ke/oped/Opinion/Youth-need-to-shape-Kenya-s-party-politics/440808-3386346-rw9extz/

[17] Agu, S. U., Okeke, V. O. S., &Idike, A. N. (2013). Voters Apathy and Revival of Genuine Political Participation in Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *4*(3), 439.

[18]Dicklitch, S., &Lwanga, D. (2003). The politics of being non-political: Human rights organizations and the creation of a positive human rights culture in Uganda. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, *25*, 482.

[19]Ntsabane, T., &Ntau, C. (2006). Youth and politics in Botswana. *Journal of African Elections*, *5*(2), 99-113.

[20]Ginwright, S., & James, T. (2002). From assets to agents of change: Social justice, organizing, and youth development. *New directions for youth development*, *2002*(96), 27-46.

[21]Perkins, D. F., Borden, L. M., &Villarruel, F. A. (2001). Community youth development: A partnership for action. *School Community Journal*, *11*(2), 39-56.

[22]Makhoul, J., Alameddine, M., &Afifi, R. A. (2012). 'I felt that I was benefiting someone': youth as agents of change in a refugee community project. *Health education research*, *27*(5), 914-926.

[23]Ruspini, E. (2016). *A new youth?: young people, generations and family life*. Routledge.

[24]VeneKlasen, L., Miller, V., Clark, C., & Reilly, M. (2004). Rights-based approaches and beyond: challenges of linking rights and participation.

[25]Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2004). *Community-based (and driven) development: A critical review* (Vol. 3209). World Bank.

[26]Oakley, P. (1991). *Projects with people: The practice of participation in rural development*. International Labour Organization.

[27]Nyamu-Musembi, C., & Cornwall, A. (2004). What is the" rights-based approach" all about?: perspectives from international development agencies.

[28]UN Declaration on the Right to Development. (Dec. 4, 1986). Retrieved 1 June 2017, fromhttp://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm

[29]Cornwall, A., &Nyamu-Musembi, C. (2004). Putting the 'rights-based approach'to development into perspective. *Third world quarterly*, *25*(8), 1415-1437.

[30] Ben-Attar, D. (2010).Youth Participation in Development: Strategies and Best Practices. Retrieved 10 May 2017, from http://www.weitz-center.org/uploads/1/7/0/8/1708801/youth_participation_for_development_daniela_ben_attar.pdf

[31]DuBois, D. L., &Karcher, M. J. (2005). Youth mentoring. *Handbook of youth mentoring*, 2-11.

[32]Karcher, M. J., Kuperminc, G. P., Portwood, S. G., Sipe, C. L., & Taylor, A. S. (2006). Mentoring programs: A framework to inform program development, research, and evaluation. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *34*(6), 709-725.

[33]Youniss, J., McLellan, J. A., & Yates, M. (1997). What we know about engendering civic identity. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *40*(5), 620-631.

[34]Wang, C. C. (2006). Youth participation in photovoice as a strategy for community change. *Journal of Community Practice*, *14*(1-2), 147-161

[35]Network of African Youths for Development. (n.d.) Retrieved 11 May 2017, from http://nayd.org/

36Krebs, V. (Aug. 31, 2012). Wireachy. Retrieved 10 December 2016, from
http://www.thenetworkthinkers.com/2012/08/wirearchy.html

37NAYDSDGs: Empowering Rural African Communities. (n.d). Retrieved 11 May 2017, from http://sdgs.nayd.org/

38Clark-Kazak, C. R. (2009). Towards a working definition and application of social age in international development studies. *Journal of Development Studies*, *45*(8), 1307-1324.

39African Youth Charter. (n.d.) Retrieved 10 May 2017, from http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/treaties/7789-file-african_youth_charter.pdf

40Wang, C., & Burris, M. (1997). Photovoice: concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*, 24 (3), 369-387.

41Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1994). Empowerment through photo novella: Portraits of participation. *Health Education & Behavior*, *21*(2), 171-186.

42Clark,L., & Zimmer, L. (2001). What we learned from a photographic component in a study of Latino Children's Health. *Field Methods* 13(4), 303-328

43Kindon, S. and Pain, R. and Kesby, M. (2008) 'Participatory action research.', in *International encyclopedia of human geography.* Amsterdam; London: Elsevier, pp. 90-95.

44Muchiri, J. (2016). Visualizing Development [Photo album]. Retrieved 3 June 2017, from Visualizing Development: A Photo Album

45Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual studies*, *17*(1), 13-26.

46Barndt, D. (1997). Zooming out/zooming in visualizing globalization. *Visual Studies*, *12*(2), 5-32.

47Orellana, M. F. (1999). Space and place in an urban landscape: Learning from children's views of their social worlds. *Visual Studies*, *14*(1), 73-89.

48 Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1), 3-21.

49Ethiopia –Djibouti Railway Line Modernization, Ethiopia. (n.d.) Retrieved 10 June 2017, from
http://www.railway-technology.com/projects/ethiopia-djibouti-railway-line-modernisation/

50Ethiopia: Drought- 2015-2017. (n.d.) Retrieved 10 June 2017, from http://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000109-eth

51Ibua Africa. (n.d.) Retrieved 13 May 2017, from http://ibuaafrica.org/

52Ignite the Youth. (n.d.) Retrieved 13 May 2017, from http://www.ityafrica.net/

53Siasa Place. (n.d.) Retrieved 13 May 2017, from http://www.siasaplace.com/

54JIACTIVATE. (n.d.) Retrieved 13 May 2017, from http://jiactivate.org/

55Croppenstedt, A., Demeke, M., &Meschi, M. M. (2003). Technology adoption in the presence of constraints: the case of fertilizer demand in Ethiopia. *Review of Development Economics*, *7*(1), 58-70.

[56]Singh, G., &Belwal, R. (2008). Entrepreneurship and SMEs in Ethiopia: Evaluating the role, prospects and problems faced by women in this emergent sector. *Gender in management: An international journal*, *23*(2), 120-136.

[57]Simukoko, M., & van der Kleij, C. (2012). Enhancing Women's Participation in Beekeeping in Zambia through Technological Innovations.

[58]Digital Opportunity Trust Ethiopia. (n.d.) Retrieved 11 May 2017, from https://ethiopia.dotrust.org/

[59]Aitkin, H. (2002). Bridging the mountainous divide: A case for ICTs for mountain women. *Mountain Research and Development*, *22*(3), 225-229.

[60]Huyer, S., &Carr, M. (2002). Information and communication technologies: A priority for women. *Gender, Technology and Development*, *6*(1), 85-100.

[61]Yelamarthi, K., &Mawasha, P. (2008). A pre-engineering program for the under-represented, low-income and/or first generation college students to pursue higher education. Journal of STEM Education , 9, 5-15.

[62]Akinsowon, O. A., &Osisanwo, F. Y. (2014). Enhancing Interest in Sciences, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) for the Nigerian Female Folk. *International Journal of Information Science*, *4*(1), 8-12.

[63]Diekman, A. B., Weisgram, E. S. and Belanger, A. L. (2015), New Routes to Recruiting and Retaining Women in STEM: Policy Implications of a Communal Goal Congruity Perspective. Social Issues and Policy Review, 9: 52–88. doi:10.1111/sipr.12010

[64]United Nations (UN). (1998a). Lisbon declaration on youth policies and programmes. Retrieved 3 February 2000, from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/library/ldypptxt.htm

[65]Maamouri, M. (1998). Language Education and Human Development: Arabic Diglossia and Its Impact on the Quality of Education in the Arab Region.

[66]Whitehead, A., & Tsikata, D. (2003). Policy discourses on women's land rights in Sub–Saharan Africa: The implications of the re–turn to the Customary. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *3*(1-2), 67-112.

[67]Cousins, B. (2007). More than socially embedded: The distinctive character of 'communal tenure'regimes in South Africa and its implications for land policy. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, *7*(3), 281-315.

[68]Peires, J. B. (2000). Traditional Leaders in Purgatory Local Government in Tsolo, Qumbu and Port St Johns, 1990–2000. *African Studies*, *59*(1), 97-114.

[69]Gade, C. B. (2012). What is ubuntu,? Different interpretations among South Africans of African descent. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *31*(3), 484-503.

[70]Checkoway, B. N., & Gutierrez, L. M. (2006). Youth participation and community change: An introduction. *Journal of community practice*, *14*(1-2), 1-9.

[71]Jennings, L. B., Parra-Medina, D. M., Hilfinger-Messias, D. K., &McLoughlin, K. (2006). Toward a critical social theory of youth empowerment. *Journal of Community Practice*, *14*(1-2), 31-55.

[72]Wijeyesekera, D. (2011). The State of Youth Volunteering in Africa. Forum Discussion Paper. Retrieved 1 June 2017, from http://restlessdevelopment.org/file/forum-youth-volunteering-africa-pdf

[73]groundBREAKERS. (n.d.) Retrieved 13 May 2017, from http://lovelife.org.za/groundbreakers/

[74]Mutagoma, P. (2006). *Decentralisation for community development-a Rwanda Case study* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University).

[75]Mohan, G., &Stokke, K. (2000). Participatory development and empowerment: the dangers of localism. *Third world quarterly*, *21*(2), 247-268

[76]Fukuda-Parr, S. (2003). The human development paradigm: operationalizing Sen's ideas on capabilities. *Feminist economics*, *9*(2-3), 301-317.

[77]Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2004). *Community-based (and driven) development: A critical review* (Vol. 3209). World Bank.

[78]Woodhall, M., &Psacharopoulos, G. (1985). Education for development: an analysis of investment choices.

[79]Lewin, K. M. (2007). Diversity in convergence: Access to education for all. *Compare*, *37*(5), 577-599.

[80]Heyneman, S. P. (1997). The quality of education in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). *International Journal of Educational Development*, *17*(4), 449-466.

[81]Maamouri, M. (1998). Language Education and Human Development: Arabic Diglossia and Its Impact on the Quality of Education in the Arab Region.

[82]McKeown, R., Hopkins, C. A., Rizi, R., &Chrystalbridge, M. (2002). *Education for sustainable development toolkit*. Knoxville: Energy, Environment and Resources Center, University of Tennessee.

[83]Would Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Trends for Youth. (Aug. 24, 2016) Retrieved 10 May 2017, from http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/media-centre/pr/WCMS_514566/lang--en/index.htm

[84]Sen, A. (2014). Development As Freedom (1999). *The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change*, 525.

[85]Human Development Report. (2001). Retrieved 10 May 2017, from http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/national-human-development-report-2001 date of retrieval

[86]Anand, S., &Ravallion, M. (1993). Human development in poor countries: on the role of private incomes and public services. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *7*(1), 133-150.

[87]Leftwich, A. (1993). Governance, democracy and development in the Third World. *Third World Quarterly*, *14*(3), 605-624.

[88]Persson, T., &Tabellini, G. (2006). *Democracy and development: The devil in the details* (No. w11993). National Bureau of Economic Research.

[89] Matthews, H., Limb, M., & Taylor, M. (1999). Young people's participation and representation in society. *Geoforum*, 30(2), 135-144.

[90]Checkoway, B. N., & Gutierrez, L. M. (2006). Youth participation and community change: An introduction. *Journal of community practice*, *14*(1-2), 1-9.

[91]Loader, B. D., Vromen, A., &Xenos, M. A. (2014). The networked young citizen: social media, political participation and civic engagement.

[92]Mohan, G., &Stokke, K. (2000). Participatory development and empowerment: the dangers of localism. *Third world quarterly*, *21*(2), 247-268

[93]Udensi, L. O., Daasi, G. L., Emah, D. S., &Zukbee, S. A. (2013). Youth participation in Community Development (CD) programmes in Cross River State: implications for sustainable youth development in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), 13 (5): 61, 67.*

[94]Why so Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. (n.d.) Retrieved 10 June 2017, from http://www.aauw.org/research/why-so-few/

[95]Gaventa, J. (2002). Legal and Policy Frameworks for Citizen Participation in Local Governance in East Africa: a regional report. Retrieved from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPCENG/Resources/regional_report.pdf

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix: Photo-elicitation Questions

- What do these pictures mean to you?

- Based on these pictures what does development mean to you?

- Is this definition different from how policy makers define development?

- How do policy makers define development?

- How can this gap in definition be bridged?

8.2 Appendix: Focus Group and Interview Questions

- According to other young people participating in this research, education is an important factor in development. What are your thoughts on this?

- How does education that fosters development look like?

- Is physical development more prioritized than other areas in your community?

- What should policy makers prioritize in development?

- Are people in your community involved in community work? Do you have examples?

- How does this community work foster development?

- What does development mean to you?