

Internship opportunity at VVOB in Uganda

Learning Entrepreneurship and Agriculture Practically(LEAP).

2023 - 2024

Towards a role model profile to motivate youth for greener and gender non-stereotypical study and career choices in the agri-food sector

Summary of the internship

Background

In Uganda, 66 percent of working youth are active in agriculture. Here, and in other low- and middle-income countries in Africa, the agri-food system is projected to remain a major sector offering (self-) employment opportunities for youth. Moreover, as the agri-food system changes, the number of jobs and demand for firms in upstream and downstream segments of agricultural value chains will continue to grow, meaning that increasingly high-level skills will be in demand ([Christiaensen et al., 2021](#)). However, there is an observable trend that education seems to steer young people away from agriculture. Of Uganda's working population, around 80 percent with no or some education are employed in the agriculture sector compared to only 50.1 percent of those who completed secondary education (UBOS, 2021). Young people often remain unaware of current and evolving opportunities existing in the agri-food system, and their understanding of the sector is shaped by the traditional forms of hand-hoe subsistence farming that their parents and grandparents were involved in. Literature on youth aspirations for agriculture also stresses the unique barriers faced by girls when it comes to taking up on-farm activities and building successful business ([Allen et al., 2016](#); [Restless Development, 2018](#)).

Study and career guidance in the LEAP programme

Robust evidence suggests that role models delivering career talks (career information) are a relatively simple and low-cost means to level-up the aspirations of youth in secondary education, improve their educational outcomes, spark their interests in specific trades and even to persuade girls to consider male-dominated, higher earning trades. Amongst other objectives, LEAP aims at equipping secondary school teachers and technical and vocational education and training instructors with the competences to mobilize local role models to conduct effective career talks to inspire and motivate young people to take up productive (self-) employment opportunities in the agri-food sector.

About the internship

When you conduct your master's research with VVOB in Uganda you will have the opportunity to immediately influence practice, and perhaps even policy. Your research findings will inform the design of teacher resources on career talks as well as teacher training activities at two National Teachers' Colleges in central and northern Uganda and the National Instructors' College in Abilonino. Moreover, the findings generated through your research can be used in the efforts of developing a scaling strategy with the Ministry of Education and Sports. This is a unique opportunity in which you will explore the intersection of youth, education, climate, gender and economic development. Below we describe the envisioned Master's study. There is opportunity for the student to propose alternative questions, research designs, theoretical frameworks and lenses as well as methods. These can be discussed prior to the internship.

Various studies suggest that role models can play an important role in improving educational outcomes, influencing career choices and career success. For example, an experimental study conducted in Uganda showed that exposure to *The Queen*

of *Katwe*, a two-hour movie with an inspirational female role model excelling in a mathematical domain, led to better performance in examinations among O-level students, particularly in maths subjects and with larger effects for females (Riley, 2022). Researchers in the UK found that exposing adolescent learners to as few as three one-hour in-person career talks delivered by volunteer role models improved students’ attitudes about the usefulness of school, enhanced their confidence in their own abilities and in fulfilling their career aspirations and increased their examination results (Kashefpakdel & Percy, 2016; Kashefpakdel et al., 2019).

In this research assignment you will develop a recommended profile for role models who can offer career talks in secondary education and/or TVET – not only to interest young people in studies and careers in agriculture but especially for gender non-stereotypical and environmentally sustainable/friendly agri-businesses.

Possible research questions are:

1. What does evidence suggest about the characteristics and qualities of role models in relation to motivation and aspirations of young people regarding their study and career choices (within agri-preneurship education)?
2. What are young people’s perceptions about qualities and characteristics of role models? Who have been the role models who inspired young agri-preneurs to get engaged in gender non-stereotypical and/or green agri-enterprises?
3. What profile should teachers and instructors use to identify local volunteers who can act as role models to inspire/motivate young people into agri-preneurship and especially green and gender non-stereotypical agri-work opportunities? What are the existing platforms and networks in which potential role models can be identified/contacted?
4. How can teachers best attract possible role models who fit the profile to engage in agriculture/entrepreneurship education? What are the role models considerations in volunteering their time and effort?
5. How can educators, policy makers and researchers further improve the utilisation of role models in secondary education and TVET towards green study and career trajectories whilst combatting gender barriers?

We tentatively envision this to be a majorly qualitative study including desk-research, interviews and/or focus group discussions to gain insight into youths’ perceptions as well as key informant interviews. We highly encourage the student to adopt participatory methods to validate insights on the profile of role models. VVOB will help connect the intern to existing networks of young farmers such as UNYFA to enable access young people who are already in green/gender non-stereotypical nodes of the agri-food system. The recommendations from this research will guide the development of a career talk guide/resource. Depending on the interest of the student they can choose to be involved in this development process.

1. Location

Country	Uganda
Town	Kampala
Partner / Institute	VVOB
Department	VVOB LEAP programme team

2. Period

Minimum three months, a period starting between September 2023 and September 2024

3. Terms of Reference	
Objectives of the internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify which characteristics and qualities of role models are proven to be effective in guiding young people towards in their study and career choices (in agriprenurship education) b) Analyze youths' perceptions of role models and their role in study and career guidance. c) Develop and validate a profile and networks teachers can use to identify role models that can inspire and motivate their learners to pursue agriprenurship, and especially green and gender non-stereotypical opportunities. d) Offer recommendations for VVOB, policy makers, educators and researchers to improve the study and career pathways of young people into agriprenurship and especially greener and gender non-stereotypical enterprises.
Expected Results	<p>A clear and sound research plan detailing a well-justified research design and activities.</p> <p>Adherence to ethical procedures and good conduct to ensure protection and authentic participation of all research participants.</p> <p>A systematic analysis of secondary and primary data resulting in clear findings and recommendations.</p> <p>Strong team work and collaboration with LEAP team members and operational and strategic partners of VVOB.</p> <p>Well documented opportunities of a clear profile for possible role models and clear recommendations that VVOB can implement.</p>
Planned activities and time frame	<p>Activity plan</p> <p>A detailed work plan will be developed in collaboration with the student. The first month will be used for orientation activities and in the final month a report should be produced.</p>
Equity component of internship	<p>The study should adopt a gender lens in support of girls entering more productive nodes of the agri-food system. Students may propose other equity components to be considered in the research.</p>

4. Support	
Working environment	The intern will be based in Kampala.
Position in the program/institution	Research intern
Name Supervisor	Margaret Balikagala, Project Coordinator LEAP

5. Minimum requirements	
Expertise	The candidate is currently studying a Master's in Education, Social Sciences or any other relevant Master Training.

	The candidate is well-acquainted with both quantitative and qualitative research methods, tool development, data analysis and report writing.
Profile	The candidate has an interest in agriculture education in a development context. The candidate is interested in youth, Entrepreneurship, and Agriculture. Fluency in English, both orally and written.
Required / Preferred preparation	Reading LEAP program documents to familiarize with the program. Orientation into Uganda, the context of living and work.
Duo-attachment possible?	The topic is best suitable for 1 student only.
Preferential or reserved attachment in the context of a Structural Partnership?	OPEN on the VVOB website

6. Working conditions

Workload	Full time, 40 hours a week
Leave days / days off	Weekends and public holidays, an additional of two days a month of leave.
Required language skills	English
Transport	Motorbike taxis (“boda boda”) for short distances, therefore it is highly recommended to bring a motorbike helmet. Public transport in form of shared taxis or buses are advised for longer distances (> 20 km). On internship related field activities with prior approval a car with driver can be availed.
Possibilities accommodation	In consultation with VVOB supervisor
Estimated general costs	Estimated general costs €300-450 p/m rent, food and drinks about €10-15 per day.

7. Comments

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