Improving Livelihoods through Youth-Adult Partnerships involving School-based, Agripreneurship Projects: The Experiences of Adult Partners in Uganda

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Abstract

The increasing number of unemployed and underemployed youth across the globe, especially in developing countries, has reached alarming levels. In Africa, for example, this phenomenon has led to some youth making treacherous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe and other parts of the world in search of better livelihoods. Such an influx of immigrants, primarily to Europe and North America, has caused resentment and outcries by many citizens of the affected nations. Some of these challenges, however, could be allayed by engaging youth in income-generating projects, including agricultural entrepreneurship, i.e., agripreneurship, to create jobs and improve livelihoods. This may be achieved through Youth-Adult Partnerships (Y-APs) by which youth and adults work together on agricultural projects of mutual interest. This study explored the experiences of adult partners in Uganda who collaborated with youth on their school-based, agripreneurial projects (SAPs) involving the raising of broiler chickens. Because of their partnership working on SAPs, both the youths' and adults' knowledge and understanding of concepts related to agripreneurship and raising of broilers chickens improved. The need exists to provide an enabling environment to promote an agripreneurial culture among youth through Y-APs if we seek to inspire them to pursue agripreneurship and related opportunities for job creation while also enabling the food security of communities and improved livelihoods for their citizens.

*Keywords***:** agripreneurship; improving livelihoods; project-based learning; school-based agripreneurial projects; youth unemployment; youth-adult partnerships

Introduction/Review of Literature

Youth unemployment has reached alarming levels in many regions of the world. In Africa, for example, about "10 to 12 million youth enter the workforce each year, [and yet] only 3.1 million jobs are created, leaving vast numbers of youth unemployed" (Africa Development Bank, 2016, p. 1). Further, on a global scale, Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the highest rate of youth classified as *working poor* (≥ 70%), i.e., individuals who are employed, but their incomes are below the poverty line (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2016). This phenomenon has led to some youth making treacherous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe and other parts of the world in search of better livelihoods (Lebada, 2019; World Vision, 2019). Such an influx of immigrants, primarily to Europe and North America, has caused resentment and outcries from many citizens of the affected nations (Herndon, 2019).

Youth migration is caused by a plethora of reasons, including poverty, unemployment, civil unrest, food insecurity, dictatorships, and displacements due to war (Semela & Cochrane, 2019). However, some of these challenges impacting youth could be allayed by engaging youth in income-generating activities, including agricultural entrepreneurship, i.e., *agripreneurship*. A*gripreneurship* could be vital to mitigating the challenges of unemployment and improving food security (ILO, 2014; Mukembo, 2017), including development in rural areas to enhance livelihoods and reduce emigration. Agripreneurship involves "the application of entrepreneurial principles to identify, develop, and manage viable agricultural enterprises/projects optimally and sustainably for profit and [/or] improved livelihoods" (Mukembo & Edwards, 2015, p. 5). The promotion of agripreneurship in communities may be achieved through Youth-Adult Partnerships (Y-APs) by which youth and adults work together on agricultural projects of mutual interest. Y-APs involve social interactions and collaborations between youth and adults to develop ideas, programs, and policies that advance the progress and enhancement of their communities while leading to improved livelihoods and positive youth development (Zeldin, Camino, & Mook, 2005; Zeldin, Christens, & Powers, 2013).

Y-APs arose out of the need to engage youth and adults in community-led development initiatives (Krauss et al., 2014; Libby, Rosen, & Sedanaen, 2005). Y-APs are distinguished from other partnerships or relationships such as apprenticeships in that the collaborations involve several youth working together with multiple adults while undertaking collective responsibility for their actions (Zeldin et al., 2013). In addition, most of these partnerships fall outside the regular school curriculum and are flexible, which allows for easier decision making and activities while not interfering with schools' schedules and priorities (Akiva & Petrokubi, 2016). Examples of such include 4-H youth programs, boys and girls clubs, agricultural clubs, and other youth leadership development initiatives (Libby et al., 2005; Mukembo, 2017; Zeldin et al., 2005).

Y-APs can play an important role in the growth and development of community-based livelihood programs, including youth development to build their capacity to bring about desired changes in their local settings (Zeldin, Krauss, Kim, Collura, & Abdullah, 2015). The partnerships also provide platforms for young people to express themselves on issues that concern them, while adults with mutual interests provide support and guidance (Watson, Mazur, & Vincent, 2015; Zeldin et al., 2015). Through Y-APs, young people learn a variety of life skills from adults, such as conflict resolution, effective communication practices, and teamwork, among others (Weybright et al., 2016) while building their social capital. Such interactions involve the exchange of ideas, and fresh insights are developed on a variety of issues likely to lead to the development of new knowledge to solve challenges faced by communities (Mitra, 2008). For this reason, various organizations and agencies, public and private, have encouraged

Y-APs as a model to simultaneously promote youth and community development (Zeldin et al., 2005). Although the benefits of Y-APs to the youth partners have been well documented by various scholars (Libby et al., 2005; Watson et al., 2015; Zeldin et al., 2005; Zeldin et al., 2013), such has not been the case for the adult partners, especially in SSA. Therefore, this inquiry sought to describe the benefits acquired by the adult partners from their relationships with youth as a result of working together on agripreneurship projects.

Purpose

This study sought to describe the adult partners' experiences regarding school-based, agripreneurial projects (SAPs), including the potential of such to improve agricultural practices and livelihoods. Ugandan high school students (the study's youth) raised broilers as their SAPs and received training on entrepreneurship from agriculture teachers, extension educators, and poultry farmers, who were the youths' adult partners. This portion of a larger investigation was guided by one overarching question: What were the adult partners' experiences regarding their interactions with the students around a SAP featuring broiler production?

Methodology, Collection, and Explication of the Data

We used a phenomenological approach (Kafle, 2011; Moustakas, 1994) to explore and derive meaning from the adult partners' *lived experiences*. This approach explores "the human world as we find it in all its variegated aspects" (van Manen, 2016, p. 18), and researchers provide an interpretation of the phenomenon experienced by the participants due to its *essence* (Guba, 1981; Husserl, 1989; Moustakas, 1994). This investigatory method helps researchers gain an understanding of participants' shared experiences regarding a given phenomenon.

Creswell (2013) recommended interviewing three to 15 individuals who experienced a phenomenon to comprehend their shared experience. For this study, we purposely selected eight adult participants who partnered with students on their SAPs (Groenewald, 2004; Padilla-Díaz, 2015); these adults were interviewed about their experiences. These interactions involved the adults partnering with 140 youth, i.e., 70 girls and 70 boys, ages 12 to 20 years from two boarding schools in eastern Uganda, who had received instruction on poultry science integrated with entrepreneurship concepts for eight weeks. During this time, the youth had opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in their agriculture classrooms through the real-world context of SAPs. They kept broiler chickens and collaborated with adults, including extension educators, agriculture and entrepreneurship teachers, as well as local farmers who were poultry producers, to learn from one another and share experiences; this was the study's *partnership*.

Interviews with the adult partners were conducted via Skype (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014) using a semi-structured interview protocol with one open-ended, overarching question (Patton, 2015). This approach allowed the researchers the flexibility to probe emerging themes to capture a rich and detailed description of the phenomenon until no new information emerged indicating that *data saturation* had been achieved (Groenewald, 2004; Padilla-Díaz, 2015; Patton, 2015). When employing a phenomenological approach, Kafle (2011) argued "for a dynamic interplay among six research activities: commitment to an abiding concern, oriented stance toward the question, investigating the experience as it is lived, describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting, and consideration of parts and [the] whole" (p. 191).

Data collection and analysis were undergirded by Tracy's (2010) eight guidelines for qualitative research to ensure a high-quality study. Through a review of literature on Y-APs and agripreneurship, we established a gap regarding such partnerships involving SAPs and their

contributions to improving livelihoods. Therefore, the findings and recommendations emanating from this study would be *worthy* or useful in filling a knowledge gap. The topic was also worthy as well as timely due to the growing concerns about food security and the number of unemployed youth, including that of policymakers. In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument; therefore, *trustworthiness* and *credibility* in the research process are essential to ensure the validity of a study's findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tracy, 2010).

Reflexivity statement: Sincerity, credibility, and being ethical are core to all qualitative inquiries (Tracy, 2010). We acknowledge that personal bias might be a factor in this study because the principal investigator was an agriculture teacher in Uganda, and he has a vested interest in youth and agripreneurship development in SSA. He has published and presented on related topics and studies. As such, to mitigate the potential for bias in this study, he had to bracket (*epoche*) or set aside his preconceived ideas to focus on the participants' experiences about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Qutoshi, 2018). However, because this may not have been entirely possible (Kafle, 2011), he also collaborated with another scholar to conduct the study. This collaboration brought an *outside lens* or *perspective* and *multivocality* to the study and thereby helped mitigate the potential for bias. Moreover, we acknowledge that the interpretation of human experience can be equivocal depending on the researchers' perspectives and experiences regarding the phenomenon they investigate (Kafle, 2011). The other researcher is an American with experience involving youth and agricultural development, including entrepreneurship, and he had traveled to Uganda with projects involving adult entrepreneurs.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim (Yin, 2010), and we used open coding (Corbin, & Strauss, 2014) to identify and organize the concepts into codes using NVivo 11 analysis software (QSR International, 2013, 2016). This involved analysis of both textual and structural data of *what* participants said they experienced and *how* such was experienced (Creswell, 2013; Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Based on the researchers' judgements, the codes that they perceived to convey similar meaning were grouped together to develop themes, which yielded an overall meaning and *essence of the phenomenon* (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). In phenomenology, researchers reflect deeply on the meaning of the textual data (Kafle, 2011). Thus, we were "called to play with the texts – to get lost in deep conversation with them. The goal . . . [is] to invite the reader to enter the world that the texts would disclose and open up in front of themselves" (Kafle, 2011, p. 192). Moreover, "[t]he themes can be viewed as written interpretations of lived experience" (Sloan & Bowe, 2014, p. 3). Through this process, our analysis revealed seven themes and seven subthemes.

Description of the Study's Participants

Eight adult partners shared their experiences regarding the students' SAPs, including the potential of such to improve agricultural practices and livelihoods in their communities, and the youths' acquisition of agripreneurship, leadership, communication, and teamwork skills. The adults included two agricultural teachers, two entrepreneurship teachers, two extension educators, and two poultry farmers in Uganda. They varied in age from 32 to 53 years and had a wide range of experience in their respective fields spanning 10 to 30 years. Their levels of formal education included associate's degrees in agriculture to master's degrees in several fields. The participants' identities were replaced with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Participant #1 (Moses): Moses is an agriculture teacher and has associate's and bachelor's degrees in agricultural education. He was one of the project's coordinators and oversaw the students' training and SAPs implementation at one of the schools.

Participant #2 (Peter): Peter is an agricultural teacher and holds associate's and bachelor's degrees in agricultural education. He oversaw the implementation of the students' SAPs at his school and participated in their training.

Participant #3 (Abu): Abu is an entrepreneurship teacher; he holds a bachelor's degree in business education and a master's degree in entrepreneurship. He provided agripreneurship training for the students.

Participant #4 (Julius): Julius is an entrepreneurship teacher with an associate's degree in business education, a bachelor's degree in business studies, and a master's degree in commerce. He provided agripreneurship training for the students as they implemented their SAPs.

Participant #5 (Noah): Noah is an entrepreneurship/business extension educator. He holds a bachelor's degree in entrepreneurship and small business management, a postgraduate diploma in project planning and management, and he was pursuing a master's degree in project planning at the time of the study. As one of the project's coordinators, Noah was involved in the students' agripreneurship training and the facilitation of their related learning experiences.

Participant #6 (Daniel): Daniel is an agricultural extension educator who holds an associate's degree in animal husbandry and several professional development certificates. He helped facilitate interaction between farmers and the youth and was involved with the training to ensure implementation of proper poultry management practices.

Participant #7 (Patience): Patience was one of the poultry farmers who partnered with the students; she operates a battery cage system for layers and a deep litter operation for broilers. She holds an associate's degree in education, a bachelor's degree in agriculture, and a master's degree in gender and women's studies. Patience taught agriculture for 15 years before venturing into poultry production.

Participant #8 (Shawn): Shawn holds a bachelor's degree in social sciences and a master's degree in human resource management. He was another poultry farmer who partnered with the students.

Findings

In reporting participants' experiences about a phenomenon, Lester (1999) urged researchers, whenever possible, to provide direct quotes to substantiate their distillation of themes and subthemes. As such, we provided a number of direct quotes to describe and illuminate the participants' lived experiences.

Theme #1. Improved understanding of and interest in agripreneurship and related opportunities for youth (students) and their adult partners.

The adult partners observed that the students' understanding and knowledge of agripreneurship had improved by the end of the project. According to one partner, this observation was based on the kind of questions posed by students about agripreneurship, and the responses they gave when asked follow-up questions. Further, the actions of youth in developing business plans, planning and budgeting, marketing their products, successfully managing the broilers, and later reinvesting capital to continue with their SAPs showed they understood the value of agripreneurship projects, as well as interests to continue with such.

Julius, shared that, in the beginning, the students could not relate agriculture with entrepreneurship to infer agripreneurship. They even wondered what an entrepreneurship teacher was doing in an agricultural project, but Julius explained:

I brought it out that if you incorporate business ideas in agriculture, then you are likely to earn more profits which you can use to expand on your production. . . . I taught them the idea of marketing, marketing plan and strategies, which they used to market their broilers.

Julius' observation was supported by Noah, who said: "Most of the students knew about entrepreneurship but combining agriculture and entrepreneurship was a total surprise to them. Most had no idea what agripreneurship meant, but when we explained [it] to them, they were astonished." Noah elaborated that the students could not initially connect entrepreneurship and agriculture, but during the training they were able to relate the two concepts and showed more interest. The youth wanted to learn more about how to identify opportunities, including business plan development and how they could get capital to start businesses. "The students were very interested and liked the idea of merging the two subjects [entrepreneurship and agriculture]. . . . Actually, most of them indicated they would like to start their agricultural businesses to help them pay their tuition at university," said Noah. This experience was echoed by Abu:

The students were very excited to see that what had been taught in class can be applied outside practically in [the] form of agripreneurship. Meaning that the theory being taught in class was transferrable into practice; helping them transform [classroom] knowledge to the business environment, instead of them learning things in class and [later] forget. . . .

In addition, some of the adults acknowledged that they also had gained more insight about agripreneurship and would use the knowledge acquired to start projects. Moses shared:

I would like to say . . . thank you because I also gained something dealing with students and attending the training by the entrepreneurship teachers. . . . The field visits to farmers gave me the motivation to go on with the projects I had already started. I invested in poultry and started a piggery unit because I got more business skills and ideas to write and develop my business projects. I am happy this experience changed my mindset, and I am sure it changed the mindset of the students and other teachers. . . .

Peter added: "Visiting farmers who were doing well and working with the students helped me get new ideas to revisit some of the projects I was working on. I plan to integrate more agripreneurship in my teaching." Peter's and Moses' views were supported by Abu who indicated: "To me, this whole project experience helped me learn new ideas in agriculture that I could use in my business classes."

Theme #2: Students' increased understanding of poultry science knowledge and its application outside the classroom.

The agriculture teachers observed that students who participated in the SAPs were more active in class than other students. They would respond to questions during class discussions with practical examples from their SAPs and described what had been experienced. For example, they discussed the signs of coccidiosis in infected birds. Further, Patience was impressed by how the students were able to match their practice with relevant theory and apply concepts from classroom learning experience when they visited her farm. The teachers also noted students' increased interests in their subjects, which made the learning easier, as Moses explained:

It was a good learning experience. Before that, we were approaching poultry in a theoretical way, and it was very hard for us to convince the girls that things can actually happen. But when it came to this training and the real practical sense with hands-on [experience], it simplified our work. . . . [The] girls loved the subject more because they saw agriculture as something they can benefit from and also help their community.

Peter's elaboration supported Moses' position:

If we gave another test today, you will find that members who were still in the project would do better. . . . Those who were in the project had more contribution[s] in class than those who did not have hands-on [experience] with the project, especially when we were handling [teaching] the topic of poultry. The other ones [students] who were in the project had practical knowledge; they would tell you most of the things [answers] than those who did not have [the] hands-on [learning opportunities]. There is a very big change/difference between the two groups.

Theme #3: Students acquiring life skills.

Some adult partners observed that the students had acquired a variety of skills such as accounting, writing a business plan, budgeting, financial management, leadership, mobilization, and organizational planning. Noah and Julius explained that they taught students accounting skills, which were used to evaluate the viability of their SAPs. As such, Moses shared:

They know how to mobilize themselves, and they know how to budget. I have witnessed this with the new birds they bought. They budget for that little money they saved from the first project and account for whatever they are doing, which means they have learned to save. Now they work as a team, and you [the teacher] rarely get to solve any serious issues [or conflicts] because they handle it themselves.

Regarding this outcome, Julius added:

They [students] learned that they needed to be organized with their project. We developed an organizational plan and identified the people to work with the project, and we established a reporting matrix within the project in an orderly way to avoid conflicts and duplication of duties.

Theme #4: Improved interaction, networking, and support among teachers, extension educators, farmers, students, and students' parents.

The teachers acknowledged that, as a result of the broiler raising project, they came to know the students better outside of the classroom, including some of their parents. According to Moses, one of the students convinced her parents to buy all the chickens from the project. Further, some parents who learned about the SAP from their children called the adult partners and inquired about the project and how they could support it. This experience was echoed by Abu, who shared:

[A] parent called and asked me about the project, that the daughter talked to him about. . . . The response from other parents who heard about the project was very exciting, and they thanked the school for starting the agro-entrepreneurship project with girls [and] that it would give them ideas to do rather than sitting at home. . . . They were [also] thankful that the project started with the young girls who were in lower classes [grades] because they would work on the project longer while still in school and get more skills.

Relationships were developed between the adult partners and some students, who they said had stayed in contact. For example, Patience indicated that students called her and inquired about starting individual poultry projects: "During the holiday, students called me and made an appointment to visit my farm with their parents." Shawn reported a similar continuation of the relationship:

Those students from well-to-do families [financially stable] followed up with me and they wanted help to talk to their parents or visit their homes and advise them how they can also start the same kind of business I do. . . . I hope to get in touch with them soon.

Theme# 5: Benefits of youth working with adults on projects in their communities.

As a result of the partnerships, mutual exchanges of ideas and better interaction occurred between the adult partners, students, and school administrators. The adults indicated that the students enjoyed interacting with and learning from the farmers visited. They were able to compare the performance of the farms and gave advice for improvement, if appropriate, as Moses described:

> When we went to Iganga to visit one broiler farmer, the birds were really in a bad shape and looked emaciated. The students asked the farmer where he bought his chicks, and feed, and they realized the feed was the problem and the birds were not from a reputable source. They told the farmer where they bought their chicks. . . . They asked the farmer to change his source of feeds and ensure the birds were given enough water and that feeding was ad libitum because he was trying to ration the feeding to save money . . . .

Further, all adult partners acknowledged that the idea of students working with community members on mutual projects was excellent. It helped the communities' adults to understand what the schools were teaching their children, and they learned new things by interacting with the students. Moreover, the adult partner teachers and extension educators indicated that it made their teaching easier because the students were able to understand better and implement what they were learning. According to Julius, "they [students] saw and experienced how they could apply the knowledge and content being covered in class to solve problems outside the class." In support, Peter said: "Students realized that it was not [only] about getting good marks in class but how to apply the knowledge to earn a living and impact your community." And, Abu added: "The skills development in agripreneurship is helpful for our learners and community to become self-reliant. That is if the students use the skills to create jobs and employ others." Noah also shared: "When students engage with communities, they are able to see opportunities to apply their skills which are not available in a closed school environment."

Further, Shawn explained that in the 1970s and 1980s, schools often had farms managed by students and the nearby residents would learn from these operations as well as buy their products. This helped promote better cooperation with the communities, and if farmers could not access immediate help from the extension educators they would visit and interact with people at these school farms, including the teachers. Shawn added:

> School farms were a resource center for the communities, and at times they had better breeds of cattle that communities would access to improve their herds. . . . But now look at these schools . . . the practical aspect is not there, and they don't have any single farm. How can you teach agriculture theoretically without practice?

Patience expanded on this point:

> This initiative is long overdue. Schools should work with communities and not [stay] in isolation because, at the end of the day, there is a need for better cooperation and, as we all know, these students will return to their communities when they graduate and will be expected to solve emerging problems. But how can they do it if they are not given the opportunity to interact with us early on, so we all learn from each other?

Theme #6: Challenges experienced by adult partners during the project's implementation.

Although the adult partners realized benefits partnering with the students, several outlined the challenges they experienced, which included seven subthemes. *Limited time and schedule conflicts with established school programs*: All participants indicated that the time periods allocated for the training of students and their interactions with them were limited. This

was because the projects were implemented during school time, and teachers had to balance their other duties with the project's work. Moreover, most of the training and the students' field trips had to be conducted on weekends, which was difficult to accommodate along with other school programs. To this point, Daniel stated: "The time was limited, and the school calendar was not favorable at times where the students were expected to attend classes or do weekly tests at the time when they are scheduled to visit farmers." He added that "it was also difficult to align the school's program with the farmers' schedule[s] . . . and yet farmers want students to go to their farms when they are around." This challenge was also supported by Abu who explained that when it came to training, it was difficult to find enough time to complete certain modules they intended to address because the students were required to attend to other school activities or assignments. And Moses shared:

> It was hard for students and teachers to balance time between school activities and project work, especially when the chicks were still young. . . . Students were required to attend to the chicks when at the same time they were needed in class.

Shawn expounded on this constraint: "Time was a challenge; I saw that students were willing to learn more, but their teachers were calling them to enter the bus that time is over."

Large number of students. The adult farmer partners had the challenge of accommodating a large number of students who visited their farms, which limited their ability to provide enough time for one-on-one interactions. However, the more interested students took the farmers' contact information and followed up with them during the schools' holiday periods.

Lack of cooperation from some farmers was another challenge identified by the extension educators. For instance, some farmers contacted to work with the students were noncommittal and others would not allow their workers to meet students in their absence, as Daniel explained:

> They [farmers] don't always like students to visit their farms when they are not there, maybe they are insecure and not sure of what the farm attendants will tell or . . . [if] they will receive them well. [And], at times, the farm attendant may not know the history of the farm and there may be some information that they don't know or understand unless that farm attendant has been there for some time.

Fear of transmitting disease from one farm to another. Some farmers worried that the visiting students could spread disease from one farm to another. This discouraged those farmers from hosting students on their farms. *Expensive cost of feeds*. Though the cost of production for the students' initial broiler projects was provided, the adult partners indicated that when the students restocked their SAPs, the cost of feed was very high, and students, at times, would have to contribute additional funds to implement such follow-on projects.

Lack of cooperation and time management by the students. The adult partners indicated that some students were less interested in the project and this caused challenges with organizing them. Moses elaborated: "Some of the students were from posh [wealthy] families and they thought it was a dirty project. So, to bring them on board, I had to convince them about the importance of participating in the project." This issue was also shared by Peter who said: "Though the majority of students loved working with the project, some wanted to give up because it required extra time to work on the project and yet they were required to prepare for tests."

Financial constraints. The adult partners explained that the resources available to implement the project were limited compared to its magnitude. For example, Julius stated: "I observed that the resources available for the project were small and thus students had to operate on a small scale which made the unit cost of production per bird high, leading to less profits."

Theme #7: Suggestions to overcome challenges experienced by the project's adult partners.
        The adult partners indicated that a need existed to harmonize school programs so that students have enough time to engage in extracurricular activities. They recommended that appropriate arrangements should be made in the future to involve farmers, schools, and other stakeholders so they understand their roles in and the importance of engaging students with adult members of their communities. This would lower the ratio of students to farmers during site visits and students would have more time to interact and share with a wider variety of farmers. In addition, Noah said: "Schools should connect their students with farmers close to their schools so they can work together as partners. Such programs should be sustained through communications and mutual understanding." This point was also stressed by Peter who noted that having stable relationships with neighboring farmers ensures ongoing collaboration and reduces travel time for moving to places where farmers are willing to host students. And Moses expressed the need to have all school administrators onboard to support new initiatives such as SAPs in their schools.
        Regarding limited resources, the adult partners urged that Uganda's government should take a proactive role in funding schools to provide students with the necessary facilities to implement their SAPs. To this aim, Abu suggested that "there should be some small grants for students to compete for so that they can start income-generating projects that are sustainable."

Theoretical Lenses
        To ensure transparency and validity, researchers using naturalistic inquiries, such as the phenomenological approach employed in this study, ought to let theory evolve from their findings (Guba, 1981; Lester, 1999). Based on data analysis, experiential learning theory, as espoused by Kolb (1984), and social capital theory (Häuberer, 2011; Lin, 2004) evolved from the study's themes and *essence*. Kolb (1984, 2014) contended that in the learning process ideas are organic and transformed as individuals encounter new experiences and reflect on such to make abstractions leading to the creation of new knowledge and meaning.
        On the other hand, social capital theory is rooted in the positive attributes that individuals acquire as a result of being part of a social network (Lin, 2004; Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). In this regard, Häuberer (2011) asserted: "Social capital, like other forms of capital, is productive and facilitates the achievement of certain ends that would be impossible in its absence" (p. 40). Social capital is dependent on social relationships and networks, including actions of the individuals within such structures to facilitate outcomes (Lin, 2004; Seibert et al., 2001). Such were developed by the partnerships between the youth and adults in this study. Evaluating the study's findings through these two theoretical lenses helped us to gain an understanding of the phenomenon and to distill an *essence* of the adult partners' experiences.

The Phenomenon's *Essence* and Related Conclusions
        The *essence* distilled from analyzing the findings about adult partners' experiences working with students was *the power of Youth-Adult Partnerships (Y-APs) to promote learning and skill acquisition while building social capital such that the adult partners were positively impacted as they served youth and lifted their communities*. Y-APs are mutually beneficial, and both parties learn from one another (Camino, 2000). These partnerships have been instrumental in helping youth and adults engage in community initiatives, including bridging the gap between them and other stakeholders (Libby et al., 2005). The partnerships help in building social capital networks and improving relationships (Häuberer, 2011). This study's adult partners leveraged

such to acquire new knowledge and skills while building relationships and networks for the betterment of their own livelihoods (Henness, Ball, & Moncheski, 2013).

Further, based on the emergent themes from the adult partners' experiences, especially their direct observations from working with the students, we concluded that the students' and adult partners' knowledge and understanding of concepts related to agripreneurship improved as a result of the *hands-on, minds-on experiential learning* (Kolb, 1984) supported by the project. The students used abstract concepts learned in agriculture courses about agripreneurship and the raising of poultry to develop and implement their SAPs, and the adult partners not only helped guide the students in that process, but they also learned more about agripreneurship and the students' SAPs due to the collaboration. In addition, the adult partners indicated acquiring new ideas by interacting with one another and with student partners that they intended to use to improve their own livelihoods in the future. Moreover, the teacher partners expressed that they would incorporate these ideas into their instructional practices.

Implications and Recommendations

Though the findings from this qualitative study should not be generalized beyond the participants who shared their experiences, such may be transferable to other individuals who undergo similar experiences. Based on the adult partners' outcomes, engaging youth with adults in their communities provided positive outcomes whereby each group learned from the other (Camino, 2000; Zeldin & Petrokubi, 2008) during implementation of the SAPs. Better relations were built among the adult partners, the students, and the students' parents as a result of collaborating through the SAPs and thereby contributed to building social capital in the participants' communities. To achieve such aims, the need exists for schools and communities to build partnerships and work together to facilitate the teaching-learning process (Watson et al., 2015). This may involve Y-APs with SAPs as the *experiential context,* which was the case in this study, to increase the likelihood of establishing better community engagement that facilitates students' applying knowledge and skills learned in school to real-world problems and opportunities under the mentorship of adult partners.

The adult teacher partners said that students expressed more interest in learning while working on SAPs involving the integration of agriculture and entrepreneurship. Therefore, teachers of these subjects should collaborate to promote students' knowledge transfer across disciplines to increase their likelihood of contributing to improved food security, including agripreneurial and related livelihood opportunities, as facilitated by schools and their community partners. Integration of curriculum could be achieved by implementing experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) projects with community partners, which is likely to lead to better working relationships between the participating actors while building social capital together (Häuberer, 2011).

A need also exists to provide an enabling environment to promote an agripreneurial culture among youth (Chen, Greene, & Crick, 1998), and they should be exposed to prosperous livelihood opportunities in the agricultural sector. By recognizing and evaluating those opportunities as worthwhile, the youth are more likely to pursue such, which may have *spillover effects* in their communities leading to improved livelihoods and enhanced food security for themselves and others. This could be done by establishing *idea incubation sites* at schools, and connecting students with adults in their communities willing to provide mentoring through Y-APs (Zeldin et al., 2013; Zeldin & Petrokubi, 2008). As was the case with student and adult partners in this study, such collaborations have the potential to influence students' career

aspirations and attitudes toward agripreneurship, while also providing personal growth and development for the adults.

Implementing partnerships involving SAPs requires a lot of time commitment from the partners and financial resources from the participating schools to implement the projects, which can be prohibitive, as expressed by this study's adult partners. Therefore, schools, communities, as well as the Ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda should earmark special funds to be availed to schools and communities interested in pursuing such initiatives. Further, more adult partners should be recruited from local communities to reduce the youth-adult ratio and to likely increase the quality of interactions and related outcomes.

In this study, the Y-APs worked on SAPs for a relatively short period of time, i.e., eight weeks, which makes it difficult to evaluate the long-term impact of such partnerships. Therefore, follow up studies should assess the long-term impacts and sustainability of Y-APs in communities, including improvements to participants' agricultural practices and livelihoods, and whether youth were able to establish successful agripreneurship projects. These investigations could involve cohort or panel studies (Creswell, 2012) with the youth who implemented SAPs, as examined by this inquiry.

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